

Giffards Primary School

Communications with Parents/Carers policy

This policy was agreed by staff and adopted by governors on 10th October 2019

To be reviewed Autumn term 2022 unless required earlier

Signed _____

Chair of Governors

Communication with Parents Policy

Policy Statement

Good communication between the school and the home is essential. Pupils achieve more when schools and parents or carers work together; parents and carers can help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve; staff and governors will be more effective if they have a good understanding of parents' perspectives.

General Principles

We aim to have clear, effective communication with parents and the wider community at all times. Effective communication enables us to share our aims and values by keeping parents informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents play in supporting the school.

While staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents, relationships are kept professional and parents are addressed in a formal manner.

Written communication is made as accessible as possible, providing translations when necessary.

We aim to respond promptly to parents' letters and emails and this is often the same day, but the following policy sets out the timescales we will try and adhere to if we are unable to respond immediately.

The use of email communication between a parent and a class teacher can speedily and effectively deal with any problems that might arise. We request that all emails are sent via admin@giffardsprimary.thurrock.sch.uk

School

The school will undertake to ensure that:

- Parents and children have clear lines of communication
- The curriculum is clearly communicated to parents
- Parents are informed of forthcoming events within appropriate timelines
- All communications will be treated as confidential within the school context

Parent/Guardians/Carers

Parents will undertake to

- Read all communications issued by the school
- Raise issues or concerns at the earliest opportunity with the school in the appropriate manner*
- Act on the communication (for example, attending special meetings)
- Not discuss school issues on Social Media

*Issues should be raised with a class teacher in the first instance; these may then be escalated to SLT / Headteacher if necessary.

Visiting School

Parents/carers are always welcome at school. If you are visiting school to attend a meeting, one of our school admin staff members will ask you to sign into the school visitors book and to complete the appropriate safeguarding form for visitors to the school (if you have not already completed one) and will then provide you with a red lanyard which we kindly ask you to wear so you are visible in school. All red lanyard holders must wear them at all times and be accompanied around the school.

We do ask parents/carers to be understanding of the fact that staff are not always available to meet with you without notice and we encourage parents/carers to make appointments with staff to discuss any concerns that you may have regarding your child. Please do not turn up at school and expect to see a member of staff immediately.

Contacting School by Telephone

The school office is open from 8.00am – 4.30pm, Monday – Friday. The telephone number is 01375 672138. Please contact a member of the admin staff if you would like a message to be passed to your child's teacher.

If you have an urgent enquiry that can't be discussed with your child's teacher or you have a safeguarding concern, please contact a member of the admin staff and ask to speak to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

The members of the Senior Leadership Team

- Mrs N Haslam-Davis, Head teacher
- Mr S Feather, Deputy Head teacher
- Mrs V Teager, AHT and SENCO
- Miss N James, AHT

Staff are not always available to take or make phone calls. Office staff will not interrupt teaching for staff to answer a telephone call. They must wait until break time or after school, with the exception of emergencies. Staff will endeavour to call parents or carers back by the end of the day unless there is a meeting.

Staff should take notes about the content of telephone calls, as they would with meetings with parents.

We are happy to talk over the phone with parents to discuss and try to resolve concerns. However, raised voices, aggression, unnecessarily accusatory language, swearing, or threatening behaviour towards staff, pupils or other parents will result in termination of the call.

Group call messages

We use a emailing/text messaging service to contact parents/carers with reminders about school events, details of class trips as well as any urgent information – for example; if it is necessary to close the school in an emergency. Please help us by making sure that we always have your correct email address/mobile telephone number. If your details change at any time,

please notify us of such change in details as soon as possible. If we do not have up to date information we cannot be held responsible for parents not receiving important information.

Written Reports

Once a year, a full written report is sent to parents giving details of their child's progress in the main subject areas taught. The report identifies areas of strength and areas where further development is needed. Pupils are also given the opportunity to comment on their own progress and parents are invited to make a comment.

Parents' Evenings

Parents are asked to meet their child's teachers twice a year at parents' evening; these are in the Autumn and Spring terms.

We meet with parents more regularly if pupils:

- have special educational needs
- are making less than expected progress
- are experiencing behavioural or disciplinary difficulties.

Transition meetings

We will hold year group meetings for parents/carers in September so all parents are informed of the curriculum, expectations and any changes for their child's new year group. This is also an opportunity for parents to meet the class teachers and address any early concerns.

There is a meeting prior to transition week, in the summer term, for all parents of pupils moving from Year 2 to 3.

Foundation Stage starters

An in-depth induction for all new foundation pupils and parents is held in the summer term once we know which pupils will be starting. Parents are contacted individually with details

A new starter meeting is held for all parents to share curriculum and organizational details prior to pupils starting

Email

Our aim is for all parents to sign up to the school's "group call" system to facilitate paperless communications.

We ask parents to use the email address admin@giffardsprimary.thurrock.sch.uk. For the purposes of administration we require all emails to go to a central email address. All emails will be treated with full confidentiality, they will be acknowledged and passed onto the correct person and the responses will be made by the member of staff addressed. Please note all emails should specify the member of staff to whom the query is addressed.

We will respond to emails within 5 working days (during term time).

Your email will be responded to within 48hrs. Please note that if your email requires a detailed response, the member of staff will be reply within a period of 3-5 working days.

Staff must not contact pupils or parents, or conduct any school business, from a personal email address. Staff have school email addresses which are used for school based communications but all parent communication should go through admin –as above

Exceptions to this are PE emails – as some communication needs to be immediate such as - if at an event/organising a late fixture. The PE department will use a PE email address.

