

West Ashtead Primary School



Policy for Communication

Governors' committee responsible	FGB
Person responsible for updating policy	Headteacher
Reviewed	Summer 22
Next Review	Summer 25

Curious, Creative, Motivated

West Ashtead Primary School is committed to providing a happy, stimulating and supportive learning environment underpinned by our values of respect, equality, aspiration and perseverance.

This policy uses these principles to support its aims, objectives and procedures.

Purpose

This document defines expectations for successful and positive home—school communication and to ensure the best partnership of support for each child’s learning.

Introduction

Parents and carers play a vital role in the education of their child and those who take on a supportive role in their child’s learning make a difference in improving achievement and behaviour. Effective home-school partnerships are essential to ensure that each child gets the best possible education.

Throughout this document the word “parent” is used extensively but Carers of Looked After Children should regard the terms “parent” and “carer” as being synonymous.

At West Ashtead Community Primary School, we believe:

- Every child is entitled to the best learning opportunity and we are committed to working in partnership with parents to deliver this.
- The child is the most important consideration in any conversation.
- Regular communication between the child, home and school is essential for all children to thrive and flourish.
- All communication should be open, honest, accessible, timely, respectful and appropriate.

At West Ashtead Community Primary School, we will:

- Maintain an ‘Open Door’ policy and actively seek to engage with parents.
- Continually seek to refine how we liaise with parents in order to meet our aim of providing all the information they need to be active partners in their child's learning journey.
- Recognise that everyone has their own preferred method of communication, as well as availability, and we aim to accommodate this wherever possible.

We recommend that concerns are discussed with the child’s class teacher in the first instance, as this will be the person who will know the child and their family best. If this doesn’t provide the information needed or if parents feel that the issue hasn’t been resolved, then they should contact the member of staff identified in **Appendix 2 – Our Communication Process**.

Methods of Communication

The school makes use of a number of digital platforms and face to face methods for communication with parents throughout the school year. Our methods of communication and what you can expect to receive from each method is outlined in **Appendix 5**.

Staff Availability & Response Times

Staff will always try to meet with parents as soon as their timetable allows. Please bear in mind that there are circumstances that lead to staff not being available on the 'open door' basis. Should the person who is needed be unavailable, arrangements will be made for someone to deputise or for the meeting to be rearranged for the earliest opportunity in discussion with parents.

Staff will always endeavour to respond to email and telephone communications as quickly as possible. Home-School communication protocols are detailed in **Appendix 4**.

Regular Meetings and Correspondence

Throughout the course of the school year, we provide information relating to learning, achievement and activities, as well as offering opportunities for parents to come into school for formal and informal meetings. We have set out a detailed schedule of meetings and correspondence, so that everyone knows when these occur and what to expect. **This is attached as Appendix 3.**

Other Communication Options

We try to provide all the information needed to help parents actively participate in their child's personal learning journey. We know that open and effective communication between home and school helps children to learn, thrive and achieve their potential.

We value all thoughts and ideas as to how things might work better and will try to accommodate them wherever we feel this will positively affect all children.

Information published by the school can be found on the school's website. The website is updated regularly and contains a wealth of information for each class and the whole school; including calendar events. The website should be used as the first point of contact for dates.

We are committed to being as environmentally friendly as possible so we try to limit the amount of paper used and ask for parental support by requesting as much information as possible to be sent via email. Class letters, newsletters, trips and events are all communicated in this way. The receipt of information on a timely basis is sometimes vitally important and again, it is the responsibility of parents to ensure their contact details are up to date.

A contact sheet is issued at the start of each year for parents to check and update where necessary. If any parent feels they are not receiving communication, it is vital they let the school office know as soon as possible. We do not send out paper copies of letters and it is the responsibility of parents who have not signed up to receive emails to regularly check with the office whether they have missed any communication.

From time to time letters need to be sent out directly to parents, for example when a written response is needed. These are given out in class and the children asked to put them in their book bags and deliver them straight to their parents. We ask all families to check their child's book bag daily.

General GB Communication Protocols

The Governing Body of West Ashted Community Primary School is very clear in its understanding of the value of parental support in all aspects of children's school life. In turn, all school employees are directed to engage positively with parents and strive to foster positive relationships that assist children to learn, thrive, flourish and achieve their full potential. We want parents to be involved in their child's learning.

Partnership: The school is committed to the concept of partnership in supporting all children. We have set out here the commitment the school makes to sharing information and how the school can be contacted for any matter that needs to be discussed. If there is any concern that a member of staff has

not met the commitments set out in this policy, this needs to be brought to the attention of the Headteacher or Chair of Governors.

Complaints: A copy of the School's Complaints Policy can be found on the school's website.

Contacting the Governing Body: The board is always eager to hear of any questions, concerns, suggestions or complaints from any school stakeholder. Parents, children or staff can leave a message at the school office for the Chair of Governors or a particular other named governor to contact them or any one may e-mail the Chair of Governors directly at chair@west-ashted.surrey.sch.uk

School Staff: we greatly value the professionalism and dedication of all our staff and expect them to be treated with respect at all times, remembering that their first concern is the safeguarding and education of the children. We believe communication is a two-way process that involves active listening by all parties.

Inappropriate Behaviour: The Governing Body will not, under any circumstances, tolerate violence, aggressive or threatening behaviour and/or verbal, physical or emotional abuse against any member of the school community. A copy of our Parent/Carers Code of Conduct Policy can be found on the school's website.

