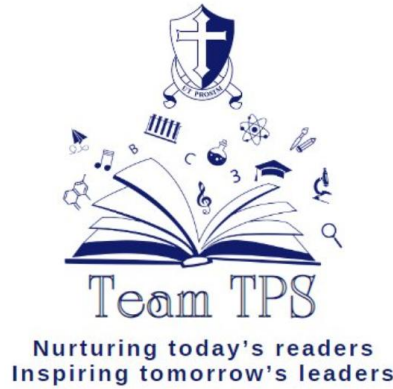




Twynham Primary School

Communication Policy

AY 2026-27

Purpose

Good communication between home and school makes a real difference to children. It helps families support learning at home, it lets us act quickly when something is not right, and it builds the partnership that children do best with. This policy sets out how to get in touch with us, what you can expect from us in return, and the expectations we hold for everyone in our school community.

Safeguarding at Twynham Primary School is carried out in line with the statutory guidance in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' published by the Department for Education.

Who this policy covers

We use the term '**parents**' to mean:

- Anyone with parental responsibility for a pupil.
- Anyone caring for a child, such as grandparents or childminders.

We use the term '**staff**' to mean:

- Anyone employed by the school or the Trust.
- Anyone training in a professional capacity at the school.
- Governors and Trustees, when acting in that capacity.
- Volunteers, when acting in that capacity.

- Anyone employed through an external agency and working in a professional capacity on the school site.

Our principles

1. Communication should be respectful on both sides. Some conversations are emotional and difficult, for families and for staff. We still expect mutual respect from everyone. Our expectations are set out for staff in the Staff Code of Conduct, for parents in the Parent Code of Conduct, and for pupils in our Trust Behaviour Policy and the Twynham Primary School Behaviour Support Strategy.

2. Short and clear gets the best response. A brief message that explains what has happened and what you would like us to do is far easier to act on than a long, detailed account. It also means we can reply sooner.

3. Start with the person closest to your child. Most questions and concerns are resolved quickly by the class teacher. If they cannot help, they will pass the matter on.

4. During the school day, staff time belongs to the children. Teachers are teaching, and before school, at break, at lunchtime and after school most staff have other duties. Please do not assume a member of staff is free to talk outside lesson times.

5. We talk to you about your own child. We will not share information about another child, and we will not take up a concern on behalf of another family. Any correspondence we receive from legal advisers will be passed to the school's own legal advisers.

How to contact us

Quick messages. A face-to-face word at drop-off or pick-up is usually the best way to pass on something short. This can be at the gate, at the cloakroom door where you drop your child off or at the office. Please wait until all children are safely in, or have been collected, before speaking to a member of staff.

Meetings. If a longer conversation is needed, please request a meeting (in person or by phone) through the school office at office@twynhamprimary.com. For anything that happened in class, please go to the class teacher first. We aim to arrange a meeting within **5 working days**. The Headteacher decides which member of staff will attend; usually this will be the class teacher, then a member of the leadership team or the SENCo, then the Headteacher. You are welcome to bring a friend or family member to accompany you - please let us know in advance. Meetings should not be recorded unless everyone present has agreed.

Email. Non-urgent messages should be sent to the school office at office@twynhamprimary.com. If you would like to contact your child's class teacher please email them on the relevant email at yearX@twynhamprimary.com. Please do not email teachers directly at their personal work addresses. We aim to reply within **3 working days**. If we need longer, for example to give a full and considered answer, we will tell you when to expect a reply. Please wait for that reply rather than sending further emails, unless the new date has passed.

Phone. If something is urgent and time-sensitive, please call the school office on 01202 026065. Teaching and leadership staff are rarely able to take calls during the day, but the office will pass on your message at the earliest opportunity. For anything that is not urgent, email or call the office and the right member of staff will contact you within 3 working days.

Reporting an absence. Please contact the school office by 9am on the first morning of any absence, and on each day after that. Our Attendance Policy explains this in more detail.

Our school app and website. Most messages and letters from school are sent through Arbor, and letters and key information are also posted on our website.

