



Positive Communication Policy

Introductory Statement

Middleton CBS Primary School is committed to fostering positive, respectful and effective communication with all members of the school community. Clear and agreed communication structures support strong partnerships between home and school, promote staff wellbeing and ensure that pupils' learning, care and supervision remain the central focus of the school day.

This policy outlines how communication between parents/guardians and staff is facilitated in a manner that is fair, transparent, solution-focused and consistent with statutory obligations.

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with:

- Middleton CBS Primary School Mission Statement & Ethos
- Data Protection Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Complaints Procedure
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005
- Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 2023
- Code of Practice on the Right to Disconnect (WRC, 2023)

Parent / Guardian – Teacher Communication

Good communication between parents/guardians and teachers is central to the positive, inclusive environment we strive to create in Middleton CBS Primary School. As the home plays a vital role in a child's development, the school and family work together in a spirit of cooperation, trust and shared responsibility to support each child's learning and wellbeing.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to:

- Develop positive links with the school
- Collaborate with staff in supporting their child's learning
- Support and uphold the school's ethos and values
- Become involved in the Parents' Association
- Participate in policy development and school initiatives where appropriate

Communication with SNAs and Bus Escorts

Parents/guardians are reminded that the first point of contact for any matter relating to a child is the **class teacher**. SNAs and bus escorts are not in a position to discuss children's learning, progress, behaviour or school matters, and messages passed through them may not be received or relayed in a timely or appropriate manner.

For any urgent matter, parents should contact the **school office**. To discuss a child's progress or any ongoing concern, an appointment should be made through the office so that the relevant staff member can give the matter appropriate time and attention.

Communication with Outside Agencies

It is essential that

- All outside agencies must contact the school office if they wish to speak with a member of staff or arrange a visit to the school.
- Appointments must be made in advance, in consultation with the relevant staff member, and scheduled at a time that suits the school.
- Where a class teacher is involved, adequate notice must be given to ensure appropriate supervision is in place and that sufficient time is available to prepare for the meeting or visit.

Communication Structures

The following structures support open communication and consultation with parents/guardians (this list is not exhaustive):

- School newsletters
- Letters and notices issued via email
- School website
- Interactive monthly calendar
- School Social Media pages
- Digital noticeboard
- See-Saw app
- Formal Parent–Teacher meetings
- Pre-arranged consultations
- School events, celebrations and performances

If a parent/guardian wishes to consult with a teacher regarding their child, this must be arranged in advance through the school secretary at a time convenient to both parties.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to inform the school promptly of any family circumstances that may impact on a child's wellbeing or learning.

Only parents/legal guardians named on the enrolment form will be consulted regarding matters relating to a pupil. Any changes to guardianship or custody arrangements must be communicated to the school in writing.

Parent–Teacher Meetings

Formal Parent–Teacher meetings are held annually in accordance with **Circular 14/04**, usually during Term 1. These meetings provide an important opportunity to:

1. Share information on pupils' progress
2. Support understanding of children's learning and development
3. Strengthen home–school partnerships
4. Develop a shared understanding of pupils as individuals

While additional meetings may be requested during the year, discussions at drop off and collection times regarding pupil progress or concerns are discouraged, as they may interrupt supervision, compromise privacy and disrupt learning.

All meetings with teachers must be arranged through the school secretary.

School Office Hours and Official Communication Channels

To ensure safe, consistent and effective communication:

- **School office hours for all phone calls and emails are 8.30 a.m. – 2.30 p.m., Monday to Friday**
- Emails and phone calls received outside of these hours will be addressed during the next working office period.
- The **school office is the primary and official point of contact** for communication between home and school.

Parents/guardians should contact the school office regarding:

- Urgent matters
- Absences
- Changes to pupil collection arrangements
- Health or safety concerns
- Requests for appointments with staff

This ensures that communication is managed appropriately, recorded accurately and acted upon promptly.

