

Home-school positive relationships policy

Date: 04.08.25

Our schools are happy and healthy places for all. Positive relationships between parents and carers, and other visitors, ('home') and members of staff ('school') have a key role to play in ensuring this.

Meetings with parents/carers

By 'meeting' we include telephone conversations, virtual meetings as well as face-to-face meetings.

We welcome quick informal conversations as a useful way to build up the partnership we have with home. Such meetings are ideal ways to answer quick questions, to alert us to any minor concerns, or to celebrate a child's achievements out of school. However, these meetings should not disrupt learning or undermine safeguarding by, for example, delaying a teacher from being with their class.

We also recognise when a longer conversation is important, and the importance of conducting such a conversation face-to-face for full understanding – meetings in person allow topics to be explored and messages to be heard more fully. If you require a longer meeting, then contact the school office.

Staff will meet with parents on their own or supported by another adult with prior consent.

Electronic recording of any meeting is not permitted without the consent of all attendees and only in special circumstances where there are communication difficulties. Agreement must be sought from all parties. Any recordings remain private and further sharing is subject to restrictions under the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR).

Emails to parents/carers

Some parents/carers are not able to meet or speak with us during a typical working week. Emails are a way to ensure positive home-school relationships when a meeting is not convenient/possible. However, we also recognise that our staff work long hours, often including lunchtimes and extended hours at the start and end of the day. With this in mind, the following points are for parents/carers and staff to follow.

Parents/carers should...	Staff will...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contact staff by email with questions that are simple and quick to answer/respond to • for more complex issues, contact school to arrange a longer telephone conversation, online discussion or face-to-face meeting • make sure their emails relate to learning or their child's social/emotional needs • if they want to, send pictures or other communication which celebrates their child's achievements outside of school • limit the number of emails they send to staff • telephone school for anything urgent (eg to report a sickness) • Scholes (Elmet) Primary: 0113 264 9149 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • forward to the Head of School any emails which are more complicated and/or an email trail which is becoming unmanageable or reasonable (typically over five emails in a half-term) • be reasonably available for meetings • not respond to emails which are of a personal or social nature; instead they will forward these to the Head of School • share a child's positive news (providing time is available) • ask the Head of School to intervene if the number of emails from one family begins to feel excessive; if an issue persists, staff will be advised to block messages from a particular email address and may also be instructed to delete all emails • not be able to respond to anything urgent

- Moortown Primary: 0113 268 5915
- St James' CE Primary: 01937 583 379
- not expect a response to emails before 8.00am or after 5.00pm
- avoid copying the emails to another person
- contact the Head of School if they have more general issues or if they have any sort of concern
- aim to respond to emails within two working days (where a response is needed)
- not 'reply to all' if the email has another person copied in
- aim to respond to emails that raise a concern, in line with our Complaints Policy, but not respond to emails that are negative or demanding in any way; instead they will forward these to the Head of School who may choose to respond appropriately

Unreasonable communications

Occasionally, it may be the case that communications from parent(s)/carer(s) are considered to be unreasonable.

Unreasonable communications might include:

- a very high number of communications
- abusive, offensive, or discriminatory language (including foul, inappropriate, or offensive language related to race, disability, or sexuality)
- conflicting communications and/or requests (including communications from different parents/carers which lead to confusion or concern)
- threats or intimidation (including communications that use threats or aggressive language)
- excessive contact (very frequent, lengthy, or complex contact that is repetitive and/or places unreasonable demands on staff and which potentially distract from the normal work of school staff)
- falsified information (knowing and deliberately providing false or unsubstantiated allegations)
- public dissemination of unacceptable content (for example, posting derogatory, defamatory, or abusive comments about the school, its staff, or students on social media or other public forums)
- harassment (including persistent, obsessive, or harassing communications which cause disruption or distress)
- unreasonable demands (for example, demands which conflict with Sphere Federation policies and demands insisting on outcomes which are unrealistic and/or lack serious purpose)
- refusal to cooperate (for example, refusing to cooperate with the complaint investigation process or changing the basis of the complaint during the investigation).

This is not an exhaustive list; it provides illustrations of unacceptable communications.

If communications are considered unreasonable, the Head of School or Head of Federation will write to the parent(s)/carer(s) explaining that their communications are unreasonable and asking them to change it.

