

Four Elms Primary School

Parent & Carers Communications Policy

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1. Introduction and aims

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

- Gives parents/carers the information they need to support their child's education
- Helps the school improve, through feedback and consultation with parents/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/carers
- Setting clear standards and expectations for responding to communication from parents/carers
- Helping parents/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.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Head of School

The Head of School is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy
- Regularly reviewing this policy

2.2 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 **aim** to respond to communication during core school hours or their working hours (if they work part-time). In line with promoting staff wellbeing and helping our staff find a suitable work-life

balance, staff may work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond outside of these hours, but they are **not expected** to do so.

Within 24 hours you will receive an initial response in which you will be informed if a longer time scale is needed to respond in detail to your query.

Most information can be found in communication sent to parents e.g. letters or the weekly newsletter. We recommend checking these before contacting the office. The letters and newsletters are also available in the parents section of the website. Please see appendix 1 for who to contact when you have a query.

Class teacher email addresses are available on the school website. Any queries relating to your child should be sent to the class teacher.

For whole school enquiries, please contact the Head of School. For complaints or concerns, please see our Complaints policy.

2.3 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
- Respond to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with our code of conduct. Please refer to our Adult Code of Conduct and Home School Agreement.

Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours, or during school holidays.

3. 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.

3.1 MCAS

We use My Child at School to:

- Send out letters, newsletters, emails and general notifications
- Set up payment/consent items
- Sign up to clubs and parent consultations

We recommend downloading the MCAS app and enabling push notifications to enable you to receive this communication effectively.

3.2 Direct emails

We will email parents directly in response to specific enquiries, to organise a meeting, or if we are unable to contact parents via phone.

3.3 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

Parents should check the website, including the newsletter, before contacting the school.

3.4 Phone calls

We will phone home to:

- Inform you of accidents that may require further monitoring or medical attention
- Inform you of behaviour incident involving your child (moderate or serious)
- In response to an enquiry
- To arrange a meeting
- To discuss specific matters relating to your child

3.5 Letters/newsletters

We endeavour to put all class/ whole school letters on the weekly newsletter. They will also be saved on the school website. The school may send separate letters personal to your child.

Letters concerning your child's attendance will be sent via post.

3.6 Reports

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

- Two, short, mid- year reports showing their current attainment, their target and a general comment about how they are at school
- An end-of-year report covering their attainment, progress, progress against the curriculum values, attendance, punctuality, uniform and behaviour
- The results of any statutory assessments

We also arrange regular meetings where parents can speak to their child's teacher about their achievement and progress (see the section below).

3.7 Meetings

We hold two parents' evenings per academic year. During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum, 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 discuss how to meet these additional needs.

3.8 Tapestry for EYFS

In EYFS, your child's teacher will upload observations of your child, including messages and reminders. Parents can also upload learning observations from home.

3.9 Facebook

Our Facebook Page, 'Four Elms Parent Community' contains news about what is happening in school, updates from school clubs and advertising for PTA events. The Facebook page is not for general enquiries.

3.10 Teams

Teams is used for teachers to set homework and for reminders that have already been sent to parents via MCAS. Teams should not be used to communicate with the class teacher or pupils.

3.11 Parent Council and Parent Representative

Each class has a Parent Rep, responsible for reminding parents of non-PTA events and messages and organise gifts. A PTA communications representative will share reminders about PTA events. Each year group will also have a Parent Council representative. Parent Council meetings occur termly and all parents will receive a form where they can give feedback on specific agenda items. The minutes will be attached to the newsletter and put on the website. If parents have any queries, they can ask the School Council member to contact the school on their behalf.

4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

Parents should use the list in appendix 1 to identify the most appropriate person to contact about a query or issue, including the school office number and email address.

4.1 Email

Parents should always email the school, or the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance. If there is a message that needs to be passed onto the class teacher that day, please inform the office via email or phone call.

We will aim to acknowledge all emails within 24 hours, in which you will be informed if a longer time scale is needed to respond in detail to your query.

If a query or concern is urgent, and parents need a response sooner than this, they should call the school.

4.2 Phone calls

If parents need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should email the school office and the relevant member of staff will contact them within 48 hours.

If the issue is urgent, parents should call the school office.

4.3 Meetings

If parents would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the appropriate member of staff, or call the school to book an appointment.

5. Inclusion

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

6. Monitoring and review

The Head of School monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every two years.

The policy will be approved by the governing board.

7. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- Acceptable use
- Parent code of conduct
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints
- Home-school agreement

Appendix 1: school contact list

Who should I contact?

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's class teacher (email addresses are on the school website) You can also refer to the experience newsletter sent out on the main newsletter and on Teams.
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your child's class teacher to raise initial concerns. Inclusion Manager for further support– asolomides@inspiream.org.uk
Payments	School office
School trips	School office
Uniform	Goodies to order new uniform https://www.gooddies.co.uk/ Uniformly to buy second hand uniform https://uniforformerly.co.uk/
Lost and found	There is a box kept in the office which you are welcome to come in and look through
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, please fill in the form here: https://www.four-elms.kent.sch.uk/form/?pid=52&form=18 or phone/email the school. If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact the school office and address it to the Head of School Please refer to our attendance policy.
MCAS/ Teams/Tapestry for EYFS	School office
Bullying and behaviour	Initial concerns should aim to be resolved by the class teacher Head of School fourelmsheadofschool@inspiream.org.uk

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
School events/the school calendar	Look at website and newsletter/letters in the first instance. Then contact the school office- secretary@inspiream.org.uk
Special educational needs (SEN)	Class teacher for initial concerns Inclusion Manager – asolomides@inspiream.org.uk
Ordering lunches/ lunch queries	School office who will work with the catering company
PTA	fourelmspta@inspiream.org.uk

Messages

If you have a message that needs passing onto the class teacher, please inform the office in person, by phone or by email. Please avoid passing on messages to the member of staff on the gate, or at the classroom door.

Complaints

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