



Home-School Communication Policy

Firfield Primary School

Approved by:	James Yellop	Date: October 2020
Last reviewed on:	New document	
Next review due by:	Review October 2021	

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Introduction and aims

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents and carers has a positive impact on pupils' learning because it:

- › Gives parents and carers the information they need to support their child's education;
- › Helps the school improve through feedback and consultation with parents and carers;
- › Builds trust between home and school which helps the school better support each child's educational and pastoral needs.

The aim of this policy is to promote clear and open communication by:

- › Explaining how the school communicates with parents and carers;
- › Setting clear standards for responding to communication from parents and carers;
- › Helping parents and carers reach the member of school staff who is best placed to address their specific query or concern so they can get a response as quickly as possible.

In the following sections, we will use 'Parents' to refer to both parents and carers.

Roles and responsibilities

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- › Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate;
- › Regularly reviewing this policy.

Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- › Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's ICT and internet acceptable use policy;
- › Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves).

Staff **will not be expected to** respond to communications outside of school hours - please allow up to 48 hours for a member of staff to respond to any communication (working hours 9am- 5pm) or their working hours if they work part-time or during school holidays.

We know that parents and carers have busy lives and often the only time you sit down to send emails will be "out of hours" for our teachers. We respectfully ask, therefore, that you do not expect a reply to your email from the school office or your child's teacher out of their contracted working hours. We support the importance of our staff maintaining a work-life balance that sustains their emotional, physical and social wellbeing and we appreciate your support in doing the same.

Teachers are very busy during the school day and may not always be able to respond to, or resolve, your request immediately. Please be patient, our teachers will respond to you as soon as possible.

Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- › Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times;
- › Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance;
- › Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner;
- › Checking all communications from the school (class email / class Dojo, Tapestry-EYFS, Twitter, ParentPay).

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening, will be treated in line with our Home School Agreement/ Parent Code of Conduct.

How we communicate with Parents and Carers

The sections below explain how we keep parents up to date with their child's education and what is happening in school.

Parents should monitor all of the following regularly to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child.

Email (Via ParentPay / school email / direct from the class teacher)

We use email to keep parents informed about the following things:

- › Upcoming school events;
- › Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days);
- › School surveys or consultations;
- › Class activities or teacher requests;
- › The termly newsletters;
- › Monthly newsletters from the Headteacher;
- › Home learning plans;
- › Absences;
- › Trips and visits;
- › Emergency school closures;
- › Payment reminders.

Text messages (ParentPay App)

We will text parents about:

- › Payments for trips, school dinners, absences (if not reported);
- › Short-notice changes to the school day;

› Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather).

Please note that text messages are kept short and direct as the number of characters is limited to help keep text messaging costs down. If you do not seem to be getting any text or email messages, please contact us and we can investigate the reason why.

Text Messages (Class Dojo App)

- › Quick messages direct from the class teacher (not for reporting absences);
- › Not to complain or raise any concerns;
- › Celebrating achievements (star of the day, work to be proud of).

Tapestry App (EYFS)

Tapestry is a **secure online Learning Journal to record photos, observations and comments** in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, to build up a record of your child's experiences during their time with us.

- › Learning platform;
- › Observations made by the class teachers;
- › Parent observations and comments.

School calendar

Our school website and monthly newsletter includes a full school calendar for the term.

Where possible, we try to give parents at least 2 weeks' notice of any events or special occasions (including non-uniform days, special assemblies or visitors or requests for pupils to bring in special items or materials).

Any such event will be included in the school calendar via the school website and newsletter,

Phone calls

We encourage staff to call parents regularly throughout the year to discuss pupils' performance (both positive and unwanted behaviour), This will be during the school day or to return a phone call at the request of a parent within 24 hours.

- › Medical concerns;
- › Behaviour concerns.

Letters

We send the following letters home regularly:

- › Consent forms;
- › Medical updates;
- › Home contact detail update;
- › Home school agreement;
- › Headlice;
- › Accident (bumped heads).

Homework books/school planners

1. Parents can write comments in reading diaries (all children have reading records throughout the school).
2. Parents can write comments on the homework.

Reports

Parents receive reports from the school about their child's learning, including:

- › An end-of-year report covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, and their attendance;
- › Termly progress reports;
- › A report on KS1 and KS2 SATs tests;
- › We also arrange regular meetings where parents can speak to their child's teacher(s) about their achievement and progress (see the section below).

