

Woodcote Primary School

Home-school Communication Policy



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Headteacher:

Chair of Governors:

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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
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves) Ensuring that all communications are treated as confidential within the school context.
- Ensuring that all communications are dealt with respectfully and with courtesy.

Staff will **aim** to respond to communication within 48 hours of receiving communications during core school hours (8.45am - 3.15pm), 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.

2.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times and in line with our Parent Code of Conduct
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance - Refer to the communication flowchart included in this policy to ensure communications are sent to the right person/people.
- Reading the key communication issued by the school through ParentMail, including year group weekly messages, the weekly newsletter, messages sent and letters. All communications for Woodcote Primary School are sent through ParentMail. This is managed by the school admin team.
- Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school

Abusive or aggressive behaviour – in person, by phone or email – will not be tolerated. Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with our parent code of conduct.

Parents should allow up to 48 working hours for staff members to respond to their communication. They should not expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours, or their working hours if they are part time, or during school holidays.

A copy of the Parent Code of Conduct can be found on our school website.

3. How we communicate with parents and carers

The sections below explain how we keep parents 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 Email

We use email to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events – trips, visitors, fundraising events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- Short-notice changes to the school day
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests

3.2 Text messages

We may also 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 newsletter includes a full school calendar for the half-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

Teachers/office staff may call parents to discuss pupils' performance, behaviour or medical conditions. This may be during core school hours (8.30am - 3.15pm) but may also need to be outside of normal core hours due to teaching commitments. If teachers/office staff are unable to contact a parent, they may contact other contacts for the pupil that are stored as additional/emergency contacts on our records. They may also ask the office to email the parent instead.

3.5 Parentmail

We send the following letters home regularly via Parentmail/Parentpay:

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

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 Key Stage (KS) 1 and KS2 SATs tests
- A report on the results of public examinations

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 2 parents' meeting(s) per 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 parents' meetings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing.

Parents of pupils with special educational needs (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
- 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.

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 about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within 1 working day, and to respond (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 3 working days.

If a query or concern is urgent, and parents need a response sooner than this, they should call the school.

4.2 Phone calls

Whilst email is preferable, telephone calls are one appropriate way to notify us that your child will be absent from school. Please telephone us to communicate brief information about your child that the school needs to know in an emergency, e.g. to let us know that you will be late collecting your child. We ask parents to telephone the school on 01491 680454. The school office is open between 8.30am and 4.00pm, Monday - Friday during term-time. At all other times, there is an answering service available to take your message. If the call requires a response, we aim to do this within 3 working days during term-time.

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 2 working days during term-time.

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 an appropriate member of staff within 5 working days of your request during term-time.

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.

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 5 working days of the request within term-time.

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

We encourage all parents to engage with the use of ParentMail, as this is the main form of communication provided by the school.

ParentMail is used to send out a variety of information, either to a targeted class or group, e.g. specific communications regarding class trips and special events, or to all parents, e.g. urgent messages such as an unplanned school closure.

For further information about how ParentMail works please click on the following link:

<https://www.parentmail.co.uk/help/parenthelp/>

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 the following languages:

- English

Parents who need help communicating with the school can request the following support:

- School announcements and communications translated into additional languages
- Interpreters for meetings or phone calls

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 three years.

The policy will be approved by the governing board.

7. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- Online Safety Policy
- Parent code of conduct
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints
- Staff wellbeing
- E- Learning Code of Conduct

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.2510@woodcote.oxon.sch.uk
- Put the subject and the name of the relevant member of staff (from the list below) in the subject line (for emails)
- 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.

We try to respond to all emails within 3 days.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's class teacher
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your child's class teacher
Payments	School office – office.2510@woodcote.oxon.sch.uk
School trips	School office – office.2510@woodcote.oxon.sch.uk
Uniform/lost and found	School office – office.2510@woodcote.oxon.sch.uk
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, call: 01491 680454 If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact School office – office.2510@woodcote.oxon.sch.uk
Bullying and behaviour	School office – office.2510@woodcote.oxon.sch.uk
School events/the school calendar	School office – office.2510@woodcote.oxon.sch.uk
Special educational needs (SEN)	School office – office.2510@woodcote.oxon.sch.uk
Before and after-school clubs	School office – office.2510@woodcote.oxon.sch.uk
Hiring the school premises	School office – office.2510@woodcote.oxon.sch.uk
PTA	Friends of Woodcote Primary School (FOWPS) fowps-pta@googlegroups.com

Concerns or Complaints

If you would like to file a concern or a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy.

A copy of the Complaints policy can be found on our school website.