

Pensans CP School

COMMUNICATION POLICY 2019

Source	Pensans School
Date Written	September 2019
Reviewed on	September 2019
Next Review Due	September 2021
I confirm that this policy has been reviewed and adopted by the Governing Body of Pensans CP School	
Rev. Sian Yates Chair of Governors	Date

Pensans School

Communication Policy

1. Rationale

1.1. Pensans School recognises the importance of clear and effective communications with all stakeholders (pupils and parents/carers, governors, Local Authority, outside agencies, national bodies, etc), and is committed to being open and accessible for all who have an interest in the school. The key stakeholders for a school are parents and pupils and this policy addresses the main ways in which the school ensures effective two-way communication between home and school.

1.2. Children achieve more when everyone works together. Parents, carers, governors and friends of the school can naturally help more if they are kept informed and know what the school is trying to achieve. Effective communication will improve relationships within the school and promote partnerships with parents and the wider community. Quality communication will enhance the school's reputation.

1.3. Communications can take a variety of forms: verbal (through meetings or by telephone), written (through letters, notes in planners, notices on website, text, social media or email). Occasionally a communication may be received second hand or through an intermediary. This policy addresses the main ways in which the school ensures effective, consistent and coherent external and internal communication.

1.4. Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school, where teachers maybe teaching full time and running clubs or otherwise working with pupils at lunchtime or after school. Parents maybe exasperated if they feel that a message elicits no immediate reply, when in fact there has been no available opportunity for the member of staff to reach a telephone to return a call.

1.5. Surveys indicate that the majority of parents are satisfied or very satisfied with the two-way communications they have with school. However, this does not mean that the school always gets things right and this policy aims to clarify the parameters within which we operate to ensure that communication is carried out with all stakeholders and interested parties effectively and efficiently. Pensans School is becoming increasingly proactive in encouraging use of modern communications methods. School email contacts are available on the website and publicised regularly in newsletters and all parents/carers are being encouraged to give an up-to-date mobile phone number and email address for prompt and effective communication.

2. Aims of the policy

2.1. To improve the quality of provision given to children at Pensans School by ensuring that effective communication and consultation takes place between the school, parents/carers, pupils and other stakeholders.

2.2. To improve the quality of provision by ensuring we enable processes for consultation between the school, parents and pupils on all aspects of your child's education.

3. Communication

3.1. Communication between the school and parents operates in the following ways:

3.2. Our home-school agreement explains the school's responsibilities towards the children, the responsibilities of parents, and what the school expects of the children. We ask parents/carers, children and teachers to sign this agreement at the beginning of each school year. The agreement covers our expectations regarding attendance, behaviour and policies including uniform and homework.

3.3. Details such as term times, home-learning timetable, termly project details, dates for parents' evenings and other school events will be posted on the school website, Facebook and reminders maybe sent by text, email, or letter.

3.4. Our school website www.pensansprimary.co.uk provides parents with access to key information, a range of school communications and documents such as newsletters, policy documents and the school calendar.

3.5. Details about events at the school are sent home by book bag post and published in the schools newsletter 'Pensans Post'. The newsletter is emailed to parents on Friday afternoons and is available in hard copy from the school reception. The schools newsletter is a key vehicle for communicating in a variety of ways: alerting parents and pupils to forthcoming events and issues; celebrating the life of the school; requests for parental views and support; publishing the results of consultations, etc.

3.6. Staff will contact parents to address any issues by phone, text message, email or letter. We rely on having up-to-date land-line and mobile phone numbers and addresses so that we can phone or text parents. Teachers often text or send a postcard to parents with good news about their child's behaviour or attitude to work.

3.7. We expect parents to check book-bags each day and to make a note of event details for future reference.

3.8. The Student Planner is the usual route for routine matters for Years 3,4,5, and 6. The Student Planner is used as a key vehicle for communication between parents and the school. The planner is monitored on a weekly basis by both parents and the student's form tutor and it is imperative that the planner is used to its full potential.

