Walverden Primary School

Communication Policy

Approved by:	Governors	**Date:**	September 2026
Last reviewed on:	September 2026		
Next review due by:	September 2027		

1. Introduction

Walverden Primary School recognises that clear, respectful and effective communication is essential to positive relationships between school, pupils, parents and carers, governors, external agencies and the wider community. Good communication supports children's education, wellbeing and safeguarding. It enables parents and carers to understand school expectations, participate in their child's education and raise questions or concerns appropriately. The school is committed to communication that is professional, accessible, inclusive and timely, while protecting confidentiality and personal information.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Communication involving a concern about the safety or welfare of a child will always be dealt with in accordance with the school's current Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education and current Lancashire safeguarding procedures.

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2. Aims

Walverden Primary School aims to ensure that communication is:

- clear and accurate;
- accessible and inclusive;
- respectful and professional;
- timely;
- two-way wherever appropriate;
- proportionate;
- confidential where appropriate;
- compliant with data protection requirements;
- sensitive to safeguarding and children's welfare; and
- conducted through appropriate school-approved channels.

We aim to ensure that parents and carers understand:

- how the school will communicate with them;
- how they can communicate with school;
- who to approach with questions or concerns;
- the difference between an ordinary query, complaint and safeguarding concern;
- how urgent concerns should be communicated; and
- the timescales within which they can normally expect a response.

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3. Responsibilities

3.1 The school

The school will:

- provide parents and carers with clear routes for communication;
- communicate important information about children's education and school life;
- provide appropriate information about the curriculum;
- communicate forthcoming events within reasonable timescales;
- listen respectfully to the views and concerns of pupils and families;
- endeavour to make communication accessible to families;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality;
- protect personal information;
- maintain professional boundaries when communicating with pupils and families;
- respond appropriately to safeguarding information received through any communication channel; and
- ensure safeguarding concerns are not delayed by ordinary communication or complaints procedures.

3.2 Parents, carers and guardians

Parents and carers are asked to:

- read communications issued by the school;

- ensure the school holds up-to-date telephone numbers, email addresses and other relevant contact details;
- inform the school promptly of important changes affecting their child;
- raise questions or concerns at the earliest appropriate opportunity;
- use appropriate school communication channels;
- communicate respectfully with staff;
- attend meetings or respond to communications where their involvement is required;
- respect the privacy and confidentiality of pupils, families and staff; and
- raise concerns directly with school rather than attempting to resolve individual issues through social media.

Safeguarding concerns are dealt with differently from ordinary queries and complaints and must not be delayed by following routine communication routes.

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4. Accessibility and inclusion

Walverden Primary School recognises the diversity of its school community and will seek to ensure that important communications are accessible and understandable.

Where reasonably possible and appropriate, the school will support parents and carers experiencing barriers to communication. This may include appropriate assistance where a parent or carer:

- has English as an additional language;
- has literacy or communication needs;
- requires information in an accessible format; or
- requires a reasonable adjustment because of a disability.

Parents and carers are encouraged to inform the school where communication support or reasonable adjustments are required.

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5. Raising general queries and concerns

In most circumstances, concerns relating to a child's day-to-day school experience should initially be raised with the class teacher.

Where a matter cannot be resolved at that level, it may be escalated to the appropriate Phase Leader, followed by a Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher, where necessary.

This normal route does not apply where:

- there is an immediate safeguarding concern;
- a child may be at risk of harm;
- the concern relates to the conduct of a member of staff and raises safeguarding issues; or
- another school policy requires a different procedure.

Formal complaints will be managed in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy.

Safeguarding concerns must not be delayed while a parent, carer or member of staff works through normal communication or complaints stages.

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6. Safeguarding communication

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.

Any communication received by the school that raises a concern about a child's safety or welfare must be acted upon without delay.

This applies whether information is received:

- face-to-face;
- by telephone;
- through the school office;
- by email;
- in writing;
- through ClassDojo;
- through an approved digital platform;
- through social media;

- through another professional or agency; or
- by any other means.

