

Springfield Primary School



School Policy

Communication with Parents

Adopted: January 2025

Date for review: January 2028

Introduction and aims

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

We will only communicate with parents in respect of their own child at the school. Requests to raise a concern on behalf of another parent will be declined, as will be requests for information on another child. Should any correspondence be received from legal advisers then this will be shared with the school's legal advisers.

In the following sections, we will use 'parents' to refer to both parents and carers.

Roles and responsibilities

Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- Regularly reviewing this policy on a three yearly basis

Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy, the staff Code of Conduct and the school's 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 8am to 4pm or their working hours if they work part-time or during school holidays. Members of the Senior Leadership Team may respond outside of working hours/days in some circumstances and this decision will be made by their own professional judgement.

Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all communication with the school is always respectful
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance through the school office
- Respond to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school
- Ensure the school has the most up-to-date contact and medical information for their child. This is to be provided in writing by emailing the school office.

Communication with the school

Parents should monitor emails to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child.

Meetings

1. Face-to-face conversations are the best way of communicating with the school at drop off or pick up for quick messages. Parents should initially contact the class teacher if they have a concern.
2. We do not allow parents to record a conversation with a member of staff on audio or video. The discretion of such a recording lies solely with the headteacher and permission must be sought before such conversation takes place. If any individual records a conversation, this will be referred to the Essex County Council Legal Team and may result in legal action.
3. When a member of staff is not able to speak to a parent immediately face-to-face due to commitments, or a longer conversation is deemed necessary or appropriate, then a request for

an appointment can be made to discuss the matter either in person or by telephone, later. Parents should email the school office to request an appointment and the school will aim to arrange that meeting within 3 - 4 working days.

4. Outside of teaching hours, all staff have additional duties which they perform either before school, during break/lunch or after school so availability of staff outside of teaching hours should not be assumed.
5. Should a meeting be requested the decision of which staff member will attend will rest with the headteacher.
6. We hold two parents' consultation meetings per year. During these meetings, parents can talk with their child's class teacher about achievement and progress, wellbeing, attendance or any other area of concern. These meetings are offered by video call or face to face. We are only able to offer one appointment per child.
7. We do not offer individual feedback, regarding their child, to parents on a daily basis.
8. In some instances the SENCo will agree to a daily diary sheet where school staff record activities which have taken place in school. This is not a two way document and comments written by a parent may not be responded to.
9. The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings between parents' consultations if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing.
10. Parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), or who have other additional needs, will also be asked to attend additional meetings with regards to a child's One Plan or EHCP.
11. Some meetings may be held virtually using Microsoft Teams. Links to these meetings will be distributed through the school office.

Email

1. Parents are welcome to email the school, office@springfield-pri.essex.sch.uk about non-urgent issues in the first instance.
2. Emails will be most helpful if they are concise, explaining concerns in a clear way. Lengthy and overly detailed accounts can make it more difficult to understand what is being explained and to respond in a timely or clear way.
3. The school will aim to respond within two working days. If a response is unable to be provided within this timeline, which can be to ensure a full and considered response, then a revised timeline will be provided and communicated. We ask that parents await a response from the school and that further emails are not sent pending that response, unless the new deadline has passed.
4. Staff are unable to respond to daily emails from a parent.
5. If multiple emails are received from a parent, the headteacher may inform the parent that emails will be responded to on a weekly basis rather than individually.
6. If there is a change in a child's medical needs, this information must always be shared by email through the school office.

We use the School X (Twitter) account to keep parents informed of activities in school and sporting events and sometimes expected return times during a school trip.

Our weekly newsletter is emailed to parents on a Thursday and is also available on our website. It includes:

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- Activities and sports events
- Diary dates

Phone calls

School office: 01245 461077

1. If a query or concern is time sensitive and urgent the parent should call the school office, who will liaise as necessary at the earliest opportunity. In most circumstances, teaching and leadership staff are unlikely to be available to receive calls due to teaching and other commitments.
2. If the query or concern is not time sensitive and urgent then parents should email or call the school office and the relevant member of staff will aim to contact them within 2 working days. If this is not possible, someone will respond to schedule a phone call at a convenient time.
3. For general enquiries, please call or email the school office.
4. Staff will call parents if their child presents as unwell during the school day.
5. Parents are expected to call or email the school office before 9.30am if their child is absent. Parents are able to leave an answerphone message but need to leave an exact reason for absence rather than 'ill'.