Staff will not be expected to monitor or respond to emails out of their normal working hours (including weekends and published school holidays).

Parent–staff Meetings

Any parent wishing to meet with a member of staff should contact the school in advance and request a meeting. Parents who do come to the school without an appointment should not expect that the member of staff will meet with them. The member of staff may still choose to do so, but this is at their discretion.

A member of staff may ask for their line manager to accompany them at meetings with parents. Where meetings occur away from the school premises, or outside normal school hours, the member of staff should try to ensure that another colleague is nearby.

We appreciate that some meetings put the participants into contrary positions. We aim to remain professional in such situations and to focus on a constructive outcome. If a parent does become aggressive or abusive, the staff member should close the meeting and report the matter to his or her line manager.

It is perfectly acceptable to call a meeting to a close in order to allow time for further investigation.

Dealing with Parental Concerns – see also complaints policy

We encourage parents to contact the relevant teacher at the earliest opportunity if they have concerns regarding their child’s progress or well-being. The teacher may then enable contact with:

- a. a member of the senior leadership team if the issue is persistent or more serious.

Pupil Absence

If a pupil is absent from school and we have no indication of the reason, attempts will be made to contact a parent on the same day.

Newsletters

We will send a newsletter to parents and carers regularly, containing general details of school events and activities as well as useful information and updates for parents. This will usually be sent by email, unless requested otherwise. We will send other information of a general nature when necessary.

Social Networking

Staff will not communicate about school with parents or pupils via social networking sites with the exception of networks, blogs, etc that have been set up specifically for the purpose of teaching and learning. We recognise that some staff may have parents on their social network

sites especially if they are local to the school or have their own pupils at school, however this is never an acceptable way to communicate about school, should a staff member be approached in this way – they are required to signpost the parent towards the correct way of dealing with their concern. We request that no parent or staff member ever posts pictures on any social media site from a school event that includes other pupils.

Prospectus

The school prospectus is available on the school website and contains all the information required to give parents a complete picture of the school's delivery of education. It is updated every year, or more frequently if necessary.

Website

The school website www.giffardsprimary.thurrock.sch.uk provides information about the school and promotes the school to a wider audience. It also has a regularly updated area giving information and current awareness for parents.

It also provides access to the school's policies and curriculum information.

Pupil Data

We hold information on pupils in our school, and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. Details have been sent to parents and carers about:

- a. the types of data we hold
- b. why we hold that data
- c. to whom we may pass it on.

This is a requirement under the Data Protection Act 1998. Parents and carers have a right to view the information we hold, and we have contact details of the agencies to which our information is passed. The school is mindful of the restrictions relating to the control of data as laid down by the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

Use of Photographs and Names

Photographs are used in the school for many purposes, including displays and records of practical work (eg art or design and technology projects) and important school events.

We may use photographs of pupils or their work when communicating with parents/carers and the wider community, in newsletters, in the school prospectus, on the school website/twitter. The local or national press may on occasion publish photographs of pupils participating in events at school.

Although not strictly required by law, we have decided that parental permission must be obtained before using photographs of pupils or their work as described in this policy. Each class teacher and the school office will keep a list of those pupils for whom permission has not been given.

Photographs used will not be shown with pupils' names. On the school's website, only pupils' first names will be used. All photographs will be checked to eliminate unsuitable ones, such as pupils in swimwear or in close-up shots.

Twitter

We have a school twitter page <https://twitter.com/GiffardsPrimary> and a PE twitter page [https://twitter.com/Giffards PE](https://twitter.com/Giffards_PE) which we use to publicise information about events in school including photographs of children's activities and details of events. It is a positive way of promoting events in school, we do not use it as a two-way method of communication and staff will not comment upon feeds.

School Letters

During the year we will write to you with information about activities that will involve your child – these could be educational visits, sporting activities or special events in school. At times this will be emailed, however if it requires a response it will be distributed to the children to take home.

Contacting Staff Outside of School

We welcome discussion with parents/carers on all aspects of their child's education, and personal and social development. It is the school's policy that these discussions must take place on the school premises or in other professional settings. This enables us to have the right information available to discuss your child's needs.

Please note that discussions or contact with staff must not take place via any unofficial channels. Please do not contact staff outside of their professional role or by personal communication such as their private email addresses, personal telephone numbers or via social media such as Facebook or Twitter. Staff should not be contacted outside of working hours.

Acceptable Behaviour and Working in Partnership

We want to foster a community where people are treated with respect and courtesy. It is important that parents do not approach a child other than their own about a concern. It is also important that parents do not usually try to address their concerns directly with other parents where those concerns relate to incidents between children that happen in the school.

We are happy to meet with parents to discuss and try to resolve concerns. However, raised voices, aggression, unnecessarily accusatory language, swearing, or threatening behaviour towards staff, pupils or other parents will result in termination of the meeting/or in removal from the premises. In serious cases the police may be called.

Similarly, we will not tolerate confrontational or inappropriate behaviour in public spaces around the school (such as the playgrounds or corridors) where this behaviour could potentially be witnessed by pupils.

In the event of raised voices, aggression, swearing or threatening behaviour, parents will be warned in writing that a repeat of the behaviour will result in a ban from the school site.

In the event of a repeat of behaviour, or in serious cases during the first incident, the headteacher will write to the parent imposing a ban from the school site. The ban will range in length depending on the seriousness of the behaviour. Parents will be informed in the banning letter of their right to appeal the ban through writing to the Chair of Governors.