Any safeguarding concern arising from communication must be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL without delay and recorded in accordance with the school's safeguarding recording procedures.
Staff must not assume that another member of staff will report the concern.
Normal response times identified elsewhere in this policy do not apply to safeguarding concerns.
Where a child has suffered harm, may be at risk of significant harm or is in immediate danger, staff must not wait for a response through ordinary communication channels or the Lancashire Safeguarding Advice Line.
The school's Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures must be followed immediately, including contact with Children's Social Care and/or the police where required.

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7. Information sharing and confidentiality

The school treats personal and sensitive information with care.
However, the school cannot promise absolute confidentiality where information indicates that a child may require support or protection.
Information may need to be shared with:

- the DSL or Deputy DSL;
- Children's Social Care;
- the Children's Services Support Hub/MASH;
- police;
- health professionals;
- safeguarding partners; or
- other appropriate agencies.

Information will be shared lawfully, securely, proportionately and where necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child.
Safeguarding information will be managed in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, data protection arrangements and applicable statutory requirements.

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8. Playground communication

- Members of the Senior Leadership Team, Office Team and/or Family Support Team may be available on the playground to receive brief messages at the start and end of the day.
- The playground is not an appropriate environment for detailed, confidential or sensitive conversations about an individual child.
- Where discussion requires privacy, a telephone call or appointment should be arranged.
- If safeguarding information is disclosed on the playground, staff must follow safeguarding procedures immediately rather than waiting for a subsequent appointment.

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9. Email

Parents and carers should normally use:

- office@walverden.lancs.sch.uk as the school's central email address.
- Emails should make clear the member of staff, child or area to which the enquiry relates, where appropriate.
- The school will normally aim to respond to emails within five working days during term time.
- This timeframe does not apply to safeguarding concerns or other matters requiring urgent action.
- Sensitive personal information should only be communicated where necessary and through appropriate channels.

- Staff must use approved school accounts and systems for professional communication.

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10. ClassDojo

Walverden Primary School uses ClassDojo to support appropriate communication between school and families.

Teachers may use ClassDojo to:

- communicate class information;
- provide reminders;
- share appropriate information about learning;
- celebrate learning and achievements; and
- support parent-teacher communication.
- Teachers will normally aim to respond to messages within 48 hours during the working week and term time.

ClassDojo should not be used with an expectation of an immediate response.

Safeguarding and ClassDojo

- ClassDojo is not an emergency safeguarding reporting service.
- Where a parent or carer has an urgent concern about the safety or welfare of a child, they should contact school directly or, where necessary, the appropriate statutory or emergency service.
- Where a member of staff receives information through ClassDojo that raises a safeguarding concern, they must follow the school's safeguarding reporting and recording procedures without delay.
- Staff must maintain appropriate professional boundaries when using ClassDojo and other digital communication platforms.

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11. Telephone communication

- Parents and carers may contact the school on: 01282 614834
- Telephone communication may be particularly appropriate where an issue requires more urgent attention than routine written correspondence.
- Where a call requires a response from a particular member of staff, the school will normally aim to respond within two working days.
- This timescale does not apply to safeguarding concerns requiring immediate or urgent action.
- Staff should ensure confidential information is only discussed with an appropriate person and should take reasonable steps to establish the identity of a caller where necessary.

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12. Text messaging

- The school may use its text messaging service to communicate important information and reminders.
- Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring the school holds their current contact details.
- Text messaging will not ordinarily be used for detailed or confidential discussions relating to individual pupils.

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13. Letters

- Written correspondence may be handed in or posted to the school office.
- Letters should identify the member of staff to whom they are addressed where possible.
- Correspondence will be handled sensitively and shared with those who require the information in order to respond appropriately.
- The school will normally aim to respond within five working days during term time.
- Where correspondence contains an urgent safeguarding or welfare concern, it must be brought to the attention of the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay.

