



Challenge/Inspire/Prepare



Transforming schools... changing lives

Acceptable Communications Policy 2019/20

The following outlines the school policy with regard to email communication between home and school and the use of social media associated with the school.

Policy Rationale

In recent years, communications between home and school have shifted quite dramatically from pen and paper to digital dialogue; with email and social media platforms becoming the preferred and predominant mode of communication this policy outlines the expectations of the school in regard to teacher / parent and parent/school communication.

All communication must respect the dignity of the recipient and protect the integrity of the school.

Wellbeing and Staff Retention

There are good teachers leaving the profession as a result of lack of trust and unmanageable workloads, this policy aims to lay out lines of clear and acceptable lines communications for both parents and staff so that we can ensure this is not reflected in our school. We have an incredibly dedicated team of staff at Auriol Junior School and we want to retain them and make them feel valued. It is therefore essential that we respect them and help them to maintain a sustainable workload.

Lines of communication

At Auriol, we operate an open door policy and would ask that if you wish to discuss anything regarding your child or the wider school community you follow these lines of communication;

- First point of contact should always be the class teacher face to face, via the home/school diary or an email (please refer to Use of Email section).
- If additional time is needed we will arrange a meeting or telephone call with the class teacher / year group leader. You can do this via the school office at: info@auriol.surrey.sch.uk
- If the issue remains unresolved contact a Senior Leader, Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher via the school office at: info@auriol.surrey.sch.uk

Vale Road, Stoneleigh, Epsom, Surrey, KT19 0PJ

Tel: 020 8393 4721 Fax: 020 8786 8193 EMail address: info@auriol.surrey.sch.uk

Website: www.auriol.surrey.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mrs Mandy McDowall

Company Registration No. 07768726 VAT Registration No. 200109287

Social Media

Online channels are an important way for parents/carers to communicate with, or about, our school. The school uses an official Facebook page. Parents/carers also set up independent channels to help them stay on top of what's happening in their child's class. For example, class/year Facebook groups, email groups, or chats (through apps such as WhatsApp).

Parents and carers who wish to join the school facebook page will be asked to agree to the following;

When communicating with the school via official communication channels, or using private/independent channels to talk about the school, I will:

- *Be respectful towards members of staff, and the school, at all times*
- *Be respectful of other parents/carers and children*
- *Direct any complaints or concerns through the school's official channels, so they can be dealt with in line with the school's complaints procedure*

I will not:

- *Use private groups, the school's Facebook page, or personal social media to complain about or criticise the school or members of staff. This is not constructive and the school can't improve or address issues if they aren't raised in an appropriate way*
- *Use private groups, the school's Facebook page, or personal social media to complain about, or try to resolve, a behaviour issue involving other pupils. I will contact the school and speak to the appropriate member of staff if I'm aware of a specific behaviour issue or incident*
- *Upload or share photos or videos on social media of any child other than my own, unless I have the permission of the other children's parents/carers*

Tone of Communications

When communicating with or about the school, using either email or social media platforms, we must be mindful that a great many staff are putting their heart and soul, and many, many hours, often unpaid, into trying to help our pupils achieve well.

Therefore we do not tolerate personal and indirect staff criticism regarding activities which they may be doing entirely out of goodwill, be it running a trip, or a team, or a concert, or a play. Critical emails and posts on social media sites are not acceptable as they can result in a reluctance from staff to continue to go the extra mile, that we so much appreciate of them.

Communication regarding an incident, decision or event that parents may be unhappy with must still be communicated using the lines of communication detailed above and be respectful.

Use of Email

The school expect teachers to be fully prepared, focused and engaged with our pupils and supporting their learning. Whilst administration staff, support staff and senior leaders may be able to access emails more routinely, their primary function is to support teachers and students.

As a school, our first priority is to deliver high quality teaching and learning. On any one day a teacher will have a plethora of demands on their time including up to five lessons teaching (lunch duties and activities, and after school clubs). Teachers cannot and are not, expected to monitor and manage their inbox during lessons or at other times during the day, when they should be planning and preparing for lessons, assessing student work, or carrying out school duties.

Should you wish to contact a member of staff via email please be aware of the following;

1. We will endeavour to respond to emails as soon as possible (during term time, **but not** over a weekend or during holidays). If the matter is urgent please use the channels of communication outlined above.
2. Responses to emails may be via telephone or in writing (including an email). This may include informing the sender that more time is required to provide a full response. If this is the case staff should indicate a timeframe in which a response should be expected.
3. If a member of staff is not able to deal with the email directly then they will pass it on to the most appropriate person and inform the sender that they have done so.
4. Staff will not be expected to monitor or respond to emails out of their normal working hours (including weekends and school holidays). Whilst parents may compose emails at all sorts of hours to suit their own needs we would ask that, where possible, emails are not sent outside of a member of staff's normal working hours. Mobile phones and other electronic devices that enable staff to access their school emails when away from school can make it difficult to 'ignore' a message from a parent, leading to unnecessary worry and anxiety on the part of the staff.
5. Whilst this is rare, if a member of staff receives an email which is of an aggressive tone, sets unreasonable demands or could otherwise be interpreted as harassing, they will refer this to a senior manager in the school, who will decide if consideration needs to be given to dealing with further communication and if the agreed communication procedures had been broken. A meeting will then be arranged with the heateacher to discuss the communications policy.