



Community, Creativity,  
Challenge and Individuality

# Wheelock Primary School Communication Protocol

Ratified by: David Booth.....

Date: March 2019

To be reviewed: March 2021

## Introduction

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The purpose of this document is to set out expectations for how school and home can successfully communicate and to ensure the best partnership of support for each child's learning.

On-going research continues to demonstrate the vitally important role parents play in the education of their child.

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.

### 1. Why partnership and good communication is important

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At Wheelock Primary School we believe that:

- 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.
- A three way process of 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.
- Communication is about more than information exchange: it is about the development of positive relationships.
- Communication involves active listening by both the school and parents so that both parties have a clear understanding and expectation of what the school is aiming to achieve. Parents can and should work with the school to achieve this and thus be able to help their own children more.
- Activities inviting parents into school are a good way for us to build relationships with parents and to develop a welcoming 'family atmosphere' within school. However these activities are not a statutory obligation of the school and parents are not obliged to attend.

### 2. Methods of Communication

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- We have an 'Open Door' policy and actively seek to engage with parents.
- We 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.
- We recognise that everyone has their own preferred method of communication as well as availability and we aim to accommodate this wherever possible, but hope that what we have set out in this document will put parents in contact with the person best placed to help them as soon as possible.
- We are committed to being a 'listening' school and always welcome parents who want to meet with our staff. However, we do recommend that an appointment is made if a parent has a particular issue they wish to discuss. This will ensure the member of staff they want to see is prepared and able to focus on the conversation.

- Appointments can be made in a number of ways: sending a note in with the child, writing a note in the child's home school diary or telephoning or e-mailing the office to leave a message.
- We offer regular opportunities for parents to work in school with their child, both through class projects such as craft sessions, reading mornings, class trips and outdoor days / weeks, and also through whole-school project days such as the Spring Term whole-school topic celebration day and events such as the Summer Wheelock Tepee Challenges.
- All children in EYFS and KS1 have a reading diary and children in KS2 have a home-school planner. This is an additional layer of communication where parents and teacher can communicate directly via short notes as regularly as needed. It is expected that this is brought to school and taken home every day to better facilitate this.

Generally speaking, 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**.

## **Social Media**

It would be appreciated if parents didn't take grievances to, and/or make adverse comments about the school on, the various social media outlets that exist as this can create unnecessary upset and escalate a situation that might otherwise be easily and quickly resolved by having a conversation direct with the school. The school reserves the right to take whatever action deemed reasonably necessary to protect itself against unwarranted adverse social media comment.

The FOWS Facebook page is similarly not an appropriate forum for asking questions or airing concerns or grievances relating to school matters. The page exists solely for communication relating to the FOWS. Only comments relating to FOWS will be approved for posting on the site.

## **3. Staff Availability**

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Staff will always try to meet with parents as soon as their timetable allows. Please bear in mind that teaching commitments have to be met and also there are other circumstances that lead to staff not being available at school at the time that is requested. All teaching staff have Preparation, Planning and Assessment (PPA) time as part of their working week and there are times they may be absent for training or liaison with other schools or agencies to ensure we are continually delivering best practice for all children in school.

Members of the Senior Leadership Team also attend meetings off- site for various reasons and so may not be available at the time requested on the usual '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.

#### 4. Regular Meetings and Correspondence

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Throughout the course of the school year, we provide information relating to children's 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**.

#### 5. Other Communication Options

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We try hard to provide all the information needed to help parents be active partners 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 using School Comms. class letters, newsletters, trips and events are all communicated in this way. If any parent feels they are not receiving communication, it is vital they let the school office know as soon as possible. We will not routinely send out paper copies of letters and it is the responsibility of parents who have not signed up to receive e-mails to regularly check with the office whether they have missed any communication. A small number of paper copies of letters are put in the letter stand in the front foyer for parents to collect.
- Children's personal information and contact details are stored on Arbor. Parents should regularly check that their child's information is up to date and make any changes – for example to contact details or home address – as soon as possible.
- We send reminders and short information notices using e-mail via School Comms. This enables information to be communicated quickly to selected groups. 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.
- 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.

## **6. General GB Communication Protocols**

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7.1 Parental Support: The Local Advisory Board of Wheelock 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 active partners in their child's learning.

7.2 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 immediately.

7.3 Complaints: A copy of the School's Complaints Policy can be found on the school's website at [www.wheelock.cheshire.sch.uk](http://www.wheelock.cheshire.sch.uk)

7.4 Contacting the Local Advisory Board: Communication should normally be through the channels set out in our Communication Process (Appendix 2). However, if a parent needs to speak directly to a member of the Local Advisory Board, they can leave a message at the school office for the Chair of Governors or a particular other named governor to contact them.