14. Appointments

- Parents and carers may request an appointment to discuss their child's education, wellbeing or other relevant concerns.
- Appointments can be requested through the school office on 01282 614834.
- Parents may be asked to provide a brief indication of the matter they wish to discuss so that appropriate arrangements can be made.
- The school will normally aim to arrange an appointment within five working days, subject to staff availability and the nature of the matter.
- Teachers should not ordinarily be expected to hold detailed discussions about individual pupils:
    - whilst supervising children;
    - during teaching time;
    - on the playground;
    - in front of other families or pupils; or
    - when approached socially outside school.
- This protects confidentiality and enables an appropriate professional conversation to take place.

15. Website

The school website provides parents and carers with access to information including, where applicable:

- school policies;
- key dates;
- curriculum information;
- uniform information;
- school activities and clubs;
- statutory information; and
- safeguarding and online-safety information.

Parents and carers are encouraged to check the website alongside other school-approved communication channels.

16. Online safety, social media and digital communication

- Online safety forms part of the school's safeguarding arrangements.
  The school may operate official social-media accounts and other digital communication channels to share appropriate information about school life, events and achievements.
- School-managed online communication should:
    - protect pupils' safety, privacy and dignity;
    - maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
    - comply with safeguarding and data protection arrangements;
    - use appropriate school-authorised accounts and systems; and
    - remain respectful and professional.
- Staff must not use personal social-media accounts or inappropriate personal communication channels to communicate privately with pupils.
- Staff must maintain professional boundaries in online relationships and communication with parents and carers.
- Parents and carers should not post information that compromises the privacy, confidentiality or safeguarding of pupils.
- Concerns arising through social media, messaging, digital communication or online content involving a pupil must be managed through the school's safeguarding procedures where they raise a safeguarding issue.
- The school recognises emerging risks associated with manipulated and AI-generated digital content and will manage safeguarding concerns arising from such material through its safeguarding and online-safety procedures.

17. Respectful communication

- The school is committed to positive and respectful relationships with parents, carers and the wider community and recognises that individuals raising concerns may sometimes be worried or distressed.
- In return, the school expects communication with its staff to remain respectful.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to raise concerns through appropriate school procedures rather than through social media.
- Where communication becomes threatening, abusive, discriminatory or otherwise unacceptable, the school may take proportionate action in accordance with relevant policies and procedures.
- Nothing within this section prevents a parent or carer from raising a genuine complaint or safeguarding concern.

18. Home-school communication

Written reports

- Parents and carers will receive a written report about their child's education in accordance with the school's reporting arrangements.
- Reports will provide appropriate information about attainment, progress and attitudes to learning.

Parent consultations

- Parents and carers will have opportunities to meet teachers to discuss their child's learning and development.
- A range of appointment times may be provided to support attendance.
- Where exceptional circumstances arise, the school will endeavour to make reasonable alternative arrangements.
- Where parents are separated, communication will be managed in accordance with the school's legal responsibilities and the individual circumstances relating to the child.
- The child's welfare will remain central to decision-making.

Calendar and newsletter

- A calendar of relevant school events will be communicated through appropriate school channels.
- The school newsletter will provide families with information about events, activities and important matters.
- ClassDojo, the website, text messaging and other approved systems may also be used for updates and reminders.

19. Home-School Agreement

- When a child starts at Walverden Primary School, parents and carers will be asked to sign and return the school's Home-School Agreement.
- The agreement supports shared expectations and positive relationships between home and school.

20. Parent voice and engagement

The school values the views of parents and carers and may use:

- Parent Forums;
- questionnaires;
- consultations;
- meetings;
- workshops; and
- other engagement opportunities to gather feedback and support school improvement.
- A Parent Forum provides an opportunity to discuss matters of wider interest but does not replace the school's complaints or safeguarding procedures for concerns involving individual children.

21. Governors

Information about the Governing Body is available through the school website. Governors may be contacted through the school office at office@walverden.lancs.sch.uk or through correspondence addressed to the Chair of Governors.
Governors fulfil a strategic role. Concerns relating to the day-to-day management of the school should ordinarily be directed through the appropriate school procedure.
Complaints involving the Headteacher or governors will be managed in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy.
Safeguarding concerns must be managed through the appropriate safeguarding procedure.

