| Document Control | |
|---|---|
| Document Title: | Communications Policy |
| Date of Last Review: | February 2026 |
| Next Review Due: | February 2027 |
| Person Responsible: | Head of Admissions and Marketing |

# Banstead Prep

# Communication Policy

*Banstead Prep is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, students and visitors to share this commitment.*

*All outcomes generated by this document must take account of and contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at Banstead Prep.*

Version 1 – February 2024
Update due: February 2026

Contents

Introduction ..... 3
Aims ..... 3
Communication with Parents and Carers ..... 4
Choosing the correct member of staff to address a query ..... 4
Emails and Messages ..... 4
Telephone Calls ..... 5
Absence ..... 5
Meeting with Parents and Carers ..... 5
Social Networking ..... 6
Weekly Bulletin ..... 6
Pre-Prep Newsletter ..... 6
Reports and Progress ..... 6
Accessibility ..... 6
Staff as Parents ..... 7
School Website ..... 7
Communication between children and Staff ..... 7
Communication between BPS staff ..... 7
Verbal ..... 7
Email ..... 7
Meetings ..... 8
Dealing with the Media ..... 8
Social Media and News Stories ..... 8
School Calendar ..... 8
Term Dates ..... 8
Trips, Visits and Activities ..... 8
Severe Weather and Emergency Closure ..... 9
Communication with other Schools and Outside Agencies ..... 9
Investigating Incidents ..... 9
Complaints ..... 9
Appendix A – To whom should my query or concern be addressed? ..... 10
General Query ..... 10
Query Specific to your Child ..... 10
Complaints ..... 10
General ..... 11
Procedures ..... 11

## Introduction

Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications and recognise that the quality of communications reflects on the school's reputation. Parents and carers, and children also have a part to play in reflecting the school's reputation. We strive for communications between all members of the school community to be clear, professional, timely and effective. Communications of all kinds should reflect the school's beliefs – Be Respectful, Be Ready, Be Safe, Be Kind and Be Yourself. All members of our community are responsible for considering this when communicating and adhering to the appropriate code of conduct.

BPS uses different methods to effectively communicate with parents and carers, other schools, the wider community and external agencies. Depending on the nature of the communication, the school will use the most appropriate communication channel(s).

Communication on issues that affect the safety and wellbeing of our children are a priority. We hold emergency contact details for all children and families are asked to alert the school immediately if contact information needs updating. A request to confirm that information is up to date is sent to parents annually.

Staff will always seek to establish friendly and professional relationships with parents and carers.

This Communications Policy embraces the principles of the school's Equal Opportunities and Acceptable Use provisions, detailed in the Digital Safety Policy.

We identify our key stakeholders as parents, carers and children and this Policy addresses the main ways in which we will ensure there is effective two-way communication between home and school.

The school recognises that engaging and working with parents and carers is vital in providing children with an excellent education. Parents and carers are always welcome to provide feedback and we want to involve as many parents and carers in their child's education as possible.

## Aims

Our aims include the following:

- Our school is as welcoming and inclusive as possible
- Clear, informative and positive signage
- All written and telephone enquiries will be dealt with promptly and parents and carers can expect an acknowledgement within 2 working days
- A variety of forms of communication with parents and carers for example, telephone contact, e-mail, post and push notifications
- Parents and carers are contacted for positive as well as constructive reasons
- Information is given to parents and carers on what students will be taught and tips for helping their child will be provided

- Parents and carers are encouraged to help and 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

## Communication with Parents and Carers

We welcome communication from parents and carers and encourage an open dialogue where we can address concerns and feedback directly. The best way to achieve this is to raise concerns with us directly.

- ### Choosing the correct member of staff to address a query

  Please see Appendix A for details of whom to contact and how to progress any query that is not successfully resolved.

- ### Emails and Messages

  Staff endeavour to reply to an email or message from parents and carers as quickly as possible. A response to acknowledge receipt will be made by telephone or email **within 2 working days and the query will be responded to within 10 working days**.

School communications to parents and carers that are being sent to more than one child in a year group should be discussed with a Phase Leader and be provided in advance for review and approval by Head of Marketing & Admissions or Executive Assistant to Headteacher and sent out using School Post.

E-mail is the preferred method of communication from parents to staff as they are usually unable to respond to telephone calls during the school day. A staff contact list is available on My School Portal.

Emails from staff should only be used to communicate day to day information to parents/carers of an individual child. For e-mails to more than one family School Post must be used.

School Post messages are the preferred way of communicating to groups of parents so there is a record of what has been sent and parents can find the information easily, in one place on My School Portal.

