



## **Communications Policy**

**Written By:** SLT

**Date:** September 2015

**Revised:** October 2019

## **Legal framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 2002
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Freedom of Information Act 2000

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

**Data Protection Policy**

**Freedom of Information Policy**

**Data and E-Security Policy**

**Data Information**

**Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

**Social Media Policy**

**Adverse Weather Policy**

**Lockdown and Evacuation Policy**

**Staff Handbook**

**Acceptable Use Agreement**

## **Vision**

Together we aspire, learn, achieve and thrive.

## **Aim**

At Carden Nursery and Primary School, we understand the importance of the relationship between parents, pupils and the school.

We have a strong inclusive ethos where pupils have positive relationships with staff members and with each other. This policy sets out the aims of the school with regards to internal and external communication, and the responsibilities of the school, its staff members and parents.

The school aims to promote effective communication between pupils, members of staff, parents, stakeholders and all members of the school community. The school's objectives are to:

- Have a clear and professional communication strategy in place which helps to keep parents well-informed about their child's educational progress and any other matters related to their child's overall wellbeing.
- Improve the quality of education by making sure there is a robust process in place for consultation between the school, parents, staff members and pupils on key areas.
- Monitor and evaluate communication issues through regular meetings with staff, parents and members of the school community.

## **Objectives**

All communication at Carden Nursery and Primary School should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents and other school community members well informed
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional
- Use jargon free English and be easily understood by all
- Be actioned within a reasonable time
- Use the method of communication most effective and appropriate to the context and audience
- Take account of relevant school policies e.g. Equal Opportunities Policy and Equalities Document

## How do we communicate?

- Open door policy – staff meet and dismiss children at the start and end of the day on the playground
- Weekly newsletters (available on the website and via Study Bugs)
- Study Bugs messaging service from the office to parents/carers
- Staff emails
- School Website – [www.carden.brighton-hove.sch.uk](http://www.carden.brighton-hove.sch.uk)
- School Office – [admin@carden.brighton-hove.sch.uk](mailto:admin@carden.brighton-hove.sch.uk)
- Telephone calls – 01273 293677
- Letters
- School Prospectus and Parents' Handbook (both available on the website)
- Parents information point in the foyer
- Noticeboards outside the school
- Parents' evenings three times a year
- Celebration events and open afternoons/work share
- Topic Overview Guides– (available termly on the website)
- Weekly Year Group homework that includes year group information
- Weekly staff briefings
- Daily Bulletin for staff
- INSET Days
- Staff Handbook
- PTA
- Parents' Forum
- Children's end of year school reports

## **Internal and external communications**

- A whiteboard is kept in the staff room that outlines weekly activities, as well as for daily messages
- All staff members are aware of the Staff Handbook, which details a variety of school procedures
- Written communications to staff members are delivered via pigeon holes or by email. There is also a text facility in the event of emergencies such as unexpected school closure or incidents
- Staff members' personal details will not be shared with other members of staff or external agencies without their consent
- Under no circumstance will staff members' personal details be shared with parents
- Staff members will not communicate with parents or pupils via social networking sites, or accept 'friend' requests, except in the case of blogs or social media pages set up specifically for the purpose of teaching and learning, in accordance with the Social Media Policy
- Parents will be given the opportunity to sign up to receive newsletters etc. via Study Bugs
- For general enquiries, parents are required to ring the school office, which is open from Monday to Friday between 8.30am to 3.45pm on 01273 293677
- For non-urgent enquiries, parents are required to email the school using **admin@carden.brighton-hove.sch.uk**
- All emails to the school will specify the member of staff that the query is addressed to
- All emails to the school will be treated as confidential, unless there is a specific reason not to do so

## **Email communication**

Email and internet access will be used in line with the school's Data and E-Security Policy and Acceptable Use Agreement

All members of staff have their own email account

Emails will not be used as a substitute for face-to-face communication. Staff members will consider the best way to communicate according to each individual situation

Staff members will not engage in personal correspondence with pupils

Communication between pupils and parents with staff members will be carried out via the school email address, and not via staff members' personal email addresses