22. Communication with the community

Walverden Primary School values its relationships within the local community.
The school may invite families and community members to appropriate:

- assemblies;
- celebrations;
- performances;
- curriculum events;
- workshops;
- fairs;
- community activities; and
- learning events.

External visitors and speakers must comply with the school's safeguarding and visitor procedures.

23. Communication with other schools and educational settings

The school communicates with other educational settings to support children's education, safeguarding, wellbeing and transition.
This may include:

- other primary schools;
- secondary schools;
- alternative provision;
- specialist provision;
- early years providers; and
- other educational services.

Information relating to individual pupils will be shared appropriately and in accordance with safeguarding, information-sharing and data protection requirements.

24. Communication with external agencies and safeguarding partners

- Walverden Primary School works with relevant external agencies to safeguard children and promote their education, welfare and wellbeing.
- These may include:
- Lancashire Children's Services Support Hub/Children's Social Care, including MASH;
- Lancashire Safeguarding in Education services;
- the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO);
- police;
- health services;
- school nursing;
- education, SEND and attendance services; and
- other relevant statutory and voluntary agencies.

Request for Support

- Where a child or family requires additional support or a safeguarding concern requires referral to Lancashire Children's Services, the DSL will follow current Lancashire procedures.

- Where appropriate, this will include use of the Children's Services Request for Support (RFS) process.

Lancashire Safeguarding Advice Line

- Where non-urgent professional safeguarding advice is required, eligible schools may use the Lancashire Safeguarding Advice Line in accordance with the school's Service Level Agreement.
- The Advice Line is for non-urgent safeguarding advice.
- It is not a referral to MASH or Children's Social Care, and contacting the Advice Line does not constitute a formal referral to Children's Services.
- The Advice Line must not be used instead of immediate safeguarding action where there is an urgent concern about a child.
- Current contact details will be maintained within the school's safeguarding operational information rather than duplicated throughout school policies.

MASH Education

- MASH Education has a separate function from the Safeguarding Advice Line.
- Operational information about these services and their current contact details will be maintained within the school's safeguarding procedures.

Immediate safeguarding concerns

- Where a child has been harmed, may be at risk of significant harm or is in immediate danger, safeguarding action must not be delayed through use of ordinary school communication procedures or a request for non-urgent safeguarding advice.
- The school will follow its Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and current Lancashire safeguarding procedures.

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25. Concerns or allegations about adults working with children

Where communication raises a safeguarding concern or allegation about:

- a member of staff;
- supply staff;
- a volunteer;
- a contractor; or
- another person working with children,
- the matter must be reported immediately in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

Where appropriate, the Headteacher, Chair of Governors or other appropriate person will follow current Lancashire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) procedures.
Current Lancashire arrangements for LADO referrals and consultation will be followed.
The welfare of the child remains paramount and any necessary safeguarding referral to Children's Social Care or police must not be delayed while the LADO process is considered.

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26. Data protection

- The school processes personal information in accordance with applicable data protection legislation and its published policies and privacy notices.
- Personal information should:
- only be accessed where there is an appropriate reason;
- be communicated using appropriate methods;
- not be unnecessarily disclosed;
- be handled securely; and
- be shared where necessary and appropriate to safeguard children.
- Data protection considerations must not result in a necessary safeguarding response being delayed.

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27. Record keeping

- Significant communications relating to individual pupils should be recorded and retained through the appropriate school system where required.

- Safeguarding concerns must be recorded in accordance with the school's safeguarding recording procedures.
- Staff records should be factual, professional, relevant and securely maintained.
- Where safeguarding advice is sought or an external safeguarding referral is made, appropriate records should be maintained in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

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28. Staff communication and professional boundaries

Staff are expected to:

- use approved school systems for professional communication;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality;
- maintain professional boundaries;
- avoid inappropriate private communication with pupils;
- communicate respectfully with parents, pupils and colleagues;
- protect personal and sensitive information; and
- report safeguarding information received through any communication channel without delay.

Concerns about staff conduct that have a safeguarding dimension must be managed through the relevant safeguarding procedure rather than the ordinary communication procedure.

