MURDISHAW WEST PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Autumn 2026

Policy Title	COMMUNICATIONS POLICY
School/HBC	School
Written by	V Edwards
FGB Ratification Date	November 2026
Signed by Chair of Governors	D Cox
Date	
Review Date	November 2029 or sooner if required

1. Purpose
At Murdishaw West Primary & Nursery School, we value clear, respectful and effective communication with parents, carers, visitors and the wider community.

This policy sets out how the school communicates with families and how families should communicate with the school. It should be read alongside the school's:

- Complaints Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- Vexatious Harassment Policy

We believe that positive communication helps to build trust, resolve issues early and support the wellbeing and learning of every child.

2. Core communication principles
All communication with the school should be:

- respectful
- calm and courteous
- constructive and solution-focused
- timely and appropriate to the issue
- in line with school policies and safeguarding expectations

Parents, carers and visitors are expected to treat staff, pupils, governors and other members of the school community with respect at all times, including in writing, on the telephone, face to face and online.

3. Contacting the school

Urgent matters
If your matter is urgent, particularly during the school day, please phone the school office.
This is especially important because staff are usually teaching in class and may not see emails or Seesaw messages immediately.

Please telephone the school office for:

- absence reporting
- changes to collection arrangements
- emergencies
- urgent welfare or safeguarding information
- any matter requiring immediate attention

Non-urgent matters

Non-urgent matters may be sent by:

- email
- Seesaw, where appropriate
- a written note via the school office
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4. Expected response times
The school aims to acknowledge communications within 3 working days.
Please note:

- acknowledgement does not always mean a full response will be available immediately
- some matters will need to be investigated before a full reply can be given
- staff may be teaching, supervising children or attending to safeguarding and operational duties during the school day

Parents and carers should not expect an instant response, particularly if the message is sent during teaching time. (see urgent matters)

5. Email communication
When emailing the school or a member of staff, please:

- use a polite and professional tone
- include a clear subject line where possible
- keep the message concise and focused
- avoid sending repeated emails about the same issue before a response has been given
- avoid copying in multiple staff members unless necessary
- allow up to 3 working days for acknowledgement

Staff are not expected to monitor or respond to emails continuously during the school day.

6. Seesaw communication

Murdishaw West Primary & Nursery School uses Seesaw as a learning platform to support teaching, learning and home-school engagement.

Seesaw is for:

- sharing learning activities
- celebrating pupils' work and achievements
- supporting classroom learning
- sending non-urgent information linked to learning

Seesaw is not for:

- urgent messages
- absence reporting
- collection changes
- safeguarding concerns
- complaints or formal disputes
- time-sensitive messages requiring an immediate response

If a matter is urgent, please phone the school office rather than send a Seesaw message.
Seesaw should only be used for non-urgent information.

7. Social media
The school recognises that social media can be a positive tool when used appropriately. However, it also carries risks relating to safeguarding, privacy, bullying, confidentiality and reputation.
This section should be read alongside the school's Social Media Policy.

7.1 General expectations

- Staff, parents, carers and pupils should use social media responsibly and respectfully.
- Social media must not be used to undermine, harass, threaten or publicly criticise members of the school community.
- Concerns about school matters should be raised through the school's normal communication and complaints procedures, not on social media.

7.2 Staff and social media

- Staff must not be contacted via personal social media accounts about school matters.
- Staff should not engage in social media communication with current or former pupils on personal accounts.
- Staff must maintain professional boundaries online.
- Any personal social media use which refers to the school must include a clear disclaimer that the views expressed are personal and not those of the school.
- Staff must not share confidential information, images or recordings relating to pupils, colleagues or the school unless this is through approved school channels and in line with school policy.

7.3 Parents, carers and visitors

Parents, carers and visitors must not:

- post abusive, threatening, defamatory, discriminatory or harassing content about the school, staff or pupils
- publish private school correspondence or recordings without permission
- use social media to pursue complaints instead of following the school's complaints procedure
- name staff directly, or describe them in a way that makes them easily identifiable, in an abusive or inappropriate context
- post images, recordings or comments that breach confidentiality or data protection

If inappropriate social media content is posted, the school may ask for it to be removed and may direct the matter through the complaints procedure. In serious cases, the school may restrict communication and seek advice from external agencies or the police where appropriate.

8. Complaints

If you have a complaint, please follow the school's Complaints Policy. Complaint emails will be acknowledged within 5 working days.

9. Behaviour expected in all communications

The school will not tolerate:

- abusive or insulting language
- aggressive or intimidating behaviour
- threatening messages
- unreasonable repeated or excessive contact which could be perceived as an intent to harass or pressure staff
- defamatory or malicious comments
- discriminatory language or conduct
- public posting of private communications in a way that is misleading, harmful or disrespectful

This applies to communication in person, by telephone, in writing, by email, through Seesaw and on social media.

10. Excessive, vexatious or harassing contact

Where contact becomes excessive, vexatious or harassing, the school may take steps to protect staff and maintain a safe working environment.

Examples include:

- repeated messages about the same issue after it has already been addressed
- contacting multiple staff members in parallel without good reason
- demands that are disproportionate to the issue
- hostile, insulting or accusatory language
- attempts to use social media to pressure staff or influence outcomes

The school may:

- limit communication to a single named member of staff
- require communication to be in writing only
- refuse meetings without prior arrangement
- block direct contact with individual staff members where appropriate
- involve the police or other agencies where necessary

11. Confidentiality and recordings

School communications are confidential.

- Staff emails, letters and messages must not be shared publicly without permission.
- Conversations or meetings should not be recorded without prior consent from all parties.
- Unauthorised sharing of staff or pupil information may breach data protection law and school policy.

Confidentiality of Behaviour Incidents

When a behaviour incident involves more than one child, the school will communicate with the parents or carers of those directly involved regarding matters relating to their own child. To protect the privacy and wellbeing of all pupils, and in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018, the school will not disclose sanctions, consequences, support plans or personal information relating to another child. Parents can be assured that all incidents are investigated thoroughly and addressed in line with this Behaviour Policy.

12. Safeguarding and duty of care

The school has a duty of care to protect pupils, staff, governors and visitors from harassment, intimidation, defamation and undue stress.

Abusive or threatening communication may also be treated as a safeguarding concern where it affects the ability of staff to carry out their duties safely and effectively.

13. Equal opportunities and reasonable adjustments

The school will consider reasonable adjustments where needed to help parents and carers access communication and the complaints process.

This may include:

- alternative formats
- support with written communication
- accessible meeting arrangements
- assistance for those with additional communication needs