



Communication Policy (Parents and Carers)

Introduction

Positive communication is an essential element of the aims and vision of Oughtibridge Primary School. This enables our children and families to feel valued and listened to. The majority of this communication takes place through the frequent verbal interactions between families and staff as children are brought to and from school as well as Class Dojo/Tapestry/Google Classroom, Parentmail, email and telephone.

Aim

To ensure that Oughtibridge Primary School is a thriving and successful school, we must communicate effectively with each other, with our children, with their families and with other members of the wider community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are open, honest, respectful, ethical and professional.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Executive Head/Head of School are responsible for:

- Placing key policies, documents and procedures in areas that maximise their accessibility and usefulness to the entire school community, e.g. on the school website.
- Communicating important information, e.g. the curriculum, clearly to Parents and carers.
- Informing parents and carers of all school events within appropriate timelines.
- Regularly keeping parents and carers informed of their child's progress.
- Informing parents and carers about the types of data that the school holds on pupils, who controls the data, why that data is held and who it may be shared with. This information will be concise, transparent and easily accessible; written in a clear and plain language; and free of charge.
- Ensuring that parents and carers understand their right to access information about their child that is held by the school.
- Ensuring that parents and carers also understand their rights to rectification, to erasure, to restrict processing, to data portability and to object to processing.
- Ensuring that consent obtained from parents and carers, and pupils where appropriate, regarding the processing of personal data is freely given, specific, informed, and an unambiguous indication of the individual's wishes.
- Ensuring that individuals are informed of their rights to withdraw consent and are provided with easy ways to do so.
- Taking steps to ensure parents and carers who do not have access to the internet can still access the information that is included on the school website.
- Approving all marketing and communication-related proposals and materials.
- Overseeing the overall implementation of this policy.

Parents and carers are responsible for:

- Reading the key communications circulated by the school and responding or acting on these communications where required, e.g. by attending meetings.
- Logging on to the school website for detailed information about the school calendar, term dates, monitoring and assessments, school achievements and other useful downloads.
- Logging on to Parentmail to read any communication such as letters, newsletters and updates they may have received.
- Informing the school of important information related to their child, such as:
 - Medical conditions or allergies, supported by medical documentation relating to these conditions.
 - Any SEND or other needs their child has.
 - Child protection matters, legal issues or relevant duties with appropriate documentation.
- Raising any issues or concerns they may have with the appropriate contact, e.g. contacting the class teacher with education-related issues.

Contact Details

The school holds emergency contact details for all children on the School Information Management System (SIMs) and families are reminded on a regular basis to ensure that these are up to date. Families are expected to inform the school immediately in the event that contact information needs to be revised. Depending on the nature of the communication, the school will use the most practicable means to contact families.

Communications with Families

Hereafter the term 'families' will be used to refer to all those individuals who have a role in the up-bringing and care of the child.

Families are welcome to visit the school to discuss their child's progress, ask questions and gain support or to have the opportunity to talk about their child/home issues with their child's class teacher first. This can be done initially at the classroom door at the start and the end of the school day, via Class Dojo or via email to the main school email address (enquiries@oughtibridge.sheffield.sch.uk).

Outside of teaching their designated class, all staff have additional duties which they perform either before school, during break time/lunchtime or after school. We aim to be able to facilitate requests for an immediate meeting, however for the reasons stated above, when this is not possible, staff may not be able to facilitate an immediate, unscheduled appointment but will aim to do so within 5 school days. Arranging a mutually convenient appointment allows the school the time to organise cover to make staff available to speak to the families and to gather any necessary information prior to the meeting. This process will make the meeting much more conducive.

The following list, whilst not exhaustive, covers the main ways in which we will communicate with families. All response times are indicative and where extensions are needed, i.e. for further investigation, a holding response will be given to the family along with an updated expected response time.

Year Group Curriculum Bulletins

Families will receive a termly Year Group Curriculum Bulletin via Parentmail. This will identify the focus of the learning taking place during the period indicated and identifies how families can support their child's learning at home.

Emails and Electronic Information

The school subscribes to Parentmail allowing us to email letters to families. Not only is this more environmentally friendly as it decreases paper usage, it also reduces photocopying and other costs in the school. We encourage families to provide us with a valid email address.

Families are permitted to use messaging via Class Dojo, Tapestry or Google Classroom as a means of providing a quick, effective way of communicating information about their child or to arrange a meeting with their teacher.

Families are reminded that teachers have minimal time during their teaching day to check messages and therefore requests which require immediate or quick action should not be sent in this way. For example, emailing your child's teacher to inform them you will be collecting them for an appointment or to change pick-up arrangements is not appropriate due to the high likelihood that the message will not be read in time. It is important that families telephone the school office with this information. Staff, if appropriate, may forward messages to the Headteacher.