7.5 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. To reaffirm; we believe communication is a two-way process that involves active listening by all parties.

7.6 Inappropriate Behaviour: The Local Advisory Board will not under any circumstances tolerate violence, aggressive or threatening behavior and/or verbal, physical or emotional abuse against any member of the school community. We reserve the right to remove right of access to the school from any person who does not behave in an appropriate manner. Such incidents will be dealt with formally, through official channels. All members of the school community have a right to expect that the school is a safe place in which to work and learn.

## Appendix 1: School Contact Details

Wheelock Primary School,  
Crewe Road,  
Sandbach  
Cheshire CW11 4PY  
Telephone: 01270 685533

Email – We request that all messages for staff are sent to the school office address to be forwarded to the relevant member of staff: [office@wheelock.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:office@wheelock.cheshire.sch.uk)

Please note that direct emails to individual members of staff, other than Mrs Sweeney or Mrs Harvey, will not be replied to unless they are part of an ongoing conversation or issue.

## Appendix 2: Communication Process

We have set out below the staff who we believe will be best placed to respond to various types of enquiry:

### Type of query and member of staff to contact:

- 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 the following people as appropriate:

EYFS, Mrs K French, EYFS Leader  
Years 1 and 2 - Miss V Davenport, KS1 Leader  
Years 3 and 4 - Miss J. Christie, Lower KS2 Leader  
Years 5 and 6 - Miss A Wilkins, Upper KS2 Leader

Mrs H Sweeney Headteacher

- Issues relating to other children in your child's class:

Class Teacher  
Key Stage Leader  
Headteacher

- Other serious concerns or complaints – Mrs H. Sweeney, Headteacher
- Formal Complaints (as per Complaints Policy)

- Chair of Governors – David Booth via the school office
- Curriculum and/or whole school pupil enquiries - Headteacher
- Further information about Special Educational Needs – Mrs Williamson, SENCo, via the school office
- Child Protection/Safeguarding issues – Mrs Sweeney or Mrs French
- Health & Safety, Finance, Payments etc – Mrs Harvey
- Letters, Admin, Attendance, School Dinners, Clubs etc – School Office

### **Appendix 3: Schedule of Regular Meetings and Correspondence**

Throughout the course of the school year, the following meetings will be held and information will be provided to all parents.

#### **Beginning of the year**

In September your child's class teacher will provide you with lots of 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**

- Each week on a Friday watch out for the School Newsletter to learn what's been going on in school that week and what's coming up. Make sure the school office has your email address so you can receive this automatically via email

#### **School Comms Service**

- Our main method of communication with parents is via e-mail using School Comms. We use this service to send class letters, newsletters and information about trips and events, as well as to provide reminders and updates for parents. We encourage all parents to sign up for this service as it is our primary method of communication. It is vital that the school office is notified of any changes to e-mail addresses. Parents who do not sign up to e-mail are expected to take responsibility for checking for communication via the school office on a regular basis. Paper copies of letters are available to collect from the school foyer.

## **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, for example club cancellations or forgotten dinner money or kit.

## **First Aid**

- Please see our first aid policy which is available on the school website for communication procedures relating to first aid.

## **Teacher and Parent Consultation Meetings**

These are important meetings where class teachers meet one to one with parents to discuss their child's progress, behavior and attitudes so that we can work together to help your child realize his or her full potential.

- In the autumn term there is a parents' evening where five minute one to one appointments are used to discuss how well children have settled in to the new school year, to share any individual information, to share expectations for the year.
- In the spring term there is a parents evening held where ten minute appointments are used to discuss progress and set targets for the rest of the year. We offer the option for children to attend these meetings along with their parents so they are part of the process.
- In the summer term, after parents have received their child's end of year School Report, there is an opportunity for parents to arrange to meet with their child's teacher to discuss any questions or concerns arising from the report.
- With regards to transition from one class to the next we allocate sessions in school for all children to spend time in their new class with their new teacher before the end of an academic year. Parents are informed of their child's new class via a letter from the Headteacher.

## **Annual Report to Parents**

- Reports are sent out in the Summer Term for all year groups from Reception to Year 6.



## **Statutory Test Reports**

Throughout their time at school, children are required by law to take a number of statutory tests which are set by government.

- Y1 Phonics Screening
- KS1 SATs
- KS2 SATs

## **Appendix 4 – Detailed Protocols for Home-School Communication**

### **Protocols for email 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 endeavor to respond to all e-mails within 48 hours either in writing, in person or electronically via the office. E-mails will not be responded to during school holidays. Those teachers who work a part week will not necessarily respond within 48 hours if an e-mail contact is made on their non-working days.

Please be aware that staff may need to forward your e-mails 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 10 minutes 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 write to 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.
- A member of staff or a governor can take notes at meetings if necessary.
- 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.