

Communication Policy



Reviewed/Updated	Date
Updated	September 2025
Review	September 2028

<u>Signed:</u>	<u>Signed:</u>
Chair of Board of Governors	Principal

Communications Policy

I. Introduction

- 1.1 Crawfordsburn Primary School recognises the importance of clear and effective communication with all stakeholders (pupils, parents and carers, staff, Governors, the local and wider community, outside agencies, etc), and is committed to being open and accessible for all who have an interest in the school.
- 1.2 The key stakeholders for a school are parents, carers and pupils and this policy addresses the main ways in which the school will ensure there is effective two-way communication between home and school.
- 1.3 Parents and carers have a key role to play in their child's education. The school will make every effort to encourage and make arrangements for parents and carers to contribute to creating a shared view of their child's needs. For the purpose of this policy parents and carers refers to those people who have legal parental responsibility for a child.

Definition of communication

Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications and needs to recognise that the quality of their communications reflect on the school's reputation. Parents and carers, trustees and pupils also have a part to play in reflecting the school's reputation. We strive to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and effective in their purpose.

Principles

- 3.1 Crawfordsburn Primary School uses a number of different methods to maintain effective communication with parents and carers, other schools, the wider community and outside agencies. Depending on the nature of the communication, the school will use the most practicable means to contact the recipient.
- 3.2 Communication on issues that affect the safety and wellbeing of a pupil will be treated as a priority. The school holds emergency contact details for all pupils and families are asked to alert the school immediately if contact information needs to be revised.
- 3.3 Staff will always seek to establish friendly relationships with parents and carers but they will ensure relationships are professional and parents will be addressed in a formal manner.

Aims of the policy

- 4.1 The aim of this policy is to:
 - Promote partnerships between the school, parents and carers, pupils and the wider community through efficient and effective communication.
 - Ensure that effective communication and consultation takes place between the school, parents, carers, pupils and other stakeholders and that there are robust procedures to facilitate this and for all parties to follow.

4.2 The school recognises that engaging and working with parents and carers is vital in ensuring that children are provided with an excellent education. Parents and carers are offered opportunities throughout the year to convey to us what they expect from and think of the school. Our wish is to involve as many parents and carers in their child's education as possible.

4.3 Our aims include the following:

- To make the school as welcoming and inclusive as possible.
- Signage will be clear, informative and positive.
- All written and telephone enquiries will be dealt with promptly and parents and carers can expect an acknowledgement within 3 working days.
- A variety of forms of communication with parents and carers for example, telephone contact, e-mail, Seesaw, post and text.
- Parents and carers are contacted for positive as well as negative reasons.
- Information is given to parents and carers on what pupils will be taught and tips for helping their child will be provided.
- Parents and carers will be encouraged to help or support their child's learning at school and at home. Information will be provided in a timely way to enable this support to be effective.

2.4 Choosing the correct member of staff to address a query

CONCERNING?	ABOUT WHAT?	WHO DO I TALK TO?
MY CHILD	Their learning Their progress Their friendships Their difficulties Their habits Their homework Any other problems you may be having with your child at home A change in pick up arrangements An issue that is happening in class or in the playground Any other concerns about how they are getting on?	The teacher MUST be contacted in the first instance to address any of these issues. Issues that require discussion should be addressed in person/by phone call, not on SeeSaw. Please send a brief message or contact the school office to arrange an appointment.
	Personal and confidential information in regard to changes in family circumstances, safe-guarding or child protection concerns.	Mrs Vance (Designated Teacher) OR Mr Ferguson (Principal)
MY ARRANGEMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in home address, contacts and contact number. • To make an appointment to see someone. • To arrange for payment of e.g. school dinners, breakfast club etc • To talk about open enrolment • To hand in important documents or letters 	THE OFFICE The office is available to receive phone calls between 8:45 am and 3:00 pm each day

5. Forms of communication

5.1 Telephone Calls

Many matters can be resolved quickly by having a conversation over the phone and will be the first preference for communication from school to home to address any issues raised, even those raised via a letter or email sent to school.

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school. Teachers are teaching full-time. Teachers have some availability after school, but only when they are not attending staff meetings or training, meeting with parents, running clubs or working with pupils at lunchtime or after school. Parents and carers may be frustrated if they feel that a message elicits no immediate reply, when in fact there has been no available opportunity for the member of staff to reach a telephone to return a call.

Equally when staff call parents, they may not get an immediate response, but where possible a message will be left by the caller so that parents know who has called and who to ask for when returning the call. The office staff will not know who has called you as each teacher has their own phone in their classroom for dialling out on. Therefore, please check your messages before returning a missed call.

Following an enquiry, **a return call will be made as soon as possible but no later than 3 working days later, with any follow up action from the request /query/problem being dealt with within an agreed time period by both parties.** Staff will make a record of a telephone conversation with a parent/carer on the telephone log.

Phone lines will be open:

Monday to Friday from 8:45 am to 3:00 pm

As a school we will endeavour to ensure there is at least one person able to answer the phones during these times, but illness and the busyness of a school means we cannot always guarantee this.