Letters - In the interests of the environment, we do not usually send paper communications. All 'letters' will be sent via School Post. It is important that the tone and content of the letter is appropriately professional and in keeping with brand guidelines. All 'letters' must be approved by the Head of Marketing & Admissions or Executive Assistant to Headteacher.

Consider which relevant members of staff should be copied into communications to parents.

We are mindful that families are busy and streamline our communications as much as possible. Communications are targeted to specific year groups where appropriate, and most communications are sent on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Parents and carers are welcome to contact the school via email for a general enquiry. The school email address is office@bansteadprep.com or there is a contact form on My School Portal.

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

Staff are expected to check emails daily during term time and intermittently during the school holidays. For emails relating to situations that require investigation or follow up, a copy of the text should be kept either in CPOMS or iSAMS as appropriate.

## Telephone Calls

Parents are encouraged to e-mail staff rather than telephone, due to the difficulty replying during the school day. Parents leaving messages will be advised that teachers will respond to the message as soon as possible and no later than 2 working days depending on the nature of the issue. Any follow ups resulting from the communication should be dealt with within 7 working days.

Office staff will make a note of a telephone conversation with a parent/carer and record on the iSAMS student log.

Staff should avoid using personal mobile phones or block their caller ID before making a call.

## Absence

Children should be reported absent no later than 8.30am - for full details please refer to the Attendance Policy.

## Meeting with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers wishing to meet a member of staff must contact the school to make an appointment and will receive a response **within 2 working days.**

Parents and carers should report to the School Office prior to meeting with a member of staff. Depending on the nature of the meeting, another member of staff may accompany them. This may be a colleague, member of the leadership team or a member of the administration team to take notes.

In the event of a parents or carers becoming angry or abusive, staff will close the meeting and report this immediately to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

If an emergency arises parents should contact the office staff who will need to be given sufficient information to quickly alert the most appropriate person(s). The contact details are:

Email: office@bansteadprep.com

Telephone: 01737 363601 (option 7)

## Parent/Class Representatives

The Banstead Prep Supporters Association, working together with the school, includes an informal network of class representatives: parent volunteers from each year group/each class who facilitate a year group community. Class reps are invited into school once a term to discuss any issues or feedback raised by parents, or to provide a forum for consultation for upcoming events or changes at school.

## Social Networking

The school has a presence on social media channels, which are used to provide updates to parents. Important messages will also be relayed through formal school communication channels.

Instagram @bansteadprep
Facebook.com/bansteadprep

Information networks such as WhatsApp groups can be valuable for sharing information and experiences and creating a community, but if you have any individual concerns or questions the best way of getting them addressed is to contact school directly.

## Banstead Bulletin

Whole school information is collated together in an electronic weekly newsletter, published on Friday each week during school term time. Information is targeted to specific year groups where appropriate. More detailed Information is included for parents of children in pre-prep as this helps parents of young children who aren't able to share information on what they are learning in school as easily as older children.

## Reports and Progress

Parents and carers receive a progress report each term, dates of which can be found in the Reporting Timetable. Reports are shared via My School Portal

In addition, parents and carers can meet their child's subject teachers at parent contact evenings. Parents and carers should contact the school if issues arise about their child's progress or wellbeing. The first point of contact should be the child's Class Teacher.

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

Regular meetings with parents take place each year and information can be found in the Teaching and Learning Policy.

## 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.

### Staff as Parents

We understand that in some cases the staff fulfil a dual role of parent and employee and these individuals are expected to uphold boundaries between the two roles and ensure that their behaviour does not constitute a conflict of interest. Consider the content and tone of comments made to groups of parents either in person or, for example, on WhatsApp groups. Confidentiality must be maintained at all times - further guidelines for appropriate behaviour can be found in the Code of Conduct for Staff.

### School Website

The school website is primarily used to promote the school to prospective families and employees. A range of information about the school is available, including key policies and term dates, that will also be useful to current families.

## Communication between children and staff

Two-way communication between children and staff is an important aspect of school life. The school welcomes and encourages children to engage in conversation with all members of staff within the school. Staff and children are encouraged to remember the school beliefs when communicating.

Situations may arise where children email staff on their school accounts in relation to their learning. All children are taught email protocol:

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

Correspondence is to be professional at all times. Staff are never permitted to use personal email accounts when communicating with students.

## Communication between BPS staff

## Verbal

Staff should use full names (Mr/Dr/Ms/Mrs Surname) in front of children, avoiding generic terms e.g. Sir/Miss.