Meetings

We hold Parents' Evenings in the Autumn and Spring term (virtual or face to face). During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum or schemes of work, their child's wellbeing or any other area of concern.

The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings between parents' evenings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress or wellbeing.

Parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these additional needs. These are arranged by the SENCo.

School website

Key information about the school is posted on our website, including:

- › School times and term dates;
- › Important events and announcements;
- › Curriculum information;
- › Important policies and procedures;
- › Important contact information;
- › Information about before and after-school provision;
- › Parents should check the website before contacting the school;
- › Prospectus for new parents.

How parents and carers can communicate with the school

Email

Parents should always email the school, or the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

enquiries@firfield.derbyshire.sch.uk (Monitored by the school office)

Or the class email address your child is assigned to (Monitored by the class teacher) as well as Class Dojo.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within 2 working days and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 5 working days.

If a query or concern is urgent, and you need a response sooner than this, please call the school.

Phone calls

If you need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, please email the school office and the relevant member of staff will contact you within 2 working days.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will get in touch with you to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure you have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within 2 days of your request.

If your issue is urgent, please call the school office requesting contact with James Yellop (Headteacher), Amanda Fletcher or Rachel Tittershill (Assistant Headteachers)

Urgent issues might include things like:

- › Family emergencies;
- › Safeguarding or welfare issues;
- › An issue which could not be resolved by the class teacher or SLT member.

For more general enquiries, please call the school office on 01332 872216.

Meetings

If you would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, please email the appropriate address enquiries@firfield.derbyshire.sch.uk or call the school to book an appointment.

We try to schedule all meetings within 5 working days of the request.

While teachers are available at the beginning or end of the school day if you need to speak to them urgently, we recommend you book appointments to discuss:

- › Any concerns you may have about your child's learning;
- › You use the school App (Class Dojo for a direct message);
- › Updates related to pastoral support, your child's home environment, or their wellbeing.

Inclusion

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school.

We currently make whole school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) available in the following languages:

- › English

This will be readily available for any children with an additional language who join the school.

Parents who need help communicating with the school can request the following support:

- › School announcements and communications translated into additional languages;
- › Interpreters for meetings or phone calls;

We can make additional arrangements if necessary. Please contact the school office to discuss these.

Monitoring and review

The Headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every 2 years. The policy will be approved by the governing board.

Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- › ICT and internet acceptable use;
- › Parent code of conduct;
- › Staff code of conduct;
- › Complaints procedure and policy;
- › Behaviour policy.

Appendix 1: School Contact List

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO	WHAT MEANS OF COMMUNICATION
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's class teacher	Class email address Class Dojo message Arrange a meeting Touch base in the morning or afternoon
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Class teacher, if not resolved, contact an SLT member Mr Yellop - Headteacher Mrs Fletcher - Assistant Headteacher Miss Tittershill - Assistant Headteacher Mrs Swallow - KS2 Lead Mrs Byard - SENCo Mrs Roseveare - EYFS and KS1 Lead	Contact the school main office 01332 872216 request an SLT member
Payments School trips School dinners	Mrs Peach - School Business Assistant	Contact the school office on 01332 872216
School trips	School office 01332 872216 Direct contact with class teacher	Telephone Email to the class teacher Class Dojo message
Attendance	School Secretary	If you need to report your child's absence, call: 01332 872216 NOT ON CLASS DOJO 07546 759537
Bullying and behaviour	Miss Lemon - PSHE Lead SLT Members Mrs Fletcher - Assistant Headteacher Miss Tittershill - Assistant Headteacher Mrs Swallow - KS2 Lead Mrs Byard - SENCo Mrs Roseveare - EYFS and KS1 Lead	School main office

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO	WHAT MEANS OF COMMUNICATION
School events/the school calendar	enquiries@firfield.derbyshire.sch.uk	Email Phone call School website
Special educational needs (SEN)	Mrs Byard - SENCo	Email SEN@firfield.derbyshire.sch.uk School main office: 01332 872216
Before and after-school clubs	enquiries@firfield.derbyshire.sch.uk Mrs Donoghue - School Business Manager	Email School main office: 01332 872216
Hiring the school premises	enquiries@firfield.derbyshire.sch.uk	Email
The PTA	pta@firfield.derbyshire.sch.uk	Email
The governing board	Mr Graham Robertson - Chair of Governors	Via the school office
Catering/meals	Miss Peach - School Business Assistant	School office 01332 872216

Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy.

The school complaints policy can be found on the school website www.firfield.derbyshire.sch.uk