Chain emails will not be allowed

Staff will ensure that the sending of attachments is limited to only work-related emails

Under no circumstances will adverts be embedded into emails

As emails can cause high volumes of pressure for staff, the email protocols below will be used followed at all times:

## **Email Protocol**

### **DURING TERM TIME**

- ✓ **Parents will be aware that teachers are not in a position to check emails consistently throughout the day**
  - ✓ **Parents will only use staff email addresses to contact staff directly**
  - ✓ **Staff and parents are aware that part-time staff may take longer to reply due to the nature of their work schedule**
- Urgent messages should not be communicated through email but should be phoned into the school office or left as a voicemail e.g. illness or alternative school pick up
  - Staff will look at all emails within 48 hours and respond to them within 72 hours
  - Staff responses to emails will be brief and may only be an acknowledgement
  - Follow up to an email may be face to face if the teacher feels that this is the best method of communication
  - Staff will not respond to emails over the weekends or during school holidays
  - Teachers email addresses can be given to parents via the school office. They will not be published on the website
  - There will be no facility for Skype, Face Time or other video calling services

**School staff will not respond to emails or telephone messages over weekends or during school holidays.**

**Parents and Teachers should ensure that:**

- They do not engage in **private/personal** correspondence with children and parents
- Under no circumstances should staff contact children, parents or conduct any school business using personal email addresses
- The sending of attachments should be limited
- The sending of chain letters is not permitted
- No adverts are embedded

## **If a parent has an urgent concern or worry. What to do and what happens next?**

### **At the beginning and end of the day**

Speak to your child's class teacher – please bear in mind that the beginning and end of the day are very busy periods.

In the mornings the teacher is expected to supervise their class and begin teaching as soon as possible. It may not be possible to have a lengthy conversation at that point.

Similarly at home time, the teachers' first priority is to hand over children safely to their collecting adult. You may need to wait to speak to them once they have dismissed all the children.

If the teacher is unable to speak to you at that point in time, they will arrange a convenient time for you to meet.

### **During the school day**

**Please phone (01273 293677) or email (admin@carden.brighton-hove.sch.uk) the school office briefly detailing your concern and to whom you need to speak.**

#### **Please note:**

- ✓ Lessons will never be interrupted for parents to speak to a teacher
- ✓ The school will determine the level of urgency requests. Any safeguarding concern will always take immediate priority over other meetings
- ✓ The school will **acknowledge receipt** of your call/email **within 48 working hours** and will ensure that any **meeting** takes place **within 5 working days**.

Please be patient as the school receives multiple requests for meetings/discussions each week, particularly with members of senior staff (Head Teacher, Assistant Head Teachers and SENCO.) We will try to arrange to speak/meet with you as soon as is practical for us to do so.



### **Personal Difficulties and concerns**

We recognise that family life can be tricky sometimes and circumstances can change. Difficult family events/circumstances can have an impact on children. It's really helpful and valuable if parents/carers are able to share this information with school as we may be able to either offer or signpost support for children and families.

All conversations will of course be treated with the utmost confidence and respect. Information will only ever be shared with relevant professionals if necessary.

Please contact the School Office and ask to speak to Miss Perrins, Assistant Head Teacher/SENCO if you have any concerns.

### **Meetings**

- ✓ A programme of all staff meetings will be set out in the school calendar
- ✓ All formal meetings will be minuted and members invited to contribute to the agenda
- ✓ Time will be set aside for structured opportunities for staff to engage in team working and to contribute to the school's reflection on priorities, activities and future plans
- ✓ For all formal meetings, minutes will be taken, action points progressed and feedback given to staff members
- ✓ Minutes of meetings will be copied to relevant staff members, as well as the SLT, and a copy will be saved on the Amber Shared Drive, in a clearly marked subject folder
- ✓ When parents wish to organise meetings with members of staff, they will first contact their child's classroom teacher
- ✓ Parents are required to organise meetings with members of staff prior to conducting a meeting

### **School prospectus**

The prospectus and school website will be utilised to communicate information regarding the following:

- Clubs and activities
- School hours
- School uniform
- Term dates
- Pupil safety
- The school calendar
- Ofsted reports
- External test information
- Informal communication between teachers and parents

The school prospectus will be updated each summer term.

