Iveson Primary School
Where aspirations soar

Communications Policy

1. Introduction

At Iveson Primary we believe that strong relationships with parents, carers, and visitors help us to create safe, supportive, and stimulating learning environments. Working in partnership with our families, communities and key stakeholders is essential to our continued success.

Our staff are dedicated to educating and supporting pupils, and we believe in respectful communication in all interactions, whether in person, by phone, or online.

We believe that as adults we should model positive interactions and as such have shared expectations of the wider school community and our staff.

Expectations for Parents, Carers and Visitors:

1. Treat all individuals with dignity and respect.
2. Set a positive example in speech and behaviour, including online interactions.
3. Work constructively to resolve concerns (contact information available on the school website).
4. Send respectful and constructive emails/ whatsapp messages.
5. Avoid communication that could be perceived as threatening or demanding.
6. Understand and accept that the school's Positive Behaviour Policy/ Individual Education Plan is essential for maintaining a safe and productive learning environment. The rules, expectations, and consequences outlined in the policy/plan apply at all times.
7. Work with school to promote positive behaviour or address unacceptable behaviour.
8. Schedule meetings with staff in advance and respect staff time (we cannot expect staff or parents to accommodate unplanned meetings).
9. The school will designate the staff member deemed most suitable to handle the specific issue, and this decision is not open to negotiation.
10. Utilise the systems in place for raising complaints and concerns
11. Understand the school's capacity limits and avoid excessive demands or communications.
12. Allow at least two working days for staff to acknowledge communication.

Inappropriate Behaviour:

Abusive language, physical threats, or aggressive behaviour towards staff, pupils, or others will not be tolerated. Violations may result in restricted communication and potential legal or police action. Everyone has the right to work or learn without fear of abuse or violence.

2. **Excessive Parental Contact / Demanding Behaviour**

- As a school our main focus is on teaching and supporting pupils. As such, we are unable to engage in excessive communications or prolonged meetings. Once a concern has been addressed, further communication may be limited or stopped.
- Staff members cannot be interrupted during class time. If you need to contact a staff member, please do so through the school office (or by whatsapp/ email to parent contact), and we will aim, where possible, to acknowledge receipt of your enquiry within two working days. Communications received at the end of term will be acknowledged at an appropriate time when the school reopens after the school holiday.
- Please note: Emergency situations will be handled separately.
- Unacceptable behaviour, such as rude or abusive language, may lead to calls being ended, emails ignored, or meetings terminated. If a request has already been addressed, the school may limit or cease further responses.

- **Agreed Communications Plans (per DfE Guidance)**

In accordance with the Department for Education (DfE) guidance, when communication with parents or carers becomes complex or repetitive, the school may implement an agreed communications plan. This plan will clearly outline how and when contact will occur, ensuring that both parties understand and manage expectations. This approach is designed to streamline communication and prevent unnecessary or excessive contact.

1. **Political Views and Standpoints**

Iveson Primary School encourages respectful debate but, in accordance with the Education Act (1996), does not allow partisan political activities. Political symbols, campaign slogans, or unbalanced views will not be permitted in lessons or extracurricular activities. Sensitive topics will be handled carefully to maintain community cohesion.

3. **Legal Framework**

This policy adheres to relevant statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Education Act 2011
- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 2004
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Data Protection Act 2018 (General Data Protection Regulation)
- The Human Rights Act 1998

3.2 The **Malicious Communications Act 1988** makes it an offence to send any communication (including online messages or letters) that threatens, is grossly offensive or indecent, or provides false information, with the intention of causing distress or anxiety to the recipient. Violating this law can result in up to six months in prison or a fine.

3.3 The **Protection from Harassment Act 1997** makes it a criminal offence to engage in a course of conduct that a reasonable person would consider harassment, or to harass two or more individuals with the aim of persuading someone to act in a particular way. Online trolling or cyberbullying may also be criminal offences under this law, which carries serious consequences. Under Section 2 of the Act, those found guilty of harassment (a summary offence) could face up to six months in prison or an unlimited fine. A more severe offence exists under Section 4, where a course of conduct causes a person to fear violence, which can result in a sentence of up to five years in prison.

