



Little Plumstead C of E Primary School

Communication Policy

Person responsible for the Policy	Executive Headteacher
Date Agreed by Governors	September 2023
Review Date	Autumn 2024

Introduction

We recognise that the relationship which exists between our school and the community is a partnership, and that all good partnerships thrive on excellent effective communication. This policy therefore seeks to define the means by which we are able to maintain effective communications between all stakeholders within our school community in addition to providing an overview of what parents/carers can expect of the school and, in turn, what the school will expect of parents/carers.

Our school aims reflect our priority to develop increased opportunity for parental involvement and engagement and in doing so recognises the importance of including parents/carers in meaningful dialogue relating to a young person's learning.

Within all avenues of communication, we politely request that all members of our school community ensure the tone of communications remain polite, non-confrontational and solution focussed. We seek to develop confidence and trust between parents/carers, children, young people and staff and recognise the importance that the views of all are listened to so that together we can build the best possible experience for our full school community.

Communication Procedures

Parents communicating with the School

The school office can be contacted by phone and in person between 8.00am and 4.00pm on school weekdays.

Although class emails were powerful during COVID restrictions, we strongly advocate face-to-face communication, over email, and would request that you make an appointment with the class teacher to discuss any concerns you may have. Therefore, class emails have been disabled and all emails should be directed to the office who will make appointments with you and the class teacher.

Postal Address	Telephone	Email:
Little Plumstead CofE Primary Academy Old Hall Road Little Plumstead NR13 5FA	01603 712165	office@littleplumstead.norfolk.sch.uk

Message, Queries, Concerns	Person to Contact
If your child is absent from school...	Please notify the school office each day of absence by 8.45am either by telephone on 01603 712165 (where you can leave a message) or in person. Please note that this notification does not guarantee that absences will be authorised.
If you have a quick message for your child's teacher about collection, concerns, home learning...	Talk to your child's teacher on the playground after the class has been dismissed; all teachers are outside every afternoon. Urgent messages may be left at the school office if you do not get a chance to speak to the teacher. We Meet and Greet in the morning so please refrain from passing messages at this time.
If you would like to talk about your child's learning progress...	Make an appointment to meet with your child's teacher via the school office. If, following your discussion you would like more information, make an appointment to meet with the relevant School Leader.
If you are concerned about social behaviours or bullying...	Make an appointment to meet with your child's teacher via the school office. If, following your discussion you would like more information, make an appointment to meet with the relevant School Leader.
If you would like to discuss something related to your child's teacher...	Make an appointment to meet with the interim Head of School via the school office.
If you would like to discuss your child's special educational needs...	Make an appointment to meet with the SENCO via the school office or directly via the SENDCo email.
If you would like to find out about after school clubs or have a query...	Check the school website, email the office on office@littleplumstead.norfolk.sch.uk or ask at the school office.
If you have a query about Breakfast club...	Please contact Mary Palmer via email plumtreeclub@littleplumstead.norfolk.sch.uk
If you have a pay query ...	Enquiries can be made to the school's office staff.
If you have a school dinner enquiry...	Please contact the school office directly.
If you wanted to check if the school is open...	Please check the school website, your ParentMail or Norfolk school closures online.
If you would like to make a complaint	Please follow the Complaints Policy on how to make a complaint.

If having followed the above the steps above, your question or concern is not resolved, please make an appointment with the school office to meet with the interim Head of School.

Types of communication

- **Formal letters (sent via the school office)**

Staff will endeavour to reply to parents' letters as quickly as possible. Letters will be acknowledged in 3 working days from receipt and a reply sent within 10 working days. Copies of correspondence with parents will be placed on CPOMS.

- **E-Mail**

Email is a quick, effective way of communicating information. However, it does not replace face-to-face meetings where some discussion is required. All email enquiries should be sent to the school office who will forward them to the appropriate member of staff.

All e-mail should be treated as letters and should be checked carefully for technical errors and tone. Staff should acknowledge e-mail within 3 working days and send a full reply within 10 working days, unless the sender has been given a legitimate reason for the delay, such as consultation or investigation. **Under no circumstances should staff contact pupils, parents or conduct any school business using personal email addresses.**

In most circumstances, staff will contact you by phone or make an appointment with you to discuss the content of your email (if needed).

- **Telephone calls**

Staff should take notes about the content of telephone calls, as they would with meetings with parents. Notes from telephone calls, including main points of discussion and action required/taken should be logged and filed on CPOMS.

If a child is absent from school and we have no indication of the reason, administrative staff will contact a parent on the same day, to find out the reason for the absence.

- **Meeting with parents**

We encourage parents to contact the school if issues arise regarding their child's progress or wellbeing. For everyday issues parents should contact their child's class teacher. If it is wellbeing concern you may be directed to the wellbeing lead or interim Head of School.

For persistent or serious issues, parents should contact the Executive Headteacher or interim Head of School.

