**SWAINSWICK CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

*Where People Matter Most*

**COMMUNICATIONS POLICY, 2017**

**Introduction**

Schools have many lines of communication to maintain: with parents and carers, with other schools, with the community, with outside agencies, and within the school.

At Swainswick we recognise that good communication between the school and the home is essential, and children achieve more when schools and parents work together. Parents can naturally be most effective in supporting their child’s education if they know what the school is trying to achieve.

We aim to have clear and effective communications with all parents and with the wider community, sharing our aims and values, keeping everyone well informed about school life, and processing feedback. We recognise that to achieve this it is important that the lines of communication are fully understood by all concerned.

This document outlines the ways and means in which we communicate at Swainswick so that the whole school community knows what to expect, how to communicate, and what their responsibilities are in terms of communication.

**Linked policies**

Complaints

Behaviour

Child Protection

**Our commitment**

Our aim is to work to ensure all communications are:

• Clear

• Comprehensive

• Two Way

• Timely

• Respective of Responsibilities

**Methods of Communication**

**Day-to-day Communications - Open Door Policy**

**Personal contact details**

The school holds contact details for all pupils. Parents/guardians/carers are contacted on an annual basis to ensure that these are updated. Any changes to the contact information provided should be communicated to the school via email at the earliest opportunity.

**Email**

We ask parents to email swainswick\_pri@BATHNES.GOV.UK. For the purposes of administration we require all emails to go to a central email address. However all emails will be treated with full confidentiality and the responses will be made by the member of staff addressed. Please note where possible all emails should specify the member of staff to whom the query is addressed.

We will respond to emails within **10 working days** during term time (this allows for sicknesses and any necessary investigations)

**Letter**

Letters can be handed into, or posted to, the school office. As with emails all letters will be treated with full confidentiality and the responses will be made by the member of staff addressed. Please note all letters should specify the member of staff to whom the query is addressed. Please let the office staff know if the letter contains information about your child which you would like the class teacher to receive urgently.

We will respond to letters within **10 working days** during term time (this allows for sicknesses and any necessary investigations)

**Telephone**

This would be appropriate where enquiries are deemed more urgent, such as communicating particular information about the child to the school.

We ask parents to phone the school on 01225 859279.

If the call requires a response from a member of staff, we aim to do this within **2 working days**.

**Social Networking Sites/Blog**

Staff will not communicate with parents or pupils via social networking sites or accept them as “friends”. Any attempt to do so will be reported to the Head Teacher on the next school day.

**Open Door Policy**

The school has an open door policy where the Headteacher is available at the school gate in the mornings and evenings for informal discussions.

**Appointments**

If necessary parents can visit the school to ask questions, gain support or to have the opportunity to talk about their child/home issues with either the child’s class teacher of the Head Teacher. Parents are asked to phone the school office on 01225 859279 to make an appointment.

We will aim to make appointments within **5 working days**. Appointments are generally made for after school or occasionally during the school day when cover is available.

**Absence Requests**

We ask that a school “Absence Request Form’ is completed and given to the school a minimum of 10 working days before the requested date, in order that we can provide a response before the date of the absence.

If a child is absent from school, and we have had no indication of the reason, we contact a parent or carer by telephone on the first day of absence, to find out the reason for the absence. If no contact can be made with any named person, we may contact the Unit Welfare Officer/Families’ Officer to ensure the pupil’s well-being and safety.

**School Website**

Our school website contains a range of information to give parents/guardians and carers, and the wider public, a full picture of our school. We aim to update this for each school year by the end of the first

term in that year. Additional updates are made throughout the year where possible to provide news and other useful information.

**Home-School Communication**

Learning does not only take part in school. We believe in long term learning and want to support and encourage children’s natural desire to question and find out about the world around them. Through working in partnership with parents, sharing information about progress and well-being, and encouraging active learning outside school hours we can enhance the learning process being done in school and encourage children to see it as part of life and not just as something to be done in the classroom.

We use a number of communication methods to remind us of our joint responsibilities, establish and maintain an effective and ongoing dialogue between home and school, and to maximise all learning opportunities for our pupils. These are outlined below.

**Home/School Agreement**

The Home/School Agreement seeks to lay out for the whole school community:

• our aims and values;

• our responsibilities towards our pupils;

• the responsibility of each pupil’s parents/guardians or carers; and

• what Swainswick expects of its pupils.

The Home/School Agreement is signed by the school and distributed annually to all parents/guardians or carers to be signed as an indication that they understand and accept the contents of the agreement. The signed agreement is kept in school and a copy sent home. Pupils in Years 4,5 and 6 will also be asked to read and sign their portion of the Agreement in class unless there are special circumstances that would make it inappropriate to do so. Pupils in the younger years will not be asked to sign the Agreement but it may be introduced to them by their teacher if it is thought to be appropriate.

A copy of the Home/School Agreement is available from the school office

**Home Visits**

Home visits are made during the first two weeks of the Autumn Term for those families with children in the Reception class.

**Regular Communication**

A **calendar of school events** will be communicated via the school Newsletter and on the website.

At the beginning of the year all teachers write to parents/guardians/carers of the children in their classes with **national year group objectives and expectations** for the year. **Topic booklets** are displayed on the website. Letters are sent home in children's book bags and are available on request from the school office.

