



POLICY NAME:	Home/School Communications
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Reviewed On:	September 2024
Reviewed By:	Kerry Darby
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The Pines Primary School

Home–School Communication Policy

Introduction

The aim of this policy is to establish a shared understanding of effective home-school communication. Effective communication between the School and home is an integral part of securing academic success and positive well-being for pupils at The Pines Primary. It also outlines procedures and expectations of behaviour between the School, parents/carers and pupils in line with the following principles.

Principles for Communication

- To harness and foster community relationships.
- To keep staff, pupils, parents/carers, governors and the wider community well informed about the work of the School.
- To be open, honest, ethical and professional at all times.
- To be timely and effective.
- To use the method of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience.
- To be compatible with The Pines Primary School’s core aims and values.

Procedures for Communication

To ensure effective and regular communication the School provides:

- A fortnightly newsletter
- Targeted school emails
- A regularly updated school website including School policy updates
- A prospectus
- The School calendar available on the School website.
- Termly Parents' Evenings and targeted Parents' Meetings.
- Additional information letters as required to groups or individuals.
- Contact home via email and telephone as and when appropriate.
- Social media updates from the School via Facebook.

Behaviour and Protocol for Communication

Staff will

- Use an appropriately formal and polite tone in emails and letters to parents.
- Send out a letter only after it has been checked by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- During the week staff are not expected to phone or contact parents beyond the working hours of 8.30am – 5.30pm or during other working commitments.
- Respond using a holding message if more than three days is required to investigate the matter raised.
- Consult with line managers before responding to sensitive issues raised in emails from parents/carers.
- Not reply to any email, letter or communication that is rude or aggressive in tone or content; or engage in excessive continued dialogue via email. Such emails, letters or communication will be referred to the Head to reply on their behalf.
- Inform parents of significant incidents during the school day and behaviour/or sanctions that their child has received, as required by the 'Behaviour Policy'.

Parents/Carers should

- Email the office if they wish to contact a member of staff. There should be no direct emails to staff (with the exception of the Family Well-Being Lead).
- Read the fortnightly Newsletter and respond to the letters sent home.
- Sign the 'Home/School Agreement' alongside the admissions form and return to The Pines Primary School.
- Keep the School informed of changes in contact information and their child's personal circumstances.
- Attend calendared Parents' Evenings and specific invitation Parents' Meeting.
- Use an appropriately formal and polite tone in emails and letters to staff.
- Acknowledge receipt of and, where appropriate, respond to emails, phone messages and communication from the School.

- Book appointments in advance to meet the appropriate member of School staff. Requests or demands for immediate appointments will not be met; exceptions to this will only be made in circumstances such as Safeguarding emergencies.
- Support the School's policy that every teacher's and leader's main priority is to teach and support students achieve their academic potential. Excessive emailing and communication is disruptive and counterproductive.
- Inform the School if separated parents require access to reports and newsletters. Requests by parents may need to be supported by relevant documentation demonstrating they are entitled to receive such information.
- Report inappropriate activity to the relevant organisation, eg. website/app provider, police or School Safeguarding team if this activity is likely to impact upon the safety or well-being of a pupil at the School in a timely manner.
- In the event of an emergency, contact the School reception via telephone, or email, if parents/carers need to contact their child. Direct contact with pupils via mobile phone is a breach of the 'Home-School Communication Policy'.

In the case of emergency communication, the School will:

- Make an urgent phone call to pupils' parents.

In the case of emergency school closure, the School will:

- In the case of school closure before the start of the School day, send an email via My Child At School (MCAS), and provide messages on The Pines Primary School website and Facebook as well as the LA website (www.suffolk.gov.uk).
- In the case of school closure during the School day provide messages via email (MCAS), The Pines Primary website and Facebook.
- In the case of an unexpected change of arrangements in clubs, fixtures or trips on the day the School will contact parents directly.

Home-School Communication Issues

The overwhelming majority of parents/carers are extremely supportive of the School and the work of its staff. The School endeavours to maintain a positive relationship with parents and carers; in cases where home-school communication becomes challenging or unproductive it will be referred to someone more senior in the School.

The School works hard to resolve matters of dispute however in cases where parents wish to make a complaint they should refer to the Anglian Learning's 'Complaints Procedure'.

Where parents become abusive or aggressive in their response, in whatever form of communication is being used, that communication will cease. In extreme cases it may be necessary to contact other authorities. For persistent complaints and harassment, the Anglian Learning's 'Complaints Policy' will be applied.

Any member of the School community should be aware that raising matters on social media can make resolution of Home-School communication issues more challenging and undermine the positive relationship the School seeks to foster.

The School does not permit electronic recordings of meetings or telephone calls by parents or staff without prior mutual consent.