If such communications continue, we may draw up a communications plan which specifies methods of communication and limit the number of contacts. It may also specify appropriate content and tone.

For example, in the case of a very high number of emails, this might limit communications (other than telephone calls regarding a child's absence and matters of urgency) to a dedicated email account with emails being read in a particular, limited window each week/fortnight. This will usually be reviewed after six months.

Unacceptable communication and behaviour

The vast majority of parents/carers and other visitors to Sphere Federation schools are supportive and act in a reasonable way, ensuring that the school is a safe, orderly environment in which pupils feel happy and healthy and safe. Occasionally, however, a negative attitude is expressed in an aggressive, verbally abusive or physically abusive way towards members of the school community which is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

We require our members of staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations, attempting to defuse the situation wherever possible, and to seek the involvement of other members of staff as appropriate. However, all members of staff have the right to work without harassment, violence, intimidation or abuse.

We expect parents/carers and other visitors to always behave in a reasonable way towards all members of the school community whether in person or online. We will take action where the behaviour displayed, whether in person or online, falls below the standards expected and will not be tolerated.

The types of behaviour which are unacceptable and will not be tolerated include:

- shouting, either in person or over the telephone
- using language or behaviour which is or is perceived to be intimidating, threatening, abusive or insulting
- using aggressive or offensive hand gestures for example shaking or holding a fist, pointing in close proximity to an individual's face

- swearing
- pushing, shoving or jostling
- hitting, slapping, punching or kicking
- spitting
- speaking directly to a child to complain about their behaviour
- any other behaviour likely to cause anybody witnessing it (including the recipient) alarm, distress or to fear that violence may be used against them or others

This is not an exhaustive list; it provides illustrations of unacceptable behaviour which will not be tolerated.

Consequences of such behaviour are likely to include barring individuals from school premises. Parents/carers have an 'implied licence' to come on to school premises at certain times. However, anyone whose behaviour is unacceptable will have this 'implied licence' to come on to school premises temporarily withdrawn ('barring').

"Schools can bar someone from the premises if they feel that their aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour or language is a risk to staff or pupils. It's enough for a member of staff or a pupil to feel threatened."
(Controlling access to school premises *Department for Education: November 2018*)

The process typically involves two stages: first, a warning, and second, withdrawal of implied permission (ie barred) for a fixed period of time. Where behaviour is deemed particularly serious, it is likely that the parent/carer or visitor's 'implied permission' will be withdrawn immediately, without a warning. The individual whose implied permission has been withdrawn (ie the barred individual) is allowed to present their side.

Home-school positive relationships policy: appendix

Website posts: expectations for teachers

The benefits of this common practice are that it demonstrates that our school is a coherent and cooperative unit. It promotes consistency in our own practice, which reflects the consistency we expect from our pupils. For the website, it also means parents and carers can navigate the site more easily, especially if they have more than one child at school.

General guidance

- avoid underlining titles or other content because underlining represents a hyperlink
- don't over-format – make sure there's a useful reason for colour, bold etc
- when you say '*This week's spellings...*' etc – don't forget the apostrophe (the homework 'belongs' to a particular week)
- use clear language – don't be over-formal
- if you use technical words / abbreviations, make sure you explain the jargon and / or give examples

Important:

Photos showing children must not be labelled with the child's name.

Children's full names should not be used in communications which go to an audience wider than the child's own family.

Class news

Class news on the website helps to keep parents/carers engaged and supportive of the school and their child's learning.

Class news must include ideas about how to help at home because this is part of the Homework Policy. Be directive: '*Help at home by...*' or '*Why not...*'

Frequency

Teachers have a choice:

- ☛ at least one longer post each week (eg about three to four paragraphs)
- ☛ at least two shorter posts each week (eg just a sentence or two)

Awesome debating!

Posted on Sunday 11 October 2020 by Mr Owen

Year 5 had a fantastic debate about animal rights as part of our homework review this week. They showed great oracy skills by practising disagreeing respectfully and adding to what others were saying.