The content of the prospectus and website will complement the work of the school, as well as contain information about the most recent activities and successes of the school, including progress, priorities and performance.

## **Emergency Communication**

- The school keeps an up to date list of emergency phone numbers used to contact parents/carers when a child is ill. It is **very important** for Parents/Carers to inform the office in the event of any details changing (including email addresses).
- In the event of school closure due to bad weather, heating failure or any other health and safety issue parents/carers will be informed by Study Bugs messaging and email. The school website will also be used, whenever possible, to pass on this information
- If a pupil is seriously ill or injured, the school will attempt to contact the pupil's emergency contact(s) via telephone
- In the event of a serious incident, the school will follow its Lockdown and Evacuation Policy – parents will routinely receive updates on how the school will communicate with them during a lockdown or evacuation via the school newsletter

## **Accessing information**

In accordance with an individual's right of access under the GDPR, personal information (such as educational records), confirmation of data processing, and other supplementary information will be shared with individuals who request access.

The procedure below will be followed in terms of SARs:

- The requests will be made in writing to the governing body, and will be responded to within one month of receipt
- The period of compliance may be extended by a further two months where the requests are complex or numerous. If this is the case, individuals will be informed within one month of receipt of the request, with an explanation of why an extension is required
- A pupil, or the parent of a pupil, will have the right to access the information that the school holds about the child in question
- Individuals have the right to access their personal data free of charge
- Where requests are manifestly unfounded or excessive, a reasonable charge for the administrative costs of providing the information will be applied, or the request will be refused
- If any request is refused, the individual will be informed of their right to complain to the supervisory authority and to a judicial remedy without delay within one month

Under the GDPR, remote access to a secure self-service system will be given to provide individuals with direct access to their personal information

In line with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, private data and public records can potentially be accessed through lodging an FOI request

The procedure below will be followed in terms of FOI requests:

- The requests will be made in writing to the school, stating the name and address of the requester, as well as a description of the information requested
- Successful FOI requests will be responded to within 20 working days from receipt of the request, unless the request does not comply with the procedure set out in the school's Freedom of Information Policy
- The school holds the right to charge the requester a fee, if complying with the request would cost the school an excess of £450
- Certain information will not be shared, such as that explained in Part 2 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000

### **Monitoring and review**

The efficiency of this policy will be continuously monitored throughout the year by the head teacher and governing body.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the senior leadership team.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is **October 2020**.

# Who Do I Contact at Carden?

## Office Staff

The Office Staff will be able to answer most queries about the general day to day running of the school i.e. Payments, letters, club information and general school enquiries. The office staff will also pass messages on to other staff members.

If your issue relates to Special Educational Needs or Additional Needs, the SENCO, Miss Perrins will be the person to contact.

## Class Teacher

The Class Teacher will be the first person to speak to in the case of a class based issue or enquiry that the office is unable to answer such as friendship issues or academic achievement. The majority of issues can be sorted out at this stage.

## SENCO

## Key Stage 2 Lead

Mr McEwen

For any Key Stage 2 issue that is more serious in nature or relates to the running of the year team, the Key Stage 2 Leader is the person to contact.

If a child or family receives Learning Mentor intervention work or support then they will be more appropriate for any first contact about issues as they have a close relationship with their mentees.

## Assistant Head Teachers

Mrs Stedman – KS1  
Mr Harrington – KS2  
Miss Perrins – SENCO/DPCP

When an issue is such that it demands the attention of a senior member of the Leadership Team then the Assistant Head Teachers would need to be contacted.

## Headteacher

There may be occasions when an issue is serious enough for it to be brought to the attention of the Headteacher. In this instance issues are usually referred up by the Assistant Head Teachers.

## Learning Mentors

## Chair of Governors

Our policy states that should any person not be satisfied with the head teacher's response they should address their concerns to the Chair of Governors who will investigate the matter within 10 working days.

