



Communications Policy

Kettlefields Primary School

Issue 3

Approved	Date	Name	Signature
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The aim of this policy is to foster good communications between parents/carers and the school.

Introduction

The school welcomes contact with parents/carers because this fosters mutual understanding and support, which has a positive effect on children's performance and their attitudes to learning.

The school wants to ensure that parents/carers have an appropriate and helpful response to their communications. However, the professional duties of staff can make it difficult for them to speak or meet with parents/carers during the school day.

Due to teaching commitments, staff will typically be unavailable between 8.30 am and 3.30 pm each day. There are also other times outside these hours when they attend meetings.

Teachers welcome brief (non-urgent) messages from parents/carers through the office email system.

If you have concerns about any child at the school or in the community including concerns of neglect and abuse, please contact one of the school's designated persons for child protection through the school office and they will make you their top priority at that moment.

In the case of separated parents, the school endeavours to ensure all those with parental responsibility are kept informed about matters related to school and their children's attainment and progress. The school will undertake to obtain the details of all those with parental responsibility through its admissions form or directly from the parent who the child lives with. We also welcome being contacted by those with parental responsibility directly - providing us with the necessary details for our systems. Please see our 'Separated Parents Policy' for further information.

1. Principles for responding to parents/carers

In order to achieve the most effective balance for children and parents/carers, teachers adhere to the following principles:

- welcoming contact from parents/carers;
- responding as quickly and fully as possible to parents/carers;
- involving parents/carers in our work with children; and
- sharing information as often and as fully as possible with parents/carers.

When correspondence is made to an individual parent/carer on an important matter, the letter will be sent by post or handed directly to the parent/carer to ensure confidentiality and security. On some occasions it may be appropriate for the school to contact parents/carers by e-mail. For day to day or routine matters correspondence will be sent via School Comms but may occasionally need to be sent home in the children's book bags.

2. Guidelines on responding to parents/carers

The following guidelines show how we aim to respond to parents/carers.

2.1 Telephone Calls

- **Messages:** Telephone calls are received through the main office. A message will be taken and sent to the relevant person as soon as possible. Staff will normally take the caller's name, telephone number and purpose in calling. The person concerned will try to respond as soon as possible and by the end of the next school day if possible. The school's telephone number is: 01638 508360.
- **Urgent calls:** The call will be put through to the most appropriate senior member of staff if possible or a message will be taken and brought to the attention of the most appropriate senior staff member
- **Busy times:** The office becomes busier at different times of the day and on occasion may not be manned. Particularly busy times are between 8.45 am and 9.15 am in the morning and 2.30 pm and 3.30 pm in the afternoon. At these times and out of hours, calls may be recorded on an answer machine. This is checked regularly and if a message is left, it will be passed on.
- **Telephone calls made at arranged times:** If teachers have arranged with parents/carers for them to receive calls at particular times of the school day, those teachers will try to ensure that they are available. Should other commitments or events make this impossible, a staff member will take a message and the staff member concerned will call back when available.

2.2 Letters and e-mails

- The school will try to acknowledge letters and e-mails received from parents/carers within two working days during term time.

The school email is: office@kettlefields.cambs.sch.uk

The postal address is: Kettlefields Primary School, Stetchworth Road, Dullingham, CB8 9UH

During non-term time, emails received will have a standard reply explaining that the school, and therefore the office, is closed. It will provide details for any urgent welfare or safeguarding concerns.

- If more time is required to provide a fuller response or to arrange a meeting, staff will try to include in the acknowledgement details of when these will happen.
- Staff will try to respond to the most pressing concerns of parents/carers as quickly as possible. It is our intention to try to respond to any letter or email as soon as we can and within ten working days within term time. If there is likely to be a delay, we will let you know the reasons why.

2.3 Complaints

We will investigate a complaint and aim to respond within ten school days. If we cannot provide a full response within ten working school days then we will write to the complainant explaining this and giving a date by which we will endeavour to provide a full response. This will not apply to complaints of the same nature which the school has previously dealt with. For further information please see our complaints policy and policy for dealing with unreasonable complaints and behaviour.

2.4 Meetings

Where situations are more complex, a face-to-face meeting may be preferable to a letter or phone call and this will be arranged at the earliest convenience for parents/carers and staff.

2.5 Meetings with class teachers

The class teacher is the first point of contact for any concerns about a child for routine matters. Teachers are not normally available between 8.30 am and 3.30pm but mutually agreed appointments can be made outside these times either through the office or directly with the class teacher. Depending on the resulting nature of the situation, a meeting may include a more senior member of staff.

A record may be kept and notes shared with all parties where appropriate. Parents/carers will only be invited to discuss their own children. Staff will not talk about other children in front of other parents/carers. All meetings and discussions are confidential between the staff involved and the parents/carers and parties should not divulge information to others without the agreement of parents/carers and the school, unless there are safeguarding concerns which the school must share with the relevant authorities.

2.6 SchoolComms

The school has a system of sending all standard forms of communication home to parents/carers through SchoolComms (an email system). For those who cannot access this, hard copies can be provided. Parents/carers must ensure that the school office is informed of any changes to e-mail addresses.

2.7 Website

The school seeks to put as much information as possible on its website. Most general information that parents/carers would seek can be readily found at: <http://www.kettlefields.cambs.sch.uk/> Parents/carers are encouraged look at the website on a regular basis.

2.8 Google Classroom

Each class has its own online platform using Google Classroom. The online classrooms are used to share information pertinent to that specific class such as topic webs, class letters, photographs of work and activities carried out by the class, home learning tasks and information about up-coming events relevant for the class. Pupils all have their own log ins for the Google Classroom; parents will need to support younger children's access to the classroom, older children may access the classroom independently but should share with their parents the in class experiences and information shared by class teachers.

3. Exceptions

There may be occasions where the school needs to invoke alternative or more bespoke communication protocols to operate effectively or to respond to more unique situations. This will be done with reference to our other guiding policies and in line with the school's governance framework and responsibilities.

We welcome visitors to our school.

We will act to ensure it remains a safe place for pupils, staff, parents and other members of our community.

If you threaten or assault anyone in the School, or persist in abusive behaviour, you will be asked to leave or will be removed from the premises. The Police may be called and you may be banned from the School's premises.

Parents' expectations of the School

Parents/carers/members of the public who raise either informal or formal issues or complaints can expect the School to:

- Explain clearly how and when problems can be raised with the School,
- Respond within a reasonable time and with courtesy and respect,
- Be available for consultation within reasonable time limits.
- Attempt to resolve problems using reasonable means in line with the School's complaints procedure, and
- Keep complainants informed of progress towards a resolution of the issues raised.

The School's expectations of parents/carers/members of the public

The School can expect parents/carers/members of the public who wish to raise problems with the School to:

- Treat all school staff with courtesy and respect,
- Respect the needs and well-being of pupils and staff within the School,
- Avoid any use, or threats, of violence to people or property,
- Avoid any aggression or verbal abuse,
- Recognise the time constraints under which members of staff work and allow the School a reasonable time to respond,
- Recognise that resolving a specific problem can sometimes take some time, and
- In the case of a complaint, follow the School's complaints procedure.