Our main discussions centered around these three points:

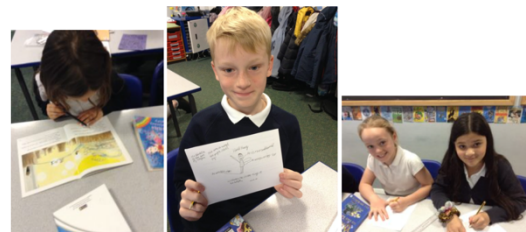
- **Should we eat animals?** Is this natural because we're predators? Is it wrong because we don't need to?
- **If we do eat animals, should we support high welfare farming, so the animals have had more space and a generally better life?** It costs more to eat 'free range' chicken, for example. Is it ok if I don't buy this?
- **Should animals be kept in zoos?** Isn't it cruel to keep them penned in for humans to stare at? But don't zoos raise people's awareness of environmental issues and do important conservation work? Their breeding programmes also help endangered animals.

As you can see, there were some deep discussions in Y5, but the children dealt with them all really maturely and respectfully. I was really proud of them! Thanks to all parents for supporting the homework this week.

Book club

Posted on Friday 09 October 2020 by nicolawadsworth

We enjoyed our weekly 'Book Club' lesson today where we read and shared books. Well done to everyone who remembered their reading record.



Content guidelines:

- aim for a balance of Reading, Writing, Maths, Science, Topic and Living and Learning (a schedule for these posts is contained in the Living and Learning Curriculum Statement)
- where appropriate, use the format *Subject: website post title* for the title of posts eg *History: We've been learning about trade* and *Living and Learning: Learning when to seek help*
- talk about how parents/carers can help at home - keep it simple, realistic
- be direct to parents/carers to show you expect their help at home eg rather than *'It would be helpful if you could practise...'* all KS1-2 teachers should say (and in bold): **Help at home:** ...
- reminders eg PE days
- refer to some websites for home use – add a hyperlink
- include some photos of activities (but always check that a child has permission to be photographed)
- keep it lively, friendly eg use contractions like **I'm** and **we're** instead of **I am** and **we are**
- avoid repeating
- avoid the phrase 'We **will be** learning...', 'We **will be** doing...' etc because it's over-used; instead 'We'll learn...', 'We'll do...'
- use quotes from children

Scholes (Elmet) Primary only: when posting a class-specific news post, begin the post with the class name eg: *34N news: We love reading!*

Homework

Talk Time homework is prepared and published on the websites each week. It often links with topic or Living and Learning. Check what the Talk Time task is. Include references to the Talk Time homework and incorporate a short time to review the Talk Time discussions in class.

Spellings: KS1

State **date**, using two digits, month, year (even if you post the day before, note the 'official' date of Friday).

Next, a sentence or two to say:

- **what the spellings relate to** – briefly explain the rule or explain why you've chosen the list
- the date for testing
- if you think useful, a few ideas or top tips

Example:

06 February 2023

This week's spellings relate to the rule '**drop 'e' for 'ing'**'. You'll be tested on Friday 09 March 2021. Remember to come up with five of your own!

Blue and Green group	Orange group
LO: Drop the e to add ing. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• deciding• sharing• biting• shining• moving• saving• writing• biking• living	LO: Drop the e to add ing. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• surprising• creating• refusing• admiring• liking• making• calculating• exciting• racing

(To copy and paste a table from Word, select the table by hovering over the top left corner, then use 'Ctrl C' to copy, then 'Ctrl V' to insert.)

Spellings: KS2

State **half-term** (eg Half-term 1).

Next, a sentence or two to say:

- **what the spellings relate to** – briefly explain the rules or explain why you've chosen the list
- the date for regular testing of a random sample
- if you think useful, a few ideas or top tips

Example:

Half-Term 1

This half-term, our spellings are linked to the rules and strategies we'll be learning in class:

- alternative ways for writing the 'ay' sound
- alternative ways for writing the 'ee' sound
- 'double up for a short vowel sound'
- 'drop the e for ing'
- 'drop the y for an i'
- adding the suffixes ed, ing
- homophones (words that sound the same but are spelled differently)

Each Friday, you'll be tested on 8 of the words from the list below.

famous	believe	accident	breathe	answer
library	passion	notice	were	possess
century	address	favourite	appear	here
their	weight	complete	ordinary	wear
straight	they're	surprise	busy	increase
session	possible	there	hear	where
suppose	mission	eighth	extreme	occasion
fraction	different	attention	learn	possession

Living and learning

To evidence that we're teaching this statutory content, we document this teaching and learning in the form of website posts. There is a guide to when to post in the Living and Learning curriculum statement. As with other posts, use the formatting *Living and Learning: website post title*

This is even more important as the website post is a main source of evidence. (Use topic books for any written recording.