5.1 Seesaw and Google Classroom

As a school we have all found Seesaw and Google Classroom very useful tools for 2-way communication between home and school, and it has helped us to be a more environmentally friendly school, as it has greatly reduced the number of letters and information sheets that we send home on paper.

These tools are being used by school as a learning and teaching tool, to keep parents regularly updated and better informed about what their children are doing in school. **They are not to be used as general forms of communication from home to school. All important information should be given via telephone calls, emails or face to face meetings.**

Parents will use Seesaw and Google Classroom to :

- View and like their child's work
- Upload work during times of home-learning
- Send a **brief** text to notify the teacher of a child's absence and expected return to school. There is no need to go into a large amount of detail via Seesaw, or to send pictures of any child to prove they are sick.

- Send a **brief** text to request a telephone conversation.
- To notify the teacher *in an emergency* of a change of pick-up arrangements.

Teachers will use Seesaw to:

- Share pupils work and photographs of their activities.
- Provide work for home learning or during long-term illness.
- To view, mark and provide feedback of completed work.
- Send class messages, share information sheets and letters in PDF form.
- Request reason for a child's absence, if not already received, so that the appropriate absence code can be recorded on SIMS.

Any whole school notes will be sent in PDF form from the Office, via email.

Only send messages to Seesaw between 8:30 am and 4:00 pm Monday-Friday. Outside of this time messages will not be monitored. Please note, as teachers will be teaching, they may only see messages after 3pm. They will not answer questions or complaints sent via Seesaw, other than to acknowledge receipt of notification of a child's absence.

To discuss any concerns, issues, long-term absences, arrange for a teacher to phone you, or to make an appointment to meet with a teacher please phone the office on 028 91 853813, or email the school on info@crawfordsburnps.bangor.ni.sch.uk.

5.3 Letters and E-mails

Where appropriate, and when staff feel it is a matter that can be quickly resolved through a conversation, they will respond to a letter from parents and carers, via a telephone call and, if necessary, thereafter a meeting will be arranged with the parents/carers to discuss it further. Otherwise, a response to acknowledge receipt of a letter will be made by telephone, letter or email within 2 working days and responded to within 10 working days.

Letters to parents/carers must be processed through the school administration team and approved by a member of the Senior Leadership Team before posting/emailing. Letters/emails being sent out to all parents/carers should be approved by the Vice-principal or Principal and sent out using email. Copies of correspondence with parents and carers will be kept by the School Office. Parents and carers are encouraged to provide the school with a current email address for prompt and effective communication. However, if we are unable to obtain a current email address for any parent or carer, communications will be delivered home in hard copy by their child or sent by post. The school will use standard templates for letters where possible.

The correct salutations must be used when writing to or emailing parents/carers/partnerships. The use of a parent, carer or staff member's first name is not appropriate, therefore all communications will be to and from Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Dr etc and sign off is always full name Ms/Mrs/Mr/Dr Teacher Surname. All relevant parties must be copied into letters or emails.

Under no circumstances will staff contact pupils or parents and carers using their own personal email address.

Any letters of concern or complaint should be dealt with in accordance with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy (copy available on the school website).

6. Texts

Automated texts from SIMS are sent to parents/carers (including in the event of an emergency closure of the school) but are not used for general communications from members of staff. Staff should not respond by text to a text message received from a parent/carer (but should respond using an alternative means of communication such as telephone or email if appropriate).

7. Absence

If a child is absent, parents and carers are asked to contact the school as soon as possible on the morning of the absence, for full details please refer to the Attendance Policy (copy available on the website)

Texts and phone calls from staff to report sickness absences to their line manager should happen as follows:

- All staff to phone the Principal, Mr Ferguson before 7:00 pm the night before or between 7:30 am and 8:00 am on the morning of their absence due to sickness. Classroom assistants must also inform the class teacher, whose class they work in, of their absence.

8. Meeting with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers wishing to meet a member of staff must contact the school to make an appointment.

Parents and carers should report to the reception office prior to meeting with a member of staff. A member of staff may ask a senior colleague to accompany them if necessary.

Staff will call a meeting to a close in the event of the parents or carers becoming angry or abusive. This should be reported immediately to a member of the Senior Leadership Team, which in turn will be reported to the Board of Governors and recorded in the minutes of their next meeting.

9. Social Networking

The school has a Facebook account which will mostly be used to share events in school and to celebrate the work of the school and our pupils. It is not compulsory for parents to sign up to Facebook and therefore key messages will be relayed through formal school communication channels.

Comments and Messenger linked to our Facebook page should not be used for communicating with school, or for questions/discussions about events in school. All such communications should be addressed via the methods mentioned before.

The page is monitored for inappropriate and negative comments which will be deleted.

10. Reports and Progress

Parent – Teacher meetings are time-tabled twice a year. These are an opportunity for parents and carers to meet with their child's teacher to discuss individual progress, and specific targets being set for their learning. A final written report, highlighting each child's progress over the year and ideas for continued development, is distributed to all parents and carers in June of each year.

We welcome the presence of any other adult a parent or carer wishes to invite to a school meeting for support or to act as an interpreter.

