

Stanhope Barrington C of E
Primary School



Westcroft
Stanhope
Bishop Auckland
Co Durham
DL13 2NU

Head Teacher: Mrs D Cross

School Number 840 3087

Tel: 01388 528218

Email: admin@stanhopebarrington.org.uk

Website: www.stanhopebarrington.durham.sch.uk

Dear Parent/Carer

22nd September 2023

Re: Continuously trying to improve communication

Communication is a huge part of school life and we constantly strive to review and improve our systems and methods of communication both internally as a team and with our parents, carers and local community.

I thought it was worth reiterating our existing communication methods so that all parents and carers are aware:

Website:

This is a vast and rich source of information about our school, policies and procedures; your child's Learning Zones and superpowers; celebrating success, planning and timetables and our latest news. Our website is constantly updated and there is lots to see on there. Our school calendar is also a great source of quick information about what is happening when.

The Friends of Stanhope Barrington also have a section on the website which shows how all of your amazing fundraising is used to benefit our children.

Letters:

Letters are put on our school website and then you will receive a text message to let you know a new letter(s) is on there for you to check. Paper letters are only sent home if they require a signature or if there is a sudden change which does not allow time for you to check the website. Most parents check the website letters section on a regular basis as this is the main source of letters from school.

Text Messages:

Text messages are sent to the mobile phone number you gave us on your data sheet at the beginning of the school year. If you change your mobile phone number please make sure you have informed the office. We only have 160 characters in which to write a message and therefore these messages tend to be straight to the point and only used for short messages. We cannot afford the more expensive package which would allow us longer messages.

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Facebook:

We use Facebook to celebrate success, to promote events and activities in school and to reinforce messages contained in letters on the website. Our Facebook page is not a two-way communication system as it is impossible to monitor it constantly. If you need a response to a query please ring the school office.

Telephone:

Our school office is officially manned from 8.15 till 4pm every day however, there is usually other staff to answer the phone from 7.30 – 6pm. We only have one school secretary and therefore if for whatever reason she is away from her desk or not in school, this can cause us problems. We will always endeavour to cover the office if at all possible and when this is not possible a message will be put out via the website and/or Facebook.

Face to Face:

We pride ourselves on our friendly and welcoming culture and all of our staff are more than happy to have impromptu discussions with parents/carers or to arrange a meeting to discuss any concerns you might have. Please don't worry about anything unnecessarily – just talk to us and we will always work with you to find a solution.

Parent Appointments:

A formal meeting with your child's Class Teacher is offered termly so that you can be kept up to date with their progress, their successes and any concerns.

Noticeboard:

Our noticeboard is used to promote up and coming events in school and to display leaflets or flyers from community organisations which families might find useful.

Email:

If you would like to contact the school via email please use admin@stanhopebarrington.org.uk unless you know your child's teacher's WORK email address.

TEAMS:

Throughout Covid Lockdown we used Zoom to meet regularly with parents and even had a Friday coffee morning via Zoom. However, due to financial pressures we will not be renewing our subscription with zoom. Therefore, virtual meetings will take place using Microsoft Teams. This is an option for parent appointments and also for any specific meetings you cannot attend in person.

Parent Briefings:

Briefings are held in the school hall on an ad hoc basis when something serious or important is happening. Recent parent briefings have included topics such as: our financial situation; changes in the law surrounding the management of absence; phonics sessions for parents so they know how their child is taught phonics in school etc. These events are publicised via letters on our website, Facebook and in the noticeboard.

Changes we are making:

Seesaw:

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When we were hit by Covid Lockdown, we purchased an online remote learning platform called Seesaw. Once Covid restrictions were lifted we continued to use Seesaw for homework to ensure children could still use it in the event of further lockdowns. The subscription fee is significant and over the last year the use of Seesaw has dwindled as homework is now mainly via Times Table Rock Stars and Spelling Shed in KS2 and sent home in school bags lower down the school. We will therefore not be renewing our subscription with Seesaw when it expires.

Dojos:

We already use Class Dojos in school to reward our children and celebrate their successes. Dojo also offers a facility for homework and for communication between parents/carers and teachers at no extra cost and therefore this is the option we will be using from now on. Mrs Green has sent out a letter last week detailing how parents can access the app and if you are experiencing any problems please contact Mrs Green.

Noticeboard:

We will be listing letters which have gone on the website the week before in our noticeboard so parents can see if they've missed anything. We will also keep a list of After School Clubs for each half term in the noticeboard.

Additional Parent Appointment:

This year we are introducing an additional parent appointment near the end of the academic year before the Learning Zone allocation letters are sent out. This is in response to a suggestion by a parent last year and will allow our Class Teachers to explain how the school will be structured and organised the following year in terms of class sizes etc. Hopefully, as a result parents will have a clearer understanding of how or why children are allocated to different Learning Zones.

Visit your child's Learning Zone:

There will be parent/carer appointments every other half term. During the half term when there is no formal parent appointment we will be inviting parents/carers & grandparents etc to come in and visit their child's Learning Zone (classroom) and to see their books, displays, where they sit etc. This will provide another opportunity for you to meet and talk to their Class Teacher.

SLT Question Time:

We are introducing a new method of communication which we are calling SLT (Senior Leadership Team) Question Time. Myself, Mr Storey and Mrs Green will be available in the school hall at the end of the school day one Thursday in every half term. There will be no agenda or presentation, we will just be there for anyone to come along and talk to us, ask us any questions – no matter how small or just to have a chat.

Newsletter

This half term we have set up an After School Club for budding news reporter, photographers etc and it is our aim that they will produce a newsletter each half term to share our news with you.

Our main method of communication is through our letters section of the website and I cannot emphasise how important it is to keep up to date by checking this regularly or whenever you receive a reminder text. If you are not receiving texts then please contact the school office to check that we have the correct mobile telephone number for you.

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As you all know by now, our financial position is extremely challenging but if you have any suggestions for how we can improve our communication with you further at no significant financial cost, please complete and return the form below. There may well be suggestions we cannot facilitate but once the forms are collated I will provide feedback on the suggestions made; whether we can implement them and if not I will explain why not.

Equally if you have any positive comments to make about our communication, this would be very much appreciated too!

Yours sincerely

Mrs D Cross

Mrs D Cross
Head Teacher

Suggestion to improve communication between home and school:

Positive comments about communication between home and school:

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