YouTube

If you link to YouTube, try to remember to add the following advice:

Top tip for watching YouTube with your child: go to the settings cog (it's along the play bar) and turn off autoplay - this avoids an inappropriate clip coming up automatically, and helps to discourage your child from passively watching clip after clip.

Facebook and X

Sphere schools use X and Facebook, but only to communicate outwards.

Curriculum leaders may choose to link website posts with X and Facebook if the content is whole-school.

To protect staff in terms of challenging conversations and work-life balance, we don't respond to messages 'inwards' to school from Facebook and Twitter, other than (if appropriate) a simple remark such as '... will be happy to speak with you about this in person'.

People-first language

In most cases, 'people first language' is best; for example:

looked after children → children who are looked after

an EAL child → a child with EAL / a child with English as an additional language

We do this because it is more 'human'. It avoids labelling people with a defining (and often negative) characteristic from the outset.

Appendix: How we communicate with parents/carers

The content below is used to communicate to parents:

Our whole-school written communications are for different purposes and therefore we have different ways that we use.

Anything urgent (such as the cancellation of an after-school club) or a quick reminder about something (like the photographer being in school) will be sent by text. If you have the School Gateway app, it might be useful to set it so you receive notifications of messages. Texts will automatically be sent to your app.

Our emails will usually be a longer message about one specific thing. We're moving away from sending out hard copies of most letters (it's better for the environment to send things electronically and things sometimes don't always get to you if they're sent home in bookbags). Please try and check your emails daily, so you don't miss anything important.

Our Weekly Messages usually contain more general information. They might include reminders, such as forthcoming events or policy details, but will mainly consist of other information that you might find useful. (These are published on the websites and emailed out on Fridays.)

For anything relevant to your child's class, please check the Class News pages of the website (we recommend doing this at least once a week). Nursery and Reception classes use these pages a lot because there are often forthcoming events specific to the Early Years.

Your child should bring home a hard copy of their weekly homework, but you will also be able to find it on the homework section of the website. (There is no specific homework set for children in Nursery and Reception, but read the Class News articles for lots of ideas to help you support your child at home.)

Finally, we do have Facebook. Messages on here are usually repeats of other communications, such as our Weekly Messages. Nothing urgent or particularly important will be posted only on social media because we know that not everyone accesses these things.

Appendix: Keeping in touch (KIT) conversations



Keeping in touch (KITs): Conversations with engage parents/c

Autumn 1, 2025-26

Also consider postcards home, too.

Please prioritise:

holes (Elmet) Primary
St James' CE Primary
Moortown Primary

[illegible]



**SPHERE
FEDERATION**

Keeping in touch (KITs): Conversations with engage parents/care

Autumn 2, 2025-26

Also consider postcards home, too.

Please prioritise:

Scholes (Elmet) Primary
St. Mary's CE Primary
St. Peter's Primary

[illegible]



SPHERE
FEDERATION

Keeping in touch (KITs): Conversations with engage parents/carers

Spring 1, 2025-26

Also consider postcards home, too.

Please prioritise:

lmet) Primary
s' CE Primary
rtown Primary

[illegible]



SPHERE
FEDERATION

Keeping in touch (KITs): Conversations with engage parents/carer

Spring 2, 2025-26

Also consider postcards home, too.

Please prioritise:

net) Primary
CE Primary
own Primary

[illegible]



SPHERE
FEDERATION

Keeping in touch (KITs): Conversations with engage parents/care

Summer 1, 2025-26

Also consider postcards home, too.

Please prioritise:

et) Primary
CE Primary
wn Primary

[illegible]



SPHERE
FEDERATION

Keeping in touch (KITs): Conversations with engage parents/care

Summer 2, 2025-26

Also consider postcards home, too.

Please prioritise:

Elmet) Primary
es' CE Primary
rtown Primary

[illegible]