3.4 The **Defamation Act 2013** covers both libel and slander, enabling legal action against individuals who make defamatory comments about the school or its employees. If such comments are deemed likely to cause serious harm to the reputation of the school or its staff, legal action can be pursued. This includes defamatory comments made online, such as on Facebook or other social media platforms.

3.5 The **Equality Act 2010** prohibits discrimination on the grounds of protected characteristics, including race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and others. Any behaviour that infringes upon these protections can result in legal consequences.

3.6 The **Data Protection Act 2018** (incorporating the General Data Protection Regulation - GDPR) ensures the protection of personal data. The school is required to safeguard the privacy of its staff, pupils, and others by following strict guidelines on how personal data is collected, stored, and shared. Any breaches of this regulation can result in significant legal penalties.

3.7 The **Human Rights Act 1998** protects fundamental human rights, including the right to respect for private and family life, freedom of expression, and freedom from discrimination. However, these rights are

balanced against other interests, such as the safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff, which may require restrictions on certain behaviours or actions.

It also adheres to statutory guidance, such as the DfE's "Keeping Children Safe in Education".

4. Related School Policies

This policy aligns with:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

5. Inappropriate Behaviour

Iveson Primary School will not tolerate inappropriate behaviour, including:

- Verbal abuse (swearing, aggressive language)
- Discriminatory remarks or actions
- Physical violence or intimidation
- Bullying, harassment, or threats
- Damage to school property
- Breaching security procedures

Any individual displaying such behaviour may be asked to leave, escorted off the premises, banned, and / or reported to the police.

6. Use of Social Media

All members of the school community must use social media responsibly. Inappropriate posts, defamatory comments, or cyberbullying will be taken seriously, and legal action may be pursued. Staff should not be contacted through social media. Violations will be addressed by the Leadership Team and may result in communication restrictions.

7. Managing Inappropriate Conduct

In cases of inappropriate behaviour, the school will follow a series of steps based on the severity of the situation:

- **Rude or Abusive Calls:** Any calls that are rude, threatening, or demanding in tone will be politely ended immediately. Staff members are not required to engage in conversations that are abusive or disrespectful.

- **Non-Response to Inappropriate Communications:** The school will not reply to communications, whether by phone, email, or in person, that are rude, threatening, or demanding in nature. We reserve the right to cease communication if the tone or content of the message is unacceptable.
- **Banning from Site:** As per Section 547 of the Education Act 1996, it is an offence to cause a nuisance or disturbance on school premises. Individuals displaying disruptive or aggressive behaviour may be asked to leave the site. In serious cases, the school reserves the right to issue a ban from school premises. If a person is banned, the school may take legal action to enforce this ban.
- **Further Action**: In cases of serious misconduct, including threats or violence, the school will contact the police to ensure the safety of all individuals on the premises.

8. Support Person at Meetings

Parents or carers may bring a support person to meetings at the school's discretion. However, the support person is there to provide emotional support only and may not speak on behalf of the individual, unless this has been agreed with the school prior to the meeting. If the support person disrupts the meeting or attempts to speak for the parent or carer, the school reserves the right to end the meeting or ask them to leave.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in ensuring the meeting remains focused and respectful.

9. Ongoing Complaints Process

If a complaint is raised against a staff member, it does not automatically prevent that staff member from maintaining contact with the complainant, unless their involvement would compromise the process.

Please note: Our published Communications Policy outlines acceptable behaviour, how we will respond to abuse, and the legal protections in place.

10. Recording

Staff do not consent to being recorded during meetings or calls and may end the conversation if they become aware of recording.

13. Compulsory communications

Some communications are considered essential to support safeguarding procedures, attendance levels and promoting high standards of learning and pupils' behaviour. Stakeholders cannot refuse to be contacted by the school regarding such issues.

14. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly by the Headteacher and Governing Body. Parents/carers who exhibit unacceptable behaviour may be given a warning and informed of the school's position and legal rights. If dissatisfied with the policy's implementation, parents can follow the school's Complaints Policy.

This policy was approved by Governors on _____

This policy will be reviewed every three years unless Government legislation supersedes this