Any parent wishing to meet with a member of staff should contact the school office in advance and request a meeting with that member of staff. This will then be arranged at a time convenient to both parties. The subject for that meeting should be shared in advance to help staff to be fully prepared to ensure the meeting is productive.

Parents should not come to the school to talk to a member of staff without an appointment. Staff members may be unavailable to meet should this happen.

Parents (like all visitors) should report to reception prior to meeting with a member of staff. If the meeting is due to take place outside office hours, separate arrangements can be made.

If a meeting with a parent is taking place outside normal school hours, the member of staff should try, where possible, to ensure that another colleague is nearby. It is perfectly acceptable to call a meeting to a close in order to allow time for further investigation.

When a pupil is accompanying a parent for a meeting, it is perfectly acceptable to ask a pupil to remain out of the meeting for part of it, particularly when a parent is criticising a teacher or any aspect of the school. It is damaging to the relationship with the pupil for them to witness this, but parents may need to air particular

feelings and this is a useful mechanism for this. The teacher should not feel threatened at any time and is encouraged to stop a meeting should this be the case.

Reply time

Non-urgent enquiries – In such cases, please feel free to contact us by telephone, letter or email. Upon receipt of your message our office staff will forward it to the relevant member(s) of our team. As a school, to facilitate effective communication, we aim to acknowledge and respond to non-urgent enquiries within three working days. In many cases, however – particularly where there is a time factor – responses will be quicker.

There may however also be occasions where it is not possible to respond within this timeframe. In these situations, we will acknowledge your enquiry within five working days and respond within 10 days.

If a member of the Senior Leadership Team deems a matter urgent, a member of staff will respond to such enquiries at the time of contact. However, where this is not possible, you will be contacted as a matter of urgency within 48 hours (during working hours only).

School Holidays

Any communication received by the school during times of school closure or school holiday will be acknowledged and responded to upon the school reopening. Where communication has been received during a holiday period the timescales for acknowledging and responding to that communication will begin upon the reopening of the school.

Social Media and private messaging

Consideration should be given regarding the nature of comments made about the school or members of staff on social media platforms.

We encourage our school community to participate positively when using any form of social media, however, would politely ask that parents/carers do not use social media, or personal telephone numbers, to contact members of staff regarding school related issues.

We respectfully ask that social media, whether public or private, is not used to voice complaints about the school, staff, parents/carers or pupils or identify/post images/video/comments regarding staff and/or children or young people. When used in this way social media has the potential to cause offence and discredit members of our school community. This can be damaging for both the individuals concerned and our school's reputation within the community.

Where a parent/carer has a concern or complaint this should be raised with the school directly in order that they can be effectively addressed in a timely manner through the appropriate channels.

The School communicating with parents

Planned meetings

At the beginning of the school year class meetings are arranged to share the new class charters, curriculum, routines and additional information. Should a class teacher change during the year these meetings will be revisited where possible.

Meetings are held prior to any residential trip to inform parents of planning, content and arrangements.

A meeting for new reception parents is held in July each year.

Written reports and Parent Evening

Once a year, a full written report is sent to parents on their child's progress in each subject. The report identifies areas of strength and areas for further development.

In addition, parents meet their child's teacher twice a year, at parents' evening.

When pupils have special educational needs, or if they are making less than expected progress or experiencing behavioural or disciplinary difficulties, we may arrange to meet with parents more regularly.

School Website

The school website provides information about the school and an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience and provide guidance on admissions for prospective parents and pupils. It also has a regularly updated area for information for current parents. In addition, it has up-to-date policies available for parents to view. Copies of all newsletters to parents and information guides are also accessible through the website.

Public Access Documents such as curriculum information, policies and copies of recent letters will be available on the school website.

Key dates for the year (where possible) are sent out in September.

School Handbook

A school handbook is made available to all parents/carers through the school website and is updated each year. This handbook's purpose is to:

- providing a welcome for new parents/carers to the school;
- helping parents/carers to choose a school; and
- helping parents/carers to prepare their child for school.

The school handbook is also available in hard copy upon request.

ParentMail

We encourage all parents to inform the school of their current e-mail address, to allow them receive communications via ParentMail.

ParentMail is used to send out a variety of information, either to a targeted group, or to all parents. This includes, newsletters, information about whole school events and all letters relevant to the whole school. It is our aim to have 100% of parents signed up to ParentMail to facilitate paperless communication.

Possible contentious meetings

A member of staff may ask for another member of staff to accompany them and should always do so when the meeting may be contentious in any way or if their input will add value to the meeting. When possible, a member of the leadership team will attend this meeting. The key discussion points, actions and decisions should be recorded.

Staff should call a meeting to a close in the event of the parent becoming angry or abusive. The member of staff should report such an incident to a member of the leadership team and seek further advice. A senior leader should either accompany the member of staff to a further meeting with the parent or hold it without the original member of staff present.

Links with Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Complaints Policy
- Parent/Visitor Code of Conduct
- Equality Information and Objectives Policy
- Online Policy
- Safeguarding and Safe Recruitment Policy