

Federation of Fairfield and Colneis

Home-School Communication Policy

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1. Introduction and aims

Our school vision is 'Together we're better', and we believe this is at the centre of our communication with parents and carers.

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 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
- › Regularly reviewing this policy

2.2 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- › Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's ICT and internet acceptable use 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)

Staff are not expected to respond to communications outside of school hours (before 9am, or after 5pm) or their working hours (if they work part-time), or during school holidays.

2.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- › Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times
- › Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance
- › Respond to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- › Checking all communications from the school

We reserve the right to forward on any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive, or threatening to external agencies, such as the Local Authority for further advice.

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 – including Parentmail

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

- › Upcoming school events
- › Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- › School surveys or consultations
- › Class activities or teacher requests
- › Payments

3.2 Text messages

We will text parents about:

- › Payments
- › Short-notice changes to the school day
- › Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- › Head bump notifications
- › Non-reported school absence

3.3 Tapestry

At Fairfield, Tapestry is used to inform parents about the following things:

- › Children's learning in school
- › Reminders of events or changes to previous communications
- › Messages to parents and/or replying to a parent

3.4 School calendar

Our school website includes a school calendar for the academic year, with events added throughout the year as they are confirmed. Half termly newsletters will also set out key dates for the next 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

Teaching staff are encouraged on an informal basis to contact parents to discuss progress and behaviour where appropriate outside of the set parents' evenings. We encourage staff to make these phone calls for positive reasons (such as good behaviour, or a particularly positive piece of work) as well as when there are concerns.

Senior Leaders will phone the parents of children who achieve a gold behaviour award in line with our behaviour policy.

When parental concerns are raised, we will endeavour to use phone calls at an early stage in order to open up clear lines of communication. These phone calls will support us in attempting to find informal solutions to these concerns, in the first instance, in line with our complaints procedures.

Parents will be contacted via a text message in the first instance for any absence that has not been reported via the usual channels. If no response is received, a phone call will be made to ascertain the reason why.

3.5 Letters

We send the following letters home regularly (letters are sent home by Parentmail):

- › Letters about trips and visits
- › Consent forms
- › Our half termly newsletter
- › Weekly roundup of information, reminders for the forthcoming week (sent out on Fridays)
- › Admission information

3.6 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
- › Termly progress reports
- › A report on KS1 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).

3.7 Meetings

We hold one parents' evening per term. 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 Summer term parent's evening is an informal opportunity to review children's work.

The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings between parents' evenings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing.

Parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these additional needs.

3.8 School website

Key information about the school is posted on our website, including:

- › School times and term dates
- › Important events and announcements

- › 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.

Please note – whilst we are aware that many parents set up and join class or year group WhatsApp or similar social media groups, these are private arrangements between parents and are not sanctioned by the school in any way. We would encourage parents to communicate with the school via the above communication channels detailed here.

4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

Please 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 may email the school, via the school office, about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

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

Letters received, including those received by email attachment will be treated in the same way, an acknowledgement within one working day and a full response within five working days.

If a query or concern is urgent, and you need a response sooner than this, please call the school.

4.2 Phone calls

If you need to speak to a specific member of staff about a non-urgent matter, parents may also call the relevant school office.

Whilst we will aim to have the relevant person return the call within two working days, if this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will get in touch with you to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure you have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within five days of your request.

If your issue is urgent, please call the school office.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- › Family emergencies
- › Safeguarding or welfare issues
- › Medical updates/information

For more general enquiries, please call the school office.

In these urgent situations, a senior member of staff will endeavour to phone back on the same day.

Any complaints will be covered under the school's complaints procedures.

4.3 Meetings

If you would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, please email or phone the school office.

We try to schedule all meetings within five working days of the request.

While teachers are available at the beginning or end of the school day if you need to speak to them urgently, we recommend you book appointments to discuss:

- › Any concerns you may have about your child's learning
- › Updates related to pastoral support, your child's home environment, or their wellbeing

Virtual meetings, for example using Zoom or Microsoft Teams, may be possible under some circumstances. Specific guidance regarding such meetings may be found in the Virtual Meetings and other policies.

Please note – whilst we are aware that many parents set up and join class or year group WhatsApp or similar social media groups, these are private arrangements between parents and are not sanctioned by the school. We would encourage parents to communicate with the school via the above communication channels.

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

The school website has a translation capability, accessible via a menu at the top of each page, that will automatically translate textual page content (although not embedded or linked documents or images) into multiple languages.

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

- › School announcements and communications translated into additional languages
- › School policies 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 year. The policy will be approved by the governing body.

7. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- › Online safety
- › Parent code of conduct
- › Staff code of conduct
- › Complaints

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 offices between 9 am and 5 pm on the following:
 - Fairfield Infant School** – 01394 283206 / fairfieldoffice@fairfieldandcolneis.co.uk
 - Colneis Junior School** – 01394 284052 / colneisoffice@fairfieldandcolneis.co.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 with an acknowledgement in one working day, and a full response within 5 working 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 in the first instance
Payments	School office
School trips	School office
Uniform/lost and found	School office
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, please call the relevant school office (option 1). If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact the relevant school office for an absence request form.
Bullying and behaviour	Your child's class teacher in the first instance.
School events/the school calendar	School office
Special educational needs	Ms Spurgeon (SENDCo). Emails to be sent through the relevant school office.
Before and after-school clubs	School office
Hiring the school premises	School office
The Friends of Fairfield and Colneis	School office

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
The governing body	School office
Catering/meals	School office If you need to speak directly to the Head of Kitchen please phone the relevant office and select option 2

Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy. This policy can be found on our website.