Urgent Matters

- **Email is not an appropriate medium for urgent communication**
- Urgent matters must always be communicated **BY PHONE directly to the school office during office hours**
- Any urgent matters eg illness/injury will also be communicated to families via PHONE CALLS
- This is essential to ensure pupil safety and timely response

Staff Wellbeing & Right to Disconnect

Midleton CBS Primary School recognises its statutory obligations under the **Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act (2023)** and the **Code of Practice on the Right to Disconnect (WRC, 2023)**. The school is committed to supporting staff wellbeing while ensuring that pupils receive high-quality teaching, supervision and care throughout the school day.

Accordingly:

- Staff have the **right not to engage in work-related electronic communication outside of normal working hours**, except where explicitly agreed or in exceptional circumstances.
- Staff are **not required or expected to read, respond to or engage with emails or messages** sent outside the school working day, including late at night, at weekends or during school holidays.
- The sending of an email outside of working hours **does not create an expectation of a response** before the next working period.
- Staff are **not required or expected to respond to emails or phone calls during class contact teaching time**, supervision duties or other assigned school responsibilities.

- Urgent matters should always be communicated **via the school office** to ensure they are received and addressed promptly.
- A delay in responding to electronic communication **must not be interpreted as a lack of professionalism or concern**.

These arrangements support a healthy work–life balance for staff, ensure compliance with health and safety legislation, and protect uninterrupted teaching, learning and pupil supervision.

Aladdin Connect Communication Email & Notices

Notices via Aladdin Connect:

The notice facility is a two-way communication tool and all messages are kept permanently on each child's individual profile. Aladdin Notices have now replaced teacher specific emails.

- Notices via Aladdin Connect may be used for routine notices, information and updates from the school/class teacher.
- Teachers may use notices to communicate with individual parents directly and where relevant will allow replies to notices
- Parents may use the Aladdin notice facility (**for brief and factual messages**) to contact the:
 - School office
 - Class Teacher
 - SEN Teacher
- The Notice facility **must not** to be used for:
 - Urgent matters
 - Time sensitive matter
 - Complaints
 - Lengthy explanations
 - Emotional or confrontational correspondence
 - Sensitive issues requiring discussion
- Such matters should be addressed through:
 - The school office
 - A phone call to the school office
 - A pre-arranged meeting
 - Formal Parent/Teacher meeting

Emails Aladdin Connect

- Emails via Aladdin Connect may also be used by the school for routine notices, information and updates from the school.
- Email communication from parents sent to the office should be **brief, factual and practical**.
- Email **must not** be used for:
 - Urgent Matters
 - Time sensitive matters
 - Complaints
 - Lengthy explanations
 - Emotional or confrontational correspondence
 - Sensitive issues requiring discussion
- Such matters should be addressed through:

- The school office
- A phone call
- A pre-arranged meeting
- Formal Parent/Teacher meetings

Staff will only be expected to respond to notice/emails before class contact time begins and at the end of the school day, **subject to teaching, supervision and professional duties.**

Time sensitive matters must always be directed to the school office and preferably via phone call.

Staff have been instructed by Management **not to engage with notices/email communication that are inconsistent with this policy.**

Class Contact Time and Meetings

Teachers **cannot engage in meetings, phone calls or email correspondence during class contact teaching time.**

Conversations at school gates regarding pupil progress or concerns are discouraged as they:

- Compromise pupil supervision
- Lack privacy
- Disrupt learning

All meetings with teachers must be **requested through the school secretary or through Aladdin** and arranged at a mutually convenient time outside of class contact hours.

Social Media & School-Based Apps

The school website, school app and school Facebook page are used to share information, celebrate achievements and showcase school life. Designated staff manage content publication in line with professional judgement and data protection requirements.

See-Saw

School-based app (e.g. SeeSaw) is used by individual teachers to support learning and is **for one-way communication only.** Here teachers will post photos, homework, assessments etc

Teachers and parents/guardians are expected to engage with these platforms respectfully, responsibly and in a manner consistent with the school's ethos.