Appendix 1: School Contact Details

West Ashtead Primary School
Taleworth Road
Ashtead
KT21 2PX

Telephone: 01372 272082

General enquires: info@west-ashtead.surrey.sch.uk

Report a child absent: absence@west-ashtead.surrey.sch.uk

Appendix 2: Communication Process

For any issue relating specifically to your child (learning, behaviour, equipment, timetables etc) you should initially speak to your child's class teacher. A face to face meeting is probably best for this type of issue. If you feel that any issue, as described above, has not been resolved or you need more advice following these discussions, please contact Mrs Hall, Headteacher.

Formal Complaints (as per Complaints Policy): Chair of Governors

Curriculum and/or whole school pupil enquiries: Mrs. Lousie Allum, Assistant Head Teacher

Special Educational Needs: Mrs Louise Allum

Child Protection/Safeguarding issues: Mrs Hall

Health & Safety, Finance, Payments, etc.: Mrs. Love

Letters, Admin, Attendance, School Dinners, Clubs, etc.: School Office

Appendix 3: Schedule of Regular Meetings and Correspondence

An up-to-date calendar can be found on the school website at <http://www.west-ashtead.surrey.sch.uk/calendar/>

Beginning of the year

In September, your child's class teacher will provide you with information including:

- Curriculum and homework information
- How you can help your child at home with their learning
- Expectations of your new child's year group.
- Forthcoming day trips and potential residential visits.

Weekly and Termly Information

Newsletter All newsletters are distributed via email but can also be found on the school website.

Learning Letters Learning Letters are uploaded to Google Classroom

Progress reports Distributed to parents at parents Evenings and within the Annual report

Text Service

Where a group of parents needs to be kept updated about a situation at short notice, for example a class who are delayed returning from a trip, we will send a text message as this is a quick and efficient way of providing updates.

Emergency Contact

The phone will be used to contact parents in the case of an emergency. It is vitally important therefore, that emergency phone numbers are kept up to date and we ask that all parents take responsibility for informing the office of any change to home or mobile phone numbers.

We will also use the phone to contact parents in situations where a quick response is required.

Parents' Evening

In the autumn and spring terms there are parents' evenings where one to one appointments are used to discuss how well children have settled into the new school year, to share any individual information, to share expectations for the year.

Bookings for Parents Evenings are done ON-LINE using your Sco-Pay account. and select "PARENTS EVENING" from the tabs at the top of the screen

Please contact the school office if you have not got the unique code to set up an account.

Annual Report to Parents

Reports are sent out in the Summer Term for all year groups from Reception to Year 6, following this although there is no formal parents' evening, parents are invited to make an appointment with their child's teacher should they wish to discuss any aspect of the report.

Statutory Test Reports

Throughout their time at school, children are required by law to take a number of statutory tests which are set by the government. The results of these tests will be sent out to parents.

Curriculum Workshops, Information and Transition Meetings

These are held as needed throughout the year. Times and dates will be communicated on the school website and newsletters.

Appendix 4 – Detailed Protocols for Home-School Communication

Protocols for e-mail communication

The Governing Body has asked all staff not to respond to emails after 5 pm or at weekends to support staff wellbeing. However, we will endeavour to respond to all emails within 48 hours either in writing, in person or electronically via the office. Emails will not be responded to during school holidays. Those teachers who work a part week will not necessarily respond within 48 hours if an email contact is made on their non-working days.

Please be aware that staff may need to forward your emails to the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team if they are unsure of how to assist you, or to obtain further information on your query.

Staff will always try to help you as quickly as possible, but may need to speak to someone else first or ask another member of staff for advice before they get back to you with a response. This is so you and your child can be supported in the best way possible.

If an urgent response is required then email may not be the quickest form of communication as there are occasions when emails cannot be accessed or responded to daily. In these circumstances, a telephone

call to the school office would enable you to be more quickly put in touch with the most appropriate person.

Protocols for informal discussion with Class Teachers before and after school

Teachers will usually be in their classrooms before the start of the school day and after school to safely welcome and send home all children. Please remember that staff are responsible for the safety of all children in their class at these times and will, therefore, not be able to have long conversations with individual parents.

If you wish to discuss something urgently with a Class Teacher, please arrange a time to meet or speak on the telephone. The office staff will be able to assist with this.

Alternatively, if the matter is not urgent, please ask or email the Class Teacher to make an appointment with them.

Protocols for Meetings with Parents

Meetings in addition to Parents' Consultation/Information Meetings are sometimes necessary in order for Home and School to share information about an individual child's needs.

- These will be arranged in advance at a mutually convenient time.
- Meetings will be held in an appropriate open or private area in the school.
- Staff may ask for a colleague to join the meeting in order to be able to give you the best advice possible or to record information.
- Electronic recording of meetings e.g. on mobile phones is not acceptable.
- Teachers and Senior Leaders will always try to help you as quickly as possible, but please be aware that they may need to ask another member of staff for information/advice before they get back to you with a response. This is to ensure that you and your child are supported in the best possible way.
- All meeting attendees are expected to speak courteously, listen to each other and have the opportunity to respond to questions and/or statements.
- If any meeting attendee becomes concerned about their safety during a meeting, it will be stopped immediately. Reasons for the meeting being stopped will be given verbally and, where necessary, the party behaving inappropriately will be escorted from school premises. The Local Authority and/or Police may be informed.
- Agreed actions will be confirmed verbally or in writing at the end of the meeting.
- Follow up communication will be issued in a timescale agreed at the meeting.

Appendix 5



West Ashtead Communication Channels