6. If a child has a head bump, we will send parents an email from Medical Tracker. After an assessment by a first aider, we will phone parents in some cases. If a child, who is non-verbal, has a head bump, a parent will be contacted on every occasion.

Social Media and Online Platforms

1. The school will not respond to concerns raised on any via social media or online platform.
2. Should the school be made aware of any physical threats or abusive behaviour towards staff members or children on roll at our school on social media, then the school will consider reporting this to the police and seeking the removal of this content from the site.

Diary Dates

Where possible, we try to give parents at least two 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 diary dates on the newsletter.

We aim to share the dates of Inset Days and Christmas performances with parents as early as possible but with a minimum of six weeks' notice.

Reports

In the summer term, parents receive a written report from the school about their child's learning, including:

- their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, and their attendance
- the child's Y1 Phonics Screening outcome, Y4 Multiplication Check and KS2 SATs outcomes

School website

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

- School times and term dates
- Notable events and announcements
- Information about activity clubs
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information
- Information about Breakfast Clubs and After-School clubs

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

Types of unacceptable behaviour and communication

There are some types of behaviour / communication that the school considers unacceptable. These are as follows:

- Any physical aggression, threat of aggression or perceived threat
- Physically intimidating a member of staff, or pupils eg. standing close to her/him
- The use of aggressive hand gestures including finger pointing towards a member of staff or pupil
- Spitting at a member of staff or pupil
- Covertly recording phone calls or meetings with member of staff
- Shaking or holding a fist towards a member of staff or pupil
- Shouting at members of staff or pupils either in person or over the telephone
- Swearing, or using offensive language including derogatory language about a protected group or characteristic
- Threatening or offensive comments about a member of staff or pupil of the school; this can include verbally, via texts, emails, social media, etc.
- Sending abusive messages to a member of staff, including via text, email, or social media
- A large volume of emails in respect of the same matter over a short period of time
- Continuing to raise the same issue despite it having been already addressed by the school
- Posting defamatory, offensive, or derogatory comments about the school, its staff, on social media platforms
- Disrupting, or threatening to disrupt, school operations (including events on the school grounds and sports team matches)
- Breaching or not conforming to the school's security procedures

- Any other behaviour that is disrespectful, threatening, or offensive

This list is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour which has no place in our school community.

Actions that may be taken by the school because of unacceptable behaviour and communication

1. In the first instance, if the unacceptable behaviour has occurred on site, the school will ask the parent to desist and/or leave the site. If the behaviour is of a serious nature, then the police will be contacted.
2. Thereafter the school (Headteacher/Member of School Leadership team) will gather information on allegations of unacceptable behaviour. This may include talking to the parties concerned or others as witnesses to the behaviour.
3. If unacceptable behaviour is considered to have occurred the following actions may be taken by the school, dependent on the severity/gravity of the behaviour:
 - The parent will be told verbally that his / her behaviour is unacceptable and, if it is not modified, the school will take further action
 - The parent will be told in writing that his / her behaviour is unacceptable and, if it is not modified, the school will take further action
 - Advising the parent that all future meetings with a member of staff will be conducted with a second person present
 - Putting in place a contact plan to deal with any communication between the individual and school. For example, except in emergencies, communication to the school must be in writing only to a named individual and the school can set out timescales for school responses
 - A warning letter or an immediate ban from the school site;
 - Contacting the police where behaviour is criminal in nature.
 - Seek advice from the local authority's legal team regarding further action.

The school will always seek to respond to an incident in a proportional way. The final decision for how to respond to the unacceptable behaviour and communication rests with the headteacher and, where necessary, the Governing Body