**Home reading/communication booklets** and, for the later years, **homework record/communication books** are given to each child. Teachers write comments, observations or concerns. Parents are encouraged to check these every day and write down their comments, observations or concerns to share with their child’s teacher.

The school **Newsletter** is sent to parents as hard copy in the child’s book bag and by email. Hard copy can be obtained from the office on request. It contains general details of school events

and activities.

There is a **whiteboard by the school gate** for notices and reminders. Parents/guardians/carers are asked to check this daily.

**Ad-hoc letters** are sent when necessary inside the child’s book bag and by email.

We welcome and value all feedback from parents and carers about our school’s policies and practices. We conduct an **annual survey** to canvas the views of parents and carers about our school and report back on the outcomes.

A **meeting is held for new parents/guardians/carers** in June.

The **residential visit** that children in Year 5 & 6 make involves meetings with parents/guardians/ carers regarding the planning and content of the visit. These are communicated via notes in children’s book bags and/or via email.

**Curriculum meetings** are held by class teachers as and when appropriate to explain to parents/ guardians/carers various areas of the curriculum such as maths, english and science, the focus of the work taking place, approaches to teaching and learning, and how parents can support their child’s work at home.

**Written Reports**

An in-depth report is provided in the summer for each child providing feedback on all areas of the curriculum and the child’s progress.

**Parent Consultations**

Parents meet their teacher twice during the year for parent consultations. Appointments are scheduled to last for10 minutes on specific dates between 4-6.30pm.

Where possible it is more effective for parents to attend the consultation together so that a common approach to supporting the child in their learning can be agreed. If exceptional circumstances mean this is not possible we will try to arrange separate consultations.

Swainswick holds a celebration open evening in the Summer term for parents to share achievements, and, if the child is changing class in the following year, visit the classroom and meet their new teacher.

When children have particular education needs, or if they are making less than expected progress, parents will be invited to meet with their child’s teacher more regularly.

**SEN annual reviews/individual education plans**

**Annual review meetings** are conducted for children with Statements or Educational Health Care Plans in which staff and parents have an extended period of time (30-45 minutes) to focus on the pupil’s progress and plan for future needs. Parents receive a written report after the meeting, which highlights progress in all curriculum areas as well as social and personal development

Children with Statements or Educational Health Care Plans, have an updated **Individual Education Plan (IEP)** at least every six months. Parents receive a copy for discussion at each parent consultation. Each IEP offers practical advice to parents on how they can work with school staff to support their child in achieving targets to assist the child’s progress.

**Communications with other schools**

Towards the end of Year 6, transition meetings are held with staff from the children's new secondary schools. The class teacher passes on information about each child, including a view of the whole child, their expected national test results (where this is appropriate), their strengths and weaknesses, their interests and responsibilities. There is also electronic transfer of further information about the child, organised by the government.

**Governors**

The names of governors are detailed on the school website.

Governors should be contacted via the school email swainswick\_pri@BATHNES.GOV.UK.

**Role**

Governors support the school in a strategic role. The role of the Governing Body is primarily to:

- Contribute to the strategic discussions at governing body meetings

- Hold senior leaders to account by monitoring the school’s performance

- Ensure school staff have the resources and support they require to do their jobs well

**Recruitment**

There are up to 4 posts for parent governors on the Governing Body. Anyone wishing to be considered for this role should it become available is invited to email the school office. Names will be kept on record. Contact will only be made when a post becomes available. A description of the appointment process will be given at that time.

**Communication**

Governors at Swainswick welcome constructive comments which may help them to improve the strategic direction of the school. We ask that this is done by letter addressed to the Chair of Governors and sent to the school office. It is not the role of the governors to respond individually to these comments but they will be taken into account when discussions are held.

If parents contact governors on a matter to do with a specific child or teacher, or the management of the school, governors will be unable to respond and will direct them to take their concern to the school.

At Swainswick some of our governors have a dual role working in the school in a part-time capacity. They can be contacted in the normal way as a member of staff if the question relates specifically to their role in the school rather than their role as a governor.

Unless you have been given express permission to do so, governors may not be contacted via personal telephone, email, social media or home address.

**Associate Members**

On occasion additional Associate Members may be invited to support the governors if they are felt to have a particular area of expertise that would be useful. Information on Associate Members will be given on request but will not as a general rule be included in the website.

Anyone wishing to offer their services as an Associate Member are invited to email the school office describing the skill or skills which they would like to offer. Names will be kept on record. Contact will only be made if the skill being offered is deemed to be of use by the Governing Body.

**Communication with the Community**

Members of the local community are invited to school functions such as the Summer Fair, Harvest and

Christmas services in the St Mary’s Church, and school production at the Rondo Theatre in Larkhall.

From time to time guest speakers from the local community and further afield may also be invited in to speak to the children or support the school in delivering learning experiences.

Each year local residents receive Christmas Cards prepared by children in the school.

**Communication within the School**

There is a timetable in the staff room of the week’s activities, and a whiteboard for the days messages so that the staff are kept informed of what’s going on.

All our systems and procedures are regularly reviewed at staff meetings

Written communications are delivered through pigeon holes in the staffroom or by hand There is a register file for each class containing copies of letters to be sent out and medical information

Staff members’ personal details will not be shared with other members of staff or persons external to the school, without due authority.

A planning file is kept in each classroom containing long, medium and short term plan

**Date when policy was last reviewed: January 2017**

**Date when next review is due: January 2018**