Lydgate Junior School

Home and school communication policy

Article 12: Children have the right to give their opinions freely on issues that affect them. Adults should listen and take children seriously.

Article 17: Children have the right to get information from the Internet, radio, television, newspapers, books and other sources.

1. Introduction and aims

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

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents 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
- 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
- Setting clear standards for responding to communication from parents
- Helping parents 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

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- 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 not be expected to respond to communications outside school office hours of 08:00 to 16:15; individually outside their working hours, including if they work part-time; during school holidays.

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
- Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school
- Keeping contact details provided to school up to date

Any communication that is disrespectful, abusive, or threatening will be referred to the Headteacher for investigation and appropriate action.

3. How we communicate with parents and carers

The sections below explain how we keep parents & carers 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 Text messages and Email

We use text and 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
- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- Regarding accidents, injury, behaviour or illness (see below)

When a child has parents in separate households we will send these messages to both parents separately.

3.2 School calendar

We use the school calendar tool on our website (https://www.lydgatejunior.co.uk/) to communicate with parents about events. 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). These events will be included in the school calendar.

3.3 Phone calls

Telephone calls remain our most frequent daily contact with parents on a one-to-one basis. We make calls to parents for a wide range of reasons, such as:

- Attendance concerns
- To respond to queries
- Safeguarding
- To follow up on incidents

We may call parents if their child is ill, been in an incident they should be made aware of, or the parent has forgotten to send something with their child.

Wherever possible the member of staff who dealt with the pupil will contact parent. If this is not practical / possible at the time then a note of the incident will be passed to the school office and admin staff will contact parent by phone and / or text message.

Separate calls and conversations may be necessary following an incident, for example initially about an injury and a second about context and consequence. These calls may be made by different members of staff, but will always be made as soon as staff are able to.

Serious behaviour incidents will lead to contact with all relevant parents. In the most serious cases, where exclusion is applied, written contact is also required. However, it is our intention to telephone first. This contact will be made as quickly as possible, and preferably the same day as the incident. A further contact may be necessary after investigations are completed by school staff.

Safeguarding will always take the highest priority. Designated staff may make telephone calls to parents about Safeguarding matters. These are always confidential within the relevant policy guidelines. Where a safeguarding concern is raised in school that requires a contact with home this will be done within one school day.

3.4 Letters

We send the following letters home, attached to emails. The letter gives more detail of the upcoming event:

- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms
- School meals
- A monthly newsletter

3.5 Homework and Home Reading

We send home reading books and homework weekly.

3.6 Reports

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

- An annual report (normally at the end of the academic year) covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, and their attendance, since the last Report
- A report on national KS2 tests, including the Year 4 multiplication check and the end of key stage Year 6 assessments

3.7 Meetings

We hold a minimum of two parent consultations each year. 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 parent consultations if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing.

Parents of pupils with special educational needs / disability (SEND), or who have other additional needs, will be invited to attend specific meetings to discuss these additional needs.

Where meetings are held online parents will be given a specific class video meeting code rather than the personal account details of individual members of staff.

3.8 School website

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

- School times and term dates
- Important events and announcements
- Curriculum information
- Policies and procedures
- Contact information
- Information about before and after-school provision
- Class blogs
- FAQ pages on current issues

Parents should check the website before contacting the school as the answer may be held there.

An embedded form on the website sends emails to the school's generic email address, and the query is dealt with accordingly at that point.

4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

Parents should use the following tiered approach in contacting school about learning and behaviour concerns:

Class teacher first, then Year Leader, Deputy Headteacher or SENCO, and finally Headteacher

Contacts sent initially to an inappropriate level will be readdressed to the lower tier i.e. if the class teacher has not been approached and a parent addresses a concern directly to the Deputy Headteacher he / she will pass the communication to the appropriate class teacher for attention.

Safeguarding concerns can be sent to the school office who will direct them to a member of the Safeguarding team.

Communications about admin / finance functions (such as school uniform orders, FOLA, school dinner money, trips) should be directed to the school office via email or telephone call.

4.1 Email

Parents should email the school about non-urgent issues. This can be done via the enquiries@lydgate-jun.sheffield.sch.uk email. Staff will not communicate via their personal emails.

We aim to acknowledge email receipt the same working day where an acknowledgement is appropriate. We also aim to respond fully the same working day.

However, many contacts have to be forwarded to other members of staff and some of these contacts need investigation before a full response is possible. We aim to respond fully to all enquiries within five working days.

Some contacts and communications extended periods stipulated for communication limits. Details of each are contained in the relevant policy and / or legislation. Examples include formal complaints, exclusion, SEND processes and school admissions.

If a query or concern is urgent, and a response is needed sooner than this, then contacts should call the school.

If parents wish to contact Governors then they may do so through the enquiries@ email address. It is monitored by admin staff and all emails of this nature will be forwarded to the appropriate Governor.

4.2 Phone calls

Parents are expected to call the school office before 09:30 if their child is absent, on the first day of absence and days subsequently.

The school office is staffed from 08:00 to 16:15. We endeavour to answer every phone call to the office during this period.

If a parent needs to speak to a specific member of staff about a non-urgent matter, they should email as outlined above. Staff will then either call the contact directly or arrange a convenient time to call as soon as practical.

We aim to return calls by the appropriate member of staff the same working day as the contact where possible, whether by a parent as above, or any other contact.

If your issue is urgent, please call the school office. Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

Call the school office on 0114 2669500. A message can be left if the office is not staffed at that point.

4.3 Meetings

To arrange a meeting with a member of staff, email enquiries@ email address, or call the school to book an appointment if the matter is urgent.

We will schedule meetings as soon as possible, dependent on staff prior commitments and on the subject of the request. Safeguarding will always take precedent.

While teachers may be available at the beginning or end of the school day if you need to speak to them urgently, we recommend contacts make appointments. This way we can ensure the availability of relevant staff.

4.4 Letter / Note

It is still perfectly acceptable to send in a handwritten note for the attention of the appropriate member of staff.

5. Inclusion

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

We will try to make additional arrangements if necessary. Parents should contact the school office to discuss specific needs to assist with communication.

6. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every 3 years. The policy will be approved by the Governing Board.

7. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- E Safety Policy
- Staff code of conduct
- Staff Social Media Policy

8. Complaints

To submit a formal complaint, the procedure is set out in our Complaints Policy. This can be found on our website.