



Communications Strategy



Author	Joe Masterson	Headmaster
Approved by	Joe Masterson	Headmaster
	Jo Storey	Group Lead Education, Compliance & Safeguarding
	John Forsyth	Chairman of the Forfar Education Group Governance Board for Harrogate Preparatory School Ltd, trading as Brackenfield School
Next review	Spring 2027	

COMMUNICATION AT BRACKENFIELD

The aim of our communications strategy is to ensure professionalism and consistency so that information to and from school is as easy as possible to follow and understand by parents and families. The consistency and routine of our communication should allow parents to feel supported to understand our information, instructions, guidance, celebration and inclusion.

We must also aim to continue a climate of open and honest two-way communication where parents and families find it easy, and find us welcoming, when they wish to communicate with us. We actively encourage parents and families to communicate with us as much as necessary in order for them to understand how our school operates, share their valuable feedback with us and feel like the integral part of the school community that they are. This positive relationship between parents and staff is also essential to supporting our pupils learning. The success of our school starts with excellent communication.

Internal communication between and among staff is crucial in developing a positive collegiate atmosphere, one of support and fun! We aim for high collective teacher efficacy and as such we seize opportunities to acknowledge and learn from each other's successes. We operate an open door policy to parents and to each other as staff which includes the leadership team.

MISSIONS & VALUES

When considering communications at Brackenfield School we first consider the aims and values of the school that underpin all communication transactions:

Curriculum & Learning

To develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding through a rich and varied curriculum

Activities

To support pupils' personal development through an array of individual and collective events, performances, sports, music and many other enriching experiences

Outdoor Learning

To learn about the outdoors and how we can sustain a better world

To learn in the outdoors; working with nature and the environment

Community

To learn about our local and wider community (the world!)

To serve and support our local and wider community

Our actions, behaviours and attitudes are underpinned by the core values of:

Kindness Confidence

Honesty Initiative

Respect Perseverance

CRITICAL INCIDENT

Communications related to what may be deemed a critical incident should be delivered in line with the Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP).

SOCIAL MEDIA

Communication from staff that makes reference or inference to Brackenfield School should be made in line with the school's Safeguarding & Child Protection, GDPR, Privacy, Acceptable Usage and Social Media policies.

COMMUNICATION GENERAL GUIDANCE

- All whole school communication should be delivered through the weekly newsletter
- All trips related messages that are year group(s) specific should be sent out electronically by attached letter via the school office, via the MIS – iSAMS
- All fixture related messages that are year group(s) specific should be sent out electronically by attached letter via the school office, via the MIS – iSAMS
- All messages that go through the iSAMS system as indicated above are sent to individual families. There is no occasion for any recipient to see the email addresses of another recipient of the same message
- Communication to families as a matter of business via phone calls or emails should always be conducted by the extended leadership team, the Office staff or the teaching staff (class teachers and specialist teachers). Support staff (teaching, site, catering etc) should communicate to families via the extended leadership team, the Office staff or the teaching staff (class teachers and specialist teachers)
- Communication as a non planned, non organized matter of business is encouraged between all members of staff and all members of the school community at all times whilst maintaining utmost professionalism at all times
- Class or specialist teachers wishing to communicate with more than one family at a time should communicate via email via the office and through MIS – iSAMS system
- Communication to families via Reading Records and Homework Diaries should be concise, informative or supportive and consistent
- All staff are welcome to communicate on behalf of the school with the outside world in anyway at anytime that positively promotes our school; our missions and/or our values
- Communication among and between staff should always be professional and underpinned by our school values. All communication among and between staff should be positive and/or supportive. Where staff experience difficulties and/or frustrations, as is inevitable from time to time, they should speak to the appropriate persons: their line manager, the Director of Welfare or the school leadership team
- Where parents or families are awaiting a return phone call or reply email from staff, we should aim to get back to these parents within 24 hours. Staff are discouraged from replying to parents out of school hours (late evenings and weekends) so as to avoid the routine expectation of this service among parents. As much as we wish to encourage parents to communicate with school we also wish to protect staff's non contact time outside of school where possible

PRESENTATION OF LETTERS OUT

- All letters (or letter attached to emails) should adhere to the following school presentation guidelines.
- All text in Calibri font size 11 (unless sending a very short message where size 12 may be more suitable)
- All paragraph breaks should be represented using a line break with no indentation
- The date should be at the top of the letter on the left hand side
- A subject matter may be included in bold between the date and the start of the letter
- All letters to more than one person/family should start with Dear families (whole school/multiple year groups) or Dear Year X families (specific year group)
- Letters should be signed off with Kind regards or Yours sincerely
- An over letter should (for inclusion of signature – though signature not necessary) should be included above the sender's name
- The sender name should be their full name or their salutation followed by their surname

TEXT MESSAGING SERVICE

Brackenfield has the capacity within its MIS, iSAMs to send out a text message to all families. This service is reserved for emergencies, notices that need immediate sharing across the school and school closures due to snow etc. The Headmaster will authorize the release of a school wide text message.

Additionally, the Headmaster retains a parent from each Year group as part of a Whatsapp group, solely for the purpose of emergency or urgent update information. These parents are part of the group by consent and understand that this is not a feedback or discussion group. Messages are rare and when they come from the Headmaster, these messages are then shared into Year group Whatsapp groups.

WEEKLY 'communication out' cycle

- Monday: Trips. Trip letters and reminder letters only.
- Tuesday: No comms to go out to families from school.
- Wednesday: Fixtures. Fixtures for the following week with accompanying details.
All other necessary communications (activities, notifications, term calendar of events, illness notices, government guidance etc that cannot wait for the newsletter, or are deemed by the Headmaster/SLT to be needed in addition to the newsletter.
- Thursday: No comms to go out to families from school.
- Friday: Newsletter only.

Name of policy Communications Strategy	Policy reviewed/amended date August 2022 (V1) November 2023 (V2) November 2024 (V3) November 2025 (V4) January 2026 (V5) *update
Original policy date August 2022	Current version V5
Date of new review Spring Term 2027	