### Email

- Consider whether an email or face to face communication would be most effective
- Think before sending or replying to a large group
- Consider who you are copying - is it necessary that person needs to know?
- Keep emails concise, use standard English and bullet points if necessary
- Tone and content to be professional and collaborative
- Staff to check emails once a day

- Use group emails as appropriate. Email groups are as follows:
  - All Staff
  - All Teachers
  - All Learning Assistants
  - SLT
  - All Site

Staff should try not to send non-urgent emails before 8am or after 8pm. Emails should instead be saved as drafts and sent during work hours or scheduled to be sent later/the next day.

### Meetings

Agendas for staff meetings are to be circulated at least two days in advance. The minutes of the meeting should be circulated to all relevant parties where possible within two weeks of the meeting.

## Dealing with the Media

All media enquiries must be directed to the Headteacher, and staff members and parents should not comment.

The school's Weekly Bulletin and our social media accounts are our main channels for communicating news. For wider coverage e.g. press, staff must first seek permission from the Head of Marketing and Admissions.

Social media accounts are managed by Head of Marketing and Admissions and access will only be provided to other members of staff following training and for agreed purposes.

All staff are responsible for creating content to be used on social media and as website news stories.

## School Calendar

The school has a busy and varied schedule of events, and we appreciate the importance of good communication around expectations for parental support, either through provision of resourcing or attendance. Parents are expected to review the calendar regularly - the school will not routinely send out reminders for events by email.

The calendar can be found on My School Portal. We do not publish a paper calendar as this quickly becomes out of date.

### Term Dates

Term dates are normally published on the school website in the Autumn Half Term of the previous academic year.

### Trips, Visits and Activities

Where possible, the school will endeavour to publish all proposed trips, visits and activities on the school calendar at the start of each term.

Parents and carers will be notified by email of trips, visits and activities in which their child/children may wish to participate as early as possible, and within at least four weeks of the proposed trip, visit or activity. Occasionally, opportunities arise during the academic year to offer students additional trips, visits or activities that were not known or available when the school calendar was published. 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.

Staff should see Appendix B for procedure for booking events into the school calendar.

## Severe Weather and Emergency Closure

In the event of emergency closure, communication will be made to parents and carers via our social media channels and e-mail. We will also place a notification on the website by 7.00am.

## Communication with other Schools and Outside Agencies

We hold information on all students 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 Regulations (for full details see our Data Protection Policy).

## Investigating Incidents

When investigating an incident involving students, school members of staff interview all students involved and ask them to complete a written account. The school will only share any information that would identify any students in accordance with data protection regulations and legislation and our policies. Disciplinary information on other students is confidential and will not be shared with other parents.

## Complaints

We hope that you will not feel the need to complain about the operation of our Communications Policy and that any difficulty can be sensitively and efficiently handled before it reaches that stage. However, the school's Complaints Procedures, which apply equally to the Early Years, are on our website, and we will send you copies on request.

# Appendix A – To whom should my query or concern be addressed?

## General Query

If you have a general query or concern (not specific to your child) please email your child's class teacher or Office@bansteadprep.com .

## Query Specific to your Child

### My query is about my child's learning:

In the first instance you should email your child's class teacher. If, following the communications to the Class Teacher you are still dissatisfied with the response or you would like to discuss this further, please contact the Phase Leader. This may then be escalated to the Deputy Head if you do not feel that the matter has been resolved.

### My query is about my child's wellbeing, behaviour or non-compliance:

In the first instance you should email your child's class teacher. If, following the communications to the class teacher, you are still dissatisfied with the response or you would like to discuss this further, please contact the phase leader. This may then be escalated to the Assistant Head - Wellbeing if you do not feel that the matter has been resolved.

## Complaints

If, having followed the communications route above you are still dissatisfied with the response, you may complain to the school. Please refer to the school's Complaints Policy available on the school website.

# Appendix B – Procedures for staff to add events to the calendar

## General

The EA to the Headteacher will give staff a deadline for adding new events to the school calendar for the new school year - this is usually early in the summer term. All trips must be agreed by the Business Manager and Educational Visits Coordinator before being added to the calendar.

Events that arise during the term should be communicated and discussed with the EA to the Headteacher to ensure that there are no clashes.

The use of Minibuses must be added to the calendar as a separate item to ensure they are reserved.

## Procedures

Calendar events should be added by staff and marked as 'awaiting approval'. Times should be accurate wherever possible, and if timings change or an event is cancelled, it is the responsibility of the staff member who is organising the event to change the time or cancel the event on the calendar.

My School Portal enables plenty of information to be uploaded to a calendar event and details should be shared there. It is important to ensure that all information shared is accurate.