



Communications Policy

	Position/Committee	Date
Prepared by	Executive Director: HR	December 2025
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Communications Policy

At Moorlands Learning Trust and in our schools we strive to build strong relationships with parents, carers and visitors, in order to help create a positive learning environment which continues from school to home and the wider community, providing all our pupils with an environment to thrive.

Our staff come to work to educate and support our pupils and we believe it is important for everyone involved with school life to communicate in a positive way, whether in person, on the phone, or online.

In this way, staff, students, parents, carers and members of the public convey courtesy and respect to each other at all times, which helps to promote the most constructive working and learning environment for all. As part of this, we welcome both constructive and positive feedback from parents and the community.

Moorlands Learning Trust therefore asks everyone who comes into contact with the school, including parents/carers, visitor and members of our local community to:

- Positively support the ethos of Trust schools by setting a good example in their speech and behaviour (including online) towards all students, staff members and other adults.
- Work constructively with staff members to resolve any issues of concern, including clarifying specific events in order to bring about a positive solution. (Details of who to best contact depending on the issue being raised can be found on each school's Trust website).
- Send emails to staff that are positive in tone and include appropriate salutations. N.B. Staff should be given at least two working days to acknowledge receipt, though we will always endeavour to respond as soon as possible.
- Make reasonable requests for meeting times, and not expect to see any member of staff without a prior appointment. We will always try and accommodate a meeting or phone call as soon as possible but do have many commitments and issues throughout the day and we would ask that you understand and respect this.
- Meet with a designated member of staff as identified or delegated by the Headteacher, in the event of a dispute or disagreement. N.B. The designated member of staff will be commensurate with the stage and scale of the concern.
- Make every effort to positively promote the Trust school to the wider community and not publicly undermine the school or the implementation of school policies.

Any abusive, foul or insulting language, physical attacks or aggressive or threatening behaviour towards staff members, governors, students, parents or any member of the public within our premises, on the phone or online will not be tolerated under any circumstances. This also extends to posting or publishing comments online that risk bringing an individual or a Trust school's reputation into disrepute.

Anyone exhibiting these behaviours will be formally warned by the school that this will not be tolerated and any future violation of this policy could then result in all future communications with the school being restricted to writing, with legal action being considered as appropriate.

All members of the Moorlands Learning Trust and its schools' community have the right to work without fear of abuse or violence at all times.

All staff at Moorlands Learning Trust:

- Are required to demonstrate the highest possible professional standards
- Deal with all students, fairly and consistently
- Communicate with all parents and visitors with the highest level of professional courtesy
- Be aware of and conform to all safeguarding routines in the Trust
- Uphold the professional integrity of the Trust at all times

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Education Act 2011
- The Equalities Act 2010
- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 2004

1.2. This policy also has due regard to statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education'
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Education Act 2011 and Department for Education guidance

2. Related Trust policies

2.1. This Communications Policy has due regard to the following school policies and procedures:

- **Health and Safety Policy**
- **Complaints Policy**
- **Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy**
- **Online Safety Policy**
- **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

3. Expectations for Parents, Carers and Visitors

3.1. In addition to the general expectations for all outlined above, we also ask parents and carers to:

- Work supportively with Trust schools to improve their child's behaviour where necessary.
- Respect the Trust/School's capacity and avoid excessive, repetitive or multi-staff contact.

3.2. Parents should be aware of school policies and know that copies are available via the Trust and school's website or from the school directly. When raising a concern, we would ask parents to ensure that they act in accordance with school policies and maintain a positive approach at all times.

3.3. Concerns regarding another parent's behaviour or conduct should be raised directly with the student's Class Teacher/Form Tutor or Head of Year or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

4. Inappropriate behaviour:

4.1 Though fortunately rare, the Trust/school takes any instances of inappropriate behaviour very seriously and will not tolerate any circumstances which may make students or members of staff feel threatened. A perceived threat, or any action which makes another individual feel threatened, can be sufficient for us to take action.

4.2 Inappropriate behaviour for the purposes of this policy includes:

- Excessive contact – which means unreasonable demands on staff time through volume or frequency of emails, calls, or meeting requests.
- Vexatious contact – which means repeated communication where the intention appears to be to harass, cause disruption, or pursue an outcome that is impossible or already decided.
- Harassing behaviour – which means repeated unwanted contact, aggressive or intimidating language, or conduct that causes distress or alarm
- Defamatory communication – which means false or misleading statements, written or spoken, that damage the reputation of the Trust or Trust Schools or its staff
- Malicious communication - which means contact (including emails or online posts) that is threatening, grossly offensive, indecent, or knowingly false with intent to cause distress

4.3 Abusive, threatening or aggressive behaviour towards staff, pupils or others will also not be tolerated. This includes:

- Bullying or intimidation, including physical, sexual and verbal abuse
- Verbal abuse: swearing, talking in an aggressive manner, using offensive language or raising their voice at another individual
- Making racist or sexual comments, or discriminating against any member of staff or student for any reason of position, gender or any other personal characteristic or behaviour
- Physical violence
- Physically intimidating an individual such as by standing in very close proximity to him/her
- Writing or online messaging abusive or defamatory comments regarding an individual or the school, including on social media

4.4 Any individual at Moorlands Learning Trust should not be discriminated against, whether a staff member, student or another adult, on the basis of their age, race, ethnicity, religion, cultural belief, attainment, disability, gender, sexuality or background.

