

INSTOW COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



Parent & Carer Communication Policy

1. Introduction & Aims

Effective communication is the cornerstone of the "Instow Partnership." We recognise that for our pupils to thrive, home and school must work in tandem. This policy establishes a framework for communication that is purposeful, respectful, and sustainable for our staff.

Our strategic aims are to:

1. **Build Rapport:** Maintain a positive, professional dialogue with all stakeholders.
2. **Ensure Clarity:** Provide high-quality information that supports pupil safeguarding and progress.
3. **Promote Wellbeing:** Define clear boundaries that protect staff mental health and prioritize "teaching time."

The Instow Standard: The 7 Cs

All school-home communication is guided by the **7 Cs Model**. By ensuring our messages are **Clear, Concise, Concrete, Correct, Coherent, and Complete**, we minimize misunderstandings and save time for both parents and staff. Central to this is a **Courteous** approach; we expect the same level of professional courtesy from all members of our school community to ensure a harmonious environment for our children.

2. Tiered Communication Framework

At Instow Community Primary and Pre-School, we utilise a tiered approach to ensure that communication is handled with the appropriate level of sensitivity and detail. To maintain professional standards and pupil safety, **the school reserves the right to determine the most effective medium for any given issue.**

Level	Nature of Issue	Primary Method
Tier 1: Routine	General updates, event reminders, trip information, and school-wide news.	Newsletters, Website, Parentmail, or Group Emails.
Tier 2: Individual	Minor queries, lost property, or non-urgent classroom updates.	Brief email to Class Teacher via class support emails or a note in the Reading Diary
Tier 3: Complex	SEND, Safeguarding, Wellbeing, or Behavioural concerns.	Face-to-Face Meeting or, where necessary, a scheduled Phone/Video Call.

Rationale for Face-to-Face Communication (Tier 3)

While we acknowledge that some parents may prefer the convenience of written communication, the school does not agree to manage complex or sensitive matters solely via email. Our policy is based on the following professional principles:

- **Effective Safeguarding:** The nuance of sensitive discussions—such as safeguarding or pupil wellbeing—requires the immediate clarity and emotional intelligence that only direct dialogue provides.
- **Preventing Misinterpretation:** Written text lacks tone and non-verbal cues, which can lead to unnecessary escalation, misunderstanding, or a breakdown in the home-school partnership.
- **Collaborative Problem Solving:** Complex issues require a "working together" approach where solutions can be co-produced in real-time.
- **Documentation & Transparency:** For parents who require a written record, the school will provide a brief summary of "Agreed Actions" via email within **48 hours** of the face-to-face meeting. This ensures a reliable "paper trail" is maintained without compromising the quality of the discussion.

3. Response Timeframes & Staff Wellbeing

At Instow Community Primary and Pre-School, our teachers' primary focus is the education and safety of the children in their care. During the school day (8:30 AM – 3:30 PM), staff are rarely able to check or respond to digital correspondence.

The "Three-Day Rule"

We aim to respond to all non-urgent enquiries as soon as possible, with a maximum turnaround of **three working days**.

- **Acknowledgement:** For complex queries, staff may send a brief acknowledgement to let you know the message has been received and is being looked into.
- **Part-Time Staff:** As a community school, we value our part-time teachers. If an email is sent to a staff member on their non-working day, the three-day response window begins on their **next scheduled working day**.
- **Urgent Matters:** If a message is time-sensitive (e.g., a change in same-day pick-up or an immediate medical concern), parents must **telephone the school office**. Do not rely on email for urgent communication, as it may not be read until after the school day has ended.

"Quiet Hours" & Digital Boundaries

To support the mental health and work-life balance of our team, Instow operates a **"Quiet Hours"** policy.

- **No Expectation of Response:** Staff are not expected to monitor, read, or respond to emails outside of professional working hours (e.g., evenings, weekends, or during school holidays).
- **Scheduled Sending:** If parents choose to send emails during the night or over the weekend, they should not expect an acknowledgement until the following working week.
- **Wellbeing First:** By protecting our staff from "always-on" digital expectations, we ensure they are refreshed and fully present for the children in their classrooms.

Written: February 2026

Agreed: March 2026

Next review date: February 2027