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29. Safeguarding takes precedence

- Nothing within this policy should delay action where there is a safeguarding concern.
- Where there is any conflict between an ordinary communication process or response timeframe and the need to safeguard a child:
- Safeguarding takes precedence.
- Staff must follow the current Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and established safeguarding procedures.
- Current external safeguarding contact details and referral routes will be maintained through the school's safeguarding procedures and DSL operational information.

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30. Related policies and guidance

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy 2026/27
- Online Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices
- Behaviour Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Attendance Policy

The school also has regard to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children;
- current Lancashire Safeguarding Partnership arrangements;
- current Lancashire Children's Services Support Hub/MASH arrangements;
- current Lancashire LADO procedures; and
- applicable information-sharing and data protection requirements.

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31. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

The Governing Body will approve and monitor the policy.

- The policy will normally be reviewed annually, or sooner where:
- statutory guidance changes;

- Lancashire safeguarding arrangements change;
- communication systems change;
- relevant legislation or national guidance changes; or
- safeguarding learning or school experience indicates that procedures should be amended.

Operational safeguarding contacts and referral routes will be reviewed separately to ensure staff have access to current information without requiring the full Communication Policy to be amended whenever individual contact details change.

Appendix 1: Communication Response Guide

Communication	Normal school response
ClassDojo	**Aim to respond within 48 hours during the working week/term time**
Email	**Aim to respond within 5 working days during term time**
Letter	**Aim to respond within 5 working days during term time**
Telephone message requiring response	**Aim to respond within 2 working days**
Request for appointment	**Aim to arrange within 5 working days**
Formal complaint	**Complaints Policy applies**
Safeguarding concern	**Safeguarding procedure applies without delay. Normal response times do not apply**
Concern requiring Children's Services involvement	**Current Lancashire Children's Services/RFS procedure followed as appropriate**
Non-urgent professional safeguarding advice	**Lancashire Safeguarding Advice Line may be used where applicable. This is not a referral**
Concern or allegation about an adult working with children	**School safeguarding/allegations and LADO procedures followed as appropriate**
Child at immediate risk/in immediate danger	**Immediate safeguarding/emergency action. Routine response times do not apply**

Appendix 2: Summary of Changes from March 2025 Policy

Area	Key change for 2026/27
Safeguarding	Dedicated safeguarding communication section introduced
Response times	Clear that normal communication response times do not apply to safeguarding matters
DSL	Concerns must be passed to the DSL/Deputy DSL without delay
Confidentiality	Previous reference to "full confidentiality" replaced with appropriate information-sharing expectations
Information sharing	Strengthened to reflect safeguarding and multi-agency working
Lancashire terminology	Outdated LCSB terminology removed and current Lancashire arrangements referenced
Children's Services/MASH	Children's Services Support Hub/MASH arrangements incorporated
Request for Support	RFS route included

Area	Key change for 2026/27
Safeguarding Advice Line	Clarified as non-urgent advice and not a safeguarding referral
Urgent safeguarding	Clear expectation that urgent action must not be delayed by routine processes
MASH Education	Distinguished from the Safeguarding Advice Line
LADO	Clear procedure included for allegations/concerns about adults working with children
External contacts	Changing telephone numbers/named contacts kept within operational safeguarding information rather than the main policy
ClassDojo	Clear safeguarding boundaries and response expectations introduced
Online safety	Social-media provisions modernised into wider online-safety and digital communication expectations
AI/digital content	Manipulated and AI-generated content recognised as a potential safeguarding concern
Professional boundaries	Expectations for staff digital communication strengthened
Parents/social media	Blanket prohibition replaced with clearer expectations around respectful and confidential communication
Complaints	Complaints and safeguarding routes clearly separated
Accessibility	New accessibility and inclusion section introduced
Record keeping	Communication and safeguarding recording requirements strengthened
External agencies	Updated to reflect current multi-agency safeguarding arrangements
Related policies	Wider cross-referencing to safeguarding, complaints, conduct, online safety and data protection
Review	Annual review retained with provision for earlier review following significant changes