11. Accessibility

We will endeavour to make any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary to enable a parent or carer with a disability to participate fully in a meeting or to receive and understand a communication.

The font used in all printed communications is Gill Sans MT 11. Documents printed using a larger font can usually be provided and requests should be made via email at the info@crawfordsburnps.bangor.ni.sch.uk account.

If a translation of a document is required, in the first instance parents/carers should access [Google Translate](#) and a link to this will be included in the main languages of the school community in documents sent out to parents as required. Key school information will be translated into community languages where appropriate and possible and where required a translator provided to ensure effective communication.

Before sending or posting information electronically staff should test to ensure cross platform access.

12. School Website

The school website provides a range of information about the school, including important curriculum information and policies for the school.:

It is used to promote the school to a wider audience and is updated regularly.

13. Communication between pupils and staff

Two way communication between pupils and staff is an important aspect of school life. The school welcomes and encourages pupils to engage in conversation with all members of staff within the school. When communicating with a member of staff pupils should:

- Stand in front of the member of staff they are speaking with and address them respectfully;
- Address the member of staff using their formal name e.g. Mrs Smith, never referring to a member of staff by their first name;
- Be respectful, do not talk over, raise voice or walk away before the conversation has ended.

When communicating with pupils staff should use pupils' first names, and full names of staff (Mr Surname and Ms/Mrs Surname) in front of pupils.

Pupils in KS2 may also be asked to digitally submit their work. All pupils should use the following protocols:

- Complete the subject line if required
- Use Ms/Mrs/Mr and Surname as salutation
- Use Standard English
- Avoid abbreviations
- Sign off with Thank you or Kind Regards.

Correspondence is to remain professional at all times.

Staff are never permitted to use personal email accounts when communicating with pupils.

14. Communication between Crawfordsburn Primary School Staff

Verbal

Staff are to use first names when communicating with each other and full names (Mr/Dr/Ms/Mrs Surname) in front of pupils. Avoid generic terms of: Sir and Miss to convey politeness.

Email

- consider whether an email is appropriate when face to face communication may be more conducive;
- avoid exclusive email correspondence without requesting or organising a face to face meeting;
- avoid send or reply all unless necessary;
- line managers are to be copied in;
- keep emails concise, use Standard English and bullet points if necessary.
- Staff to check emails at regular intervals in the day e.g. first thing in the morning, at break time or lunch-time and at the end of the day.
- Use group emails as appropriate.

Staff should not send non-urgent emails before 8am or after 5 pm. Emails should instead be scheduled to be sent during work hours. Staff are not expected to respond to emails outside of their working hours.

Minutes of all staff, key-stage, curricular and SLT meetings are to be emailed to staff within 2 weeks of the meeting and saved on the school network.

15. School trips, visits and activities

Parents and carers will be notified by letter of trips, visits and activities that their child/children may wish to participate in as early as possible (a minimum of two weeks where possible). The school will always ensure parents and carers are notified of any additional opportunities for their child as soon as possible to ensure parents and carers have adequate time to plan for such events.

16. Severe weather and emergency closure

In the event of emergency closure communication will be made to parents and carers via text or email. Parents and carers should also tune in to local radio, check local news websites and check the school website and social media channels i.e. website and Facebook.

17. Prospective parents/carers

Prospective PI parents and carers are invited to an Open Day event in the year preceding their child's year of entry to the school. A printed copy of the school prospectus is available for prospective parents and carers on request.

Prospective parents and carers are also invited, along with their child, to an induction afternoon where the main channels of communication are outlined, and important information will be shared. Parents wishing to move their child to our school should phone to make an appointment if they want to view the school in operation.

18. Supporting parents and carers of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The school recognises the importance of positive relationships with parents and carers of all pupils with additional needs. The SEND Code of Practice emphasises the importance of positive, supportive attitudes to parents and carers and user-friendly information and procedures. All staff will make every effort to ensure effective communication with parents and carers. All staff within the school are expected to help parents and carers understand how to contribute effectively to their child's education and will make every effort to ensure that parents understand their rights and responsibilities.

When pupils who have special educational needs are making less than the expected progress or if they are experiencing behavioural difficulties, we would expect to meet with parents and carers more regularly. Parents and carers are encouraged to communicate immediately where they have a concern about their child's needs being met.

19. Communication with other schools and outside agencies

Prior to pupils joining Year 1, or moving to their post-primary school in year 8, it is customary for schools to gain further information about them to help and support their transition to and from Crawfordsburn Primary School.

We recognise that children have diverse needs, and where required we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals including medical services (such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy), educational psychologists, health professionals and specialists and various welfare-focused services, such as Educational Welfare.

We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our school must provide a safe and secure environment (see the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy copy available on the school website).

We hold information on all pupils in our school and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. All personal data is held and processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (for full details see our Data Protection Policy and Privacy notice on the school website)

20. Monitoring, evaluation and review

This Policy will be reviewed at least every three years to assess its implementation and effectiveness. The Policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

The next review is due: August 2026

Appendix

Contact information:

Telephone: 028 91 853813

E-mail: info@crawfordsburnps.bangor.ni.sch.uk

School website: <https://www.crawfordsburnps.com/>