All emails requiring an answer should be responded to within 3 school days. Staff are not expected to, and are discouraged from, checking and responding to emails outside of their working day. However, staff are encouraged to work flexibly and respond to emails in a way that suits them to balance their working hours. Staff do not expect families to read, respond or action emails outside hours that suit them.

Emailing does not replace face to face meetings where some discussion is required. All staff should seek face to face communications, when emailing is not the most effective form of communication. Staff and families are discouraged from entering into in-depth discussions about a child's progress or well-being via email.

Where it is not possible to use electronic messaging, most written correspondence is passed on to families through face to face interaction at the end of the school day. Where this is not appropriate, it is forwarded through Parentmail, Pupil Post or the Royal Mail postage service.

Home/School Communication

Text

The school has a Text system (Parentmail) which is used to communicate with families. Text messages are sent to both Primary and Secondary contacts. This is not a reply service and is only used when there is an unexpected situation to report, such as a bad weather or school closures. This may also be used if the school is unable to contact a parent via telephone and the school is needing an urgent response, such as non attendance or an ill child.

Telephone calls

Inbound

All telephone calls will be answered by staff in the main office. It is our policy that office staff do not interrupt teaching for staff to answer a telephone call unless it is an emergency. Messages are taken and forwarded to the relevant person. If the call requires a response from a member of staff, we aim to do this within 3 working days.

Outbound

Telephone calls will be made where immediate contact with a family member is required i.e. for injuries or accidents. A member of staff will call the first named emergency contact as listed. Where no contact is made, a call will then be made to the second named contact and so forth. In the event that no live contact can be made, the member of staff will either leave an answer phone message or ensure that repeat calls continue to be made to the contact numbers, where possible.

Class Dojo (Y1-Y6) and Tapestry (FS2)

Class Dojo and Tapestry connects the school and families through building virtual classroom communities.

It enables staff to share photos, videos, announcements and celebrations as well as messaging between school and home. As with emails, staff are not expected to, and are discouraged from, checking and responding to Dojo/Tapestry messages outside of their working day.

However, staff are encouraged to work flexibly and respond to Dojo/Tapestry messages in a way that suits them to balance their working hours. The 'quiet hours' function may be employed during non working hours so you are aware that your message may not be read during this time. Staff do not expect families to read, respond or action Dojo/Tapestry messages outside hours that suit them. Dojo/Tapestry messaging does not replace face to face meetings where some discussion is required. All staff should seek face to face communications, when Dojo/Tapestry is not the most effective form of communication. Staff and families are discouraged from entering into in-depth discussions about a child's progress or well-being via Class Dojo or Tapestry.

School Facebook Site

Staff are advised not to communicate with families via social networking sites or accept them as "friends". Our Facebook feed is designed to highlight positive aspects of our school

only. Any negative comments or complaints will be deleted and the school reserves the right to 'block' any user from the school's page. The school office will not respond to Facebook messages and therefore other forms of communication to the school should be used.

Written Reports

Once a year, we provide a full written report to each child's families on their progress. This report identifies areas of strength and next steps. We also provide a termly progress report (verbal) at our Parents' Evenings.

Newsletter

Our newsletter is emailed out each Friday by Parentmail and contains important reminders, dates and messages for the week ahead. Families are strongly encouraged to read these. The weekly lunch menu is also included within this newsletter along with any changes to the menu.

Parents' Evenings

All families are provided with two, 9-minute meetings each academic year. Families are asked to sign up for an allocated date and time via SchoolCloud. Should an appointment day not be suitable, families are asked to contact their child's teacher who will make every effort to arrange a more mutually convenient time, although this cannot be guaranteed to be during the same week of the planned meetings. Families are encouraged to request additional meetings should they have a concern regarding their child's progress or well-being. Likewise, staff will arrange additional meetings if necessary.

Annual Reviews for Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan

All children with an Education, Health and Care Plan will have an Annual Review each academic year to discuss their progress in relations to the aims and objectives of their plan and termly review meetings are held to ensure provision and support is appropriate. Please refer to our SEND Policy for further details.

Children with Support Plans

Children on the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Register, have a plan with targets which is updated every term and is discussed with families at SEN review meetings.

School Website

The school website <http://www.oughtibridgeschool.co.uk> provides an opportunity to share information about the school and is an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience.

Complaints

All formal letters of complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the school's separate Peak Edge Trust Complaints Policy. All formal letters to families must be approved by the Headteacher before they are sent. If families communicate with the school using email and a letter with a formal complaint or a matter of concern, a copy should be stored digitally for

all children in their pupil records and held for a period of time in accordance with our Disposal of Records Schedule. The school does not accept or act upon anonymous communication unless in relation to matters of serious Child Protection.

Requests for Information

Please refer to our Data Protection and GDPR Policy for copies of children's records, freedom of information and Subject Access Requests. This will detail procedures and protocols, including timings.

When communication becomes inappropriate, aggressive, vexatious, persistent or disproportionate and the school deems it is unacceptable, then actions will be put in place in accordance with our Anti-Violence and Aggression Policy.