4.5 The sending of abusive or threatening written or email messages will be treated in the same way as any other abusive or threatening behaviour.

5. Consequences of inappropriate behaviour:

In the instance of inappropriate behaviour, the Trust / school will follow a number of procedures, depending on the severity of the situation:

- 5.1 Contact will be made by a member of the Senior Leadership Team to discuss the issues raised in a meeting or a written warning will be issued
- 5.2 Anyone who is creating a nuisance or disturbance will be asked to leave the premises. The Trust / school may issue a letter banning any individual from the site.
- 5.3 The school will always contact the police in the event of any serious threat or incidence of violence and assault, and in the event of any actual harm caused to an individual.
- 5.4 If an individual has been previously barred from the premises, or is causing a serious disturbance, the school will contact the police in order for the individual to be removed from the premises.

5.5 Other Consequences may include:

- Restricted communication.
- Blocking from direct staff email addresses.
- Warnings or staged sanctions.
- Ban from Trust / School premises under the Education Act 1996 (section 547).
 - The Trust holds the right to escort anyone off the premises who is displaying aggressive or disruptive behaviour.

- Escalation to External Authorities
 - Where conduct involves harassment, threats, defamation, misuse of data or malicious use of social media, school will refer the matter to the Local Authority, Department for Education, police, Information Commissioner's Office or legal advisors as appropriate
- Police involvement or legal action under harassment, malicious communications or defamation law.
 - Under section 547 of the Education Act 1996, it is an offence for any person to cause a nuisance or disturbance on school premises, and the police may be contacted to assist in the removal of individuals from the premises, where necessary.

6. Excessive, Vexatious or Harassing Contact

Trust Schools cannot sustain excessive contact or prolonged meetings once concerns have been reasonably addressed. Repetitive communication beyond what is necessary for a pupil's welfare will be restricted.

Examples include:

- Repeatedly raising the same issue after it has been addressed.
- Contacting multiple staff members in parallel to challenge non-negotiable policies.
- Excessive demands on staff time that are disproportionate to the issue raised.
- Harassing, hostile or aggressive tone or content.

School reserves the right not to respond to communications where:

- the tone is abusive
- the content is repetitive
- the matter has already been addressed
- it appears the intention is to cause harm or nuisance, or there is no possible outcome within the school's remit

7. Restriction of Contact

In line with DfE Best Practice Guidance for School Complaints Procedures (2023), where communication becomes complex, repetitive or unmanageable, the Trust or school may implement a communications plan.

The school reserves the right to direct, limit or block contact. This may include:

- Requiring all communication to go through a single named staff member.
- Requiring all communication to be made only by telephone at agreed times.
- Requiring all communication to be made only by email to a central monitored account.
- Blocking access to staff personal school email addresses so parents cannot email multiple staff directly.
- Refusing face-to-face meetings unless specifically authorised by the Headteacher/Executive Headteacher.
- Requiring all communication to be in writing only.
- Suspending all non-essential communication, with exceptions only for statutory safeguarding, attendance or legal matters.

Restrictions will remain in place until the Trust / school is satisfied that communication has returned to an appropriate, respectful and proportionate level or may be permanent in the most extreme of cases.

8. Use of social media

8.1 Staff must not be contacted via social media.

- 8.2 Defamatory, abusive, hostile or misleading posts about school or staff will be taken seriously and may lead to legal action.
- 8.3 Parents who engage in such behaviour may have all non-essential communication immediately restricted to statutory written channels only.
- 8.4 Cyber bullying of any kind will not be tolerated and will be dealt with as a serious incident.
- 8.5 Any cases of social media use that breach the guidelines of this policy will be reported immediately.
- 8.6 The individual will be advised to remove any posts or comments that are harmful, immediately.
- 8.7 The Trust / school may contact the police for legal action where necessary.

9. Duty of Care and Safeguarding

- 9.1 School has a legal duty of care to protect staff, pupils, governors and the community from harassment, intimidation, defamation, trespass and undue stress.
- 9.2 Abusive parental behaviour is also a safeguarding concern because it prevents staff from carrying out their duties to pupils effectively.

10. Complaints

10.1 Complaint Campaigns

- Where multiple complaints are received on the same subject, school may issue a single standard response to all complainants or publish a statement on the school website in place of individual replies.

10.2 Serial or Persistent Complaints

- If a complainant attempts to reopen a closed matter, the school will confirm in writing that the complaints process is exhausted.

10.3 Closure of Complaints

- Once the school's complaints procedure is exhausted, the complaint is deemed concluded and closed.
- Attempts to reopen the same or a substantially similar issue will not be considered and no further correspondence will be entered into.

11. Additional Provisions

- Governors / Trustees will not engage with complaints outside the formal procedure. Their role is strategic oversight, not operational decision-making.
- Trivial or out-of-scope complaints, or those seeking remedies the school cannot provide, will not be considered.
- Staff do not consent to being recorded during calls or meetings.
- Staff communications are confidential. The unauthorised publication or circulation of staff emails or recordings may breach data protection law and will be treated as misconduct.