School Social Media Pages

The school Facebook page is an information-sharing platform:

- It is not intended as a discussion forum or two-way communication channel
- Queries and feedback should be directed through the school office
- Photographs are shared only with parental permission
- Pupils should not be tagged in posts

The school reserves the right to moderate content where necessary to maintain a positive online presence.

Engagement with the Complaints Procedure

Open, respectful and solution-focused communication is encouraged at all times. Early engagement with the school often resolves concerns quickly and informally.

Where issues cannot be resolved at an informal level, the school's **Complaints Procedure** provides a clear and transparent process to support all parties involved.

Behaviour of All Stakeholders

Respectful communication underpins all relationships within the school community. Everyone entering the school should feel safe, welcomed and respected.

All stakeholders are expected to:

- Communicate calmly and courteously
- Respect confidentiality and privacy
- Model appropriate behaviour for pupils
- Respect agreed meeting times and school procedures

Aggressive, confrontational or inappropriate communication, whether in person, by phone, email or online is unacceptable and may be addressed under:

- The school's **Complaints Procedure**
- The **Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act**
- Relevant DES circulars and procedures

Commitment to Fair and Transparent Processes

Clear communication structures:

- Protect pupil learning time
- Safeguard staff wellbeing
- Promote fairness and consistency for all families
- Support a positive, respectful school environment

All members of the school community share responsibility for upholding these standards.

Safety, Health & Welfare at Work

The school is committed to providing a safe working environment for staff. Any instances of inappropriate, aggressive or intimidating behaviour will be addressed in line with relevant legislation and procedures, including **DES Circular 40/97**.

Ratified by the Board of Management

Chairperson: Michael Ryan

Original Date: 4th October 2019

Reviewed: May 2023

Updated: *January 2026*

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As part of our ongoing work to strengthen communication across our school community, we are currently reshaping our **Positive Communication Policy** and ways in which parents and the school connect with one another.

Over the coming weeks, you will notice a **move away from individual teacher email addresses**. Instead, all school communication will take place through:

- **The school office**, and
- **Aladdin Connect**

This change is being introduced to:

- Streamline communication
- Ensure clear and consistent messaging
- Keep accurate records on each child's profile
- Support safeguarding, data protection and accountability

What's changing?

All messages, queries and updates should be sent via **the school office** or through the **Aladdin Connect Notices**. Teachers will no longer respond through individual email accounts.

What should each system be used for?

The **School Office** is for:

- Absences, late arrivals and early collections
 - Please note **absences** are best logged in the attendance section of the Aladdin app
- Appointments, meetings and general queries
- Urgent or time-sensitive matters
- Changes to contact details or family information

Aladdin Connect Notices are to be used for:

- Notices and school updates
- Messages to and from home
- Permission slips and forms
- Reminders and key dates

Aladdin Connect Notices sent by parents/guardians via the app must be **brief and factual**.

Using these systems helps us ensure that communication is logged correctly and attached to each child's profile.

What should each system NOT be used for?

The **School Office** should NOT be used for:

- Non-urgent classroom or learning queries
- Day-to-day homework or curriculum questions
- Information that is already available through Aladdin notices

Aladdin Connect Notices should NOT be used for:

- Urgent same-day matters (e.g. immediate collection changes, emergencies)
- Sensitive or complex issues that require a meeting or phone call
- Complaints or issues better dealt with through the school's formal procedures

What's coming next?

A full copy of the updated **Positive Communication Policy** is attached to this message and is available via our website, along with a **one-page infographic** summarising the main points. We kindly ask that all parents read this carefully once received.

During the transition

We appreciate your patience as we move to this new model. Change always takes a little time, but this will help us communicate more clearly and consistently in the long term.

Please ensure you have access to **Aladdin Connect**. If you experience any difficulties, or need support setting it up, contact the school office and we will be happy to help.

Thank you, as always, for your support as we continue to improve how we work together for the benefit of all our pupils.

Kind regards,

Niamh O'Leary

Principal

Middleton CBS Primary School