

Home-school communication policy



Approved by: Finance,
Premises and Staffing
Committee

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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 Headteacher

The headteacher 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)
- Updating Google classroom twice weekly with curriculum content.

Staff will **aim** to respond to communication during core school hours (8am – 5pm) 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.

The office staff are responsible for ParentPay and My Child At School which are two forms of communication that we use for payments, newsletters etc.

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 addressed by the leadership team.

Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours (8am – 5pm) or during school holidays. This will also apply to staff who are on sick leave.

3. How we communicate with parents and carers

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 Email

We use email through My Child At School 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

Parents will receive push notifications through the App.

3.2 Text messages

We will text parents about:

- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)

3.3 School calendar

Our school website 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.

3.4 Phone calls

At Crawley Down School, we are happy to speak to parents over the phone. This may be the parents' preferred way of communication when discussing matters that arise.

Parents are able to contact the school office in order to make an appointment for a member of staff to contact them however, this may not be possible to be arranged for the same working day. We endeavour to make phone call appointments within 72 hours.

3.5 Letters

We send the following letters home regularly (via My Child At School):

- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms
- Our weekly newsletter

3.6 Homework books/school planners

All children receive a home reading journal. This is primarily used to record reading in school and at home. These records are checked regularly by staff and parents may sometimes use this to leave a message for the teacher. Homework such as spelling lists and, log ins for online systems, are also recorded in the children's books.

3.7 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
- A report on KS2 SATs tests
- A report on the results of phonics screening and the multiplication check

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

3.8 Meetings

We hold two parents' consultations in the Autumn term and a further two parents' consultations in the Spring term. 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 and disabilities (SEND), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these additional needs.

3.9 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.

3.10 Google Classroom

Curriculum coverage and school trips will be shared in Google Classroom. In addition there will be a weekly overview of home learning.

3.11 Home-school communications app

ParentPay – this system is used for payments for school hot meals.

My Child At School – this system is used for communication with parents. This includes, upcoming school trips, newsletters, consent forms and school announcements.

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.

We aim to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 5 working days. A 5 working day auto response email will be returned to all external emails.

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 5 working days.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will respond to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure parents have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within 3 days of your request.

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

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

For more general enquiries, please call the school office.

Staff may contact parents by phone to discuss events or issues that may arise.

4.3 Meetings

If parents would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the appropriate email address (see appendix 1), or call the school to book an appointment.

We try to schedule all meetings within 7 working days of the request.

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

- Any concerns they have about their child's learning
- Updates related to pastoral support, their child's home environment, or their wellbeing

4.4 Home-school communications app

ParentPay is used solely for the purchasing of a school hot lunch.

My Child At School can be used by parents to communicate child absences from school. The school will use My Child At School for sending home letters, announcements etc.

5. 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 English.

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

6. 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 Body.

7. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- Online safety
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints
- Home-school agreement

Appendix 1: school contact list

Who should I contact?

If you have questions about any of the topics in the table below, or would like to speak to a member of staff:

- Email or call the school office on office@crawleydownschool.com or 01342 713292
- We will forward your request on to the relevant member of staff

Remember: check our website first, much of the information you need is posted there.

The school office try to respond to all emails within 2 working days. The office working hours are 8.30am – 4.30pm.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's classteacher
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your child's classteacher
Payments	School office – admin@crawleydownschool.com
School trips	School office – admin@crawleydownschool.com
Uniform/lost and found	School office – admin@crawleydownschool.com
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, call: 01342 713292 If you want to request approval for term-time absence, please collect an absence request from the school office.
Bullying and behaviour	Your child's classteacher
School events/the school calendar	School office – admin@crawleydownschool.com
Special educational needs (SEND)	Your child's classteacher or the Inclusion Lead on sen@crawleydownschool.com
Before and after-school clubs	School office – admin@crawleydownschool.com
Hiring the school premises	School office – admin@crawleydownschool.com
Fundraising Team	School office – admin@crawleydownschool.com
Governing board	School office – admin@crawleydownschool.com
Catering/meals	School office – admin@crawleydownschool.com

Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy. This is available on the school website.