Safeguarding concerns

If you are worried about the safety or wellbeing of any child, **please do not rely on email**. Speak to our Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mrs J Hunter, or ask the office to put you through straight away. If a child is in immediate danger, call 999. Outside school hours, contact BCP Out of Hours Emergency Service (Children's Social Care Out of Hours):

- Phone: 01202 738256
- Email: ChildrensOOHS@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Emails: keeping them short, and the use of AI tools

We know that many families now use AI tools such as ChatGPT, Copilot or Gemini to help them write emails. Using them to check spelling or tidy up wording is absolutely fine. However, we are increasingly receiving emails that are very long, heavily structured, or written in a formal or legal style that does not sound like the parent who sent them. These rarely help to resolve a concern, because:

- The actual worry can be hard to find among a lot of text.
- AI tools can add assumptions, quote policy or law that does not apply, or set a much more confrontational tone than the parent intended.
- They take far longer to read and respond to, which delays our reply and takes staff time away from children.

We ask that you:

- Write in your own words, as you would if you were talking to us at the classroom door.
- Keep to what happened and how it has affected your child. A few short paragraphs is almost always enough.
- Send one email per issue and avoid re-sending or adding to long email chains.
- Do not paste information about your child, other children or staff into AI tools. Once shared, that information may be stored outside your control.

- Ask for a meeting or phone call instead if there is a lot to say. It is usually quicker and clearer for everyone.

In return, we will read every email we receive. Where an email is very long, we will reply to the main points rather than to every point in turn, and we may suggest a meeting or phone call rather than a written reply. Any AI tools used by staff are used only in line with Trust guidance, and children's personal information is never entered into tools that have not been approved for that purpose.

When we will respond

Staff will aim to respond during core school hours, 8.30am – 4.30pm on school days, or within their own working hours if they work part-time. Please do not expect a reply in the evening, at weekends or during school holidays. Some staff may choose to work at other times, but they are not expected to reply outside these hours.

What you can expect from us

- Regular newsletters and letters, sent through Arbor and posted on the website.
- Parents' evenings twice a year, an open evening at the end of the summer term and written reports at the end of every term.
- Contact on the same day if your child has had an accident or incident that you need to know about.
- Early contact from the class teacher if we have a concern about your child's learning, wellbeing or behaviour.
- Clear, polite and timely replies within the timescales set out in this policy.

Separated families and keeping details up to date

Parents with parental responsibility are entitled to information about their child's education, including reports and invitations to parents' evenings, unless a court order says otherwise. Please let us know about any court orders or arrangements that affect your child and tell the office promptly about any change to contact details, so that we can reach the right people quickly.

Support to communicate with us

If you would find it easier to receive information in a different format or language, would like an interpreter, or would prefer to talk rather than write, please let the office know and we will do our best to help.

Social media and group chats

Social media. The school will not respond to concerns raised on social media. On any social media site run by the school, we will remove comments that do not fit the purpose of the site, which is to share news and information about the school. If we become aware of threats or abusive behaviour

towards staff, on social media or by email, we will consider reporting this to the police and seeking removal of the content, in line with the Parent Code of Conduct.

WhatsApp and other group chats. The school does not set up WhatsApp groups nor does it use these to communicate with families. Parent groups can be helpful for sharing dates, PE days and birthday plans, but anything said about staff, pupils or the school must remain respectful. Group chats are not the place to raise concerns about staff or other children - please bring these to us directly so we can help.

Unreasonable or abusive communication

Most communication with families is positive and constructive. Occasionally, the volume, frequency or tone of communication makes it difficult for us to respond fairly or takes up time needed for other children. In these cases, the Headteacher may agree a communication plan with the parent, for example a single named contact, a set method of contact, or an agreed frequency. We will explain why, and we will review the arrangement.

Staff may end a meeting or phone call if it becomes abusive or threatening, and we will not respond to emails of that kind. Serious or repeated incidents will be dealt with under the Parent Code of Conduct and the Trust's policy on unreasonable behaviour.

Complaints

Most concerns are resolved quickly through the routes in this policy, and we encourage families to use them first. This is not compulsory, and you may use the complaints procedure at any stage. The complaints policy, including its timescales, is available on our website.

Your information

We handle personal information in line with data protection law and our Privacy Notice. Please be aware that emails and other written communication may form part of your child's school record and can be disclosed if a formal request for information is made.

Related policies

This policy should be read alongside our Complaints Policy, Parent Code of Conduct, Staff Code of Conduct, Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Attendance Policy and Privacy Notice.