



Sedgefield Primary School

Learning Together for Life

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS & CARERS POLICY

1. Introduction

At Sedgefield Primary School, we believe that good communication between school and the home is essential. Children achieve more when school and parents/carers work together. Parents/carers can help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve and how they can support this.

In our school we aim to have clear and effective communications with parents/carers and the wider community. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values through keeping parents/carers well informed about school life. This reinforces the importance of the role that parents/carers play in supporting the school in educating their children.

2. Principles:

- Communicating with stakeholders, particularly parents/carers, is a core part of what we do.
- We will always try to share as much information as possible about any issue.
- We will communicate in a voice which is courteous, jargon free and warm.
- We acknowledge that some information is of a confidential nature and will always respect that confidentiality.

3. Strategies:

We communicate with parents/carers through a range of different strategies. Some of our communications are the result of a statutory requirement; others reflect what we believe is important to our school:

Talking with staff

Class Teachers are available for a 'quick word' at the end of the day. However, if a parent/carer needs to talk with the class teacher in more detail, they should make an appointment for a telephone conversation or a meeting in person, as talking at length in the playground after school is difficult for the teacher and the children.

The Headteacher or member of the Leadership Team will always be in the playground at the start of the day. Many parental queries and concerns can be dealt with at this time. The Headteacher is often available for a telephone conversation or meeting without appointment.

Meetings

There are a number of meetings through the year which provide opportunities to discuss children's progress, how parents/carers can support their child, current developments in the school, etc.:

- New Parents - we hold two meetings for new parents/carers each July.
- 'Meet the Teacher' – there is an opportunity for parents/carers to meet their child's new teacher at the beginning of the new academic year to pass on any relevant information and check that their child has settled.
- Year 6 Robinwood and SATs – the Headteacher and Year 6 staff organise a meeting for parents/carers in September/October to provide detailed information about all aspects of the Robinwood residential trip and to share information about the SATs testing process and how parents/carers can support their child.
- Year 1 Phonics and Year 2 SATs Briefings – short sessions to explain the testing process and how parents/carers can support at home.
- Curriculum Information Meetings – meetings are arranged to explain aspects of the curriculum and/or teaching methods, such as the meeting for Reception parents/carers to explain phonics, reading and writing, or meetings to explain how aspects of mathematics are taught.
- Parents' Evenings – twice a year there is the opportunity for parents/carers to meet with class teachers to discuss their child's progress and how they can be support at home.
- Open Afternoons - parents/carers are invited to spend an afternoon in the school working alongside their child and looking at their work.

Website

The school website <http://www.sedgefield-pri.durham.sch.uk/> is regularly updated with information about the school, including newsletters, up to date policies, curriculum information for each class, current news about what is happening in school. The school diary can also be found on the website and is regularly updated. Staff lists and responsibilities are also published on the school website in the information section.

Twitter

Staff members will 'Tweet' about things the children have done in school on a regular basis. It provides parents/carers with an immediate update of what is happening. The school's Twitter feed can be accessed from the website for those people who do not access Twitter.

Text and E-Mail Communication

The school uses 'PS Connect' as a method of text and e-mail communication. Newsletters, whole school and group letters are emailed, wherever possible, replacing the paper copies. Urgent messages (such as school closure) and reminders are sent by text.

Monthly Newsletter and Half-Termly Class Letter

Details of school events, reminders, requests for help and news are shared in our monthly newsletter. Every half-term class teachers send information about what the children will be studying in the coming weeks so parents/carers are able to support their child at home. The newsletter and half-termly letters are also published on the website.

Staff Communication with Parents/carers

Copies of letters sent home are kept in the school office. Details for the protocol for communicating with parents/carers via text and email are provided in appendix 1.

School Reports

Parents/carers are given a brief report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the Autumn and Spring Terms. A detailed written report is sent home at the end of the year and parents/carers can subsequently arrange to meet with teachers if there are any concerns.

School Brochure

The School Brochure contains a range of information to give new and prospective parents/carers a full picture of provision at our school. It is also published on the website and a hard copy is given to every new/prospective parent.

Public access documents

The school makes available a range of documentation for parents/carers. We keep a master set in the school office and we make this available on request. It contains copies of all school curriculum policies, minutes of governing body meetings and copies of policies that the governing body are required to have in relation to charging and remissions, sex education, health and safety, curriculum, performance management, admissions etc. It also contains a range of national and LA documentation. A copying charge may be levied where requests for printed materials are made (a large proportion of this information is also on the website).

APPENDIX 1

EMAIL and TEXT PROTOCOL

for staff communication with parents/carers

This is guidance on when to send an email or text from Sedgefield Primary School to parents/carers. It should be used in conjunction with the E-Safety Policy.

As a broad overview, emails and texts are useful communication tools, but a face to face meeting is always preferable to discuss a child's progress or welfare issues.

EMAILS

- Where possible newsletters and those letters which do not require a returns slip should be emailed to reduce photocopying costs and ensure the letter gets to the parent/carer.
- Group email addresses can be collated under year group or whole school categories. Groups will be administered by the admin staff so that they can communicate information where only one group is affected (e.g. trip information, meeting for Reception parents, etc.).
- When staff give parents/carers their email address at the beginning of the year, they should make it clear it is not for urgent communication (that should be done via a phone call to the school office).
- Staff should aim to respond to an email within 48 hours where possible and, under normal circumstances, should not respond to any email from a parent before 8.00am or after 5.00pm Monday – Friday.
- Staff should forward complaints, or any email that causes concern, to the Headteacher and should not respond to those emails directly. It may also be appropriate to copy the Headteacher into email responses to keep her informed of a particular issue.
- Staff should not enter into in depth discussion with parents/carers about a child via email, but should use it to make a face-to-face appointment or follow it up with a phone call.

TEXTS

- A text message should be used as a primary resource in informing parents/carers of a school closure (e.g. snow).
- Texts should be used to inform parents/carers of a change to procedure e.g. the closure of an after-school club or the cancellation of an event.
- Texts can be used to remind parents/carers of upcoming events.
- In the event of sickness or an accident parents/carers should be telephoned, not sent a text. However, a text may be sent asking the parent/carer to contact the school.
- The PTFA may send a text to all parents/carers e.g. asking for help with events, etc.
- News of great significance must not be sent by text, but should come by email/letter from the Head.