3.9. If a child is ill we expect parents to contact school before 8:50am and leave a message on the answerphone each day of the absence. If we are unsure about the whereabouts of a student we will contact parents either by phone or text.

3.10. We send home termly attendance certificates. If attendance is poor we will make an appointment for parents to see an Education Welfare Officer.

3.11. Because Pensans School is a cash free school, trips and events must be paid for in advance via the ParentPay website, parents may receive reminders / communications from staff via ParentPay. Student permissions for trips are communicated to teachers via ParentPay when payments are made.

3.12. Prospective parents are invited to an Open Days in the Autumn term preceding the year of entry to the school and can make appointments to visit at other times via the school office.

3.13. Teaching staff are not available to speak to parents before registration and are often busy over break times and/or at after-school clubs. Email is the simplest form of communication and accessible by most parents so any messages for teachers must be sent to the following email address: *messages@pensans.cornwall.sch.uk* . Parents should ensure your child's name and teachers name are in the subject line of the email. Parents will be regularly reminded of this email addresses for reference.

3.14. Where a parent does not have email access, they can bring in a note addressed to the teacher. It should be posted into the secure 'messaging point' post slot at the end of the reception desk or passed to the teacher at the school gate. Office and breakfast staff will not be able to pass on messages on behalf of parents unless it is of utmost urgency.

3.15. The school has published the following provision standards to ensure realistic expectations for parents and timely responses from teachers. These standards are reviewed on an annual basis by the school's administrative team:

4. Provision Standards at Pensans School

4.1. Children achieve more when schools and parents work together. Keeping parents informed enables the school to share aims and values and reinforces the important role that parents play. Pensans School recognises that communication is a two-way process and aims to ensure parents are listened to and their concerns dealt with in a professional, timely and appropriate manner.

4.2. Pensans School has the following provision standards to ensure a prompt response for communication requests by parents. Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school, where teachers may be teaching full time and running clubs or otherwise working with children at lunchtime or after school. We aim to meet the following response times are usually adhered to:

Communication from parents Suggested response time

(Those sent at weekends may not be dealt with until the following working week, and emails sent in holidays may not elicit a reply until term-time)

Phone calls
Email

Returned within 36 hours of parent's call
Acknowledge receipt of letter within 36 hours of receipt

Written letter
Note in planner (Y3,4,5,6)

Acknowledge receipt of letter within 36 hours
Acknowledged within 36 hours of receipt
(providing child ensures the note is shown to the
appropriate member of staff)
Reply within 5 working days (term time only)

Requests for information,
any concerns, requests for
references or progress

4.3. Letters received by staff and their replies will be kept on file. Letters to parents will be approved by the Headteacher (or delegated member of SLT) before being sent out. Appropriate, timely professional advice will be sought before replying where necessary. Any letter of complaint will be referred to the Headteacher immediately in line with Pensans Complaints Policy.

5. Violence / abusive behaviour

5.1 Violence or abusive language from parents / carers will not be tolerated at this school.

6. Access to school / reception area

6.1 Our school reception is an area where parents and visitors can feel comfortable waiting for meetings and appointments. It is also a place of work and an area where parents and visitors may need to initiate confidential discussions. Parents are expected to drop off and collect their children at the designated areas around the school at the appropriate times.

7. Sudden incidents

7.1. In the case of sudden incidents affecting the school, such as a fire or severe weather, parents will be texted and information will be put on the website, the Twitter page and FaceBook.

7.2. We will try to contact parents/carers by telephone if their son or daughter is injured or taken seriously ill. Where an incident affects the whole school community, such as power failure or snow, the school will send all parents an email or text message which may direct them to a special message posted onto the school's website. If the school is closed for more than one day, due to adverse weather or some similar problem, an update will be posted on the website.

7.3. In the unlikely event of a more serious incident, the response will, inevitably, depend on the circumstances. The first and greatest priority will always be to look after the children. The second priority will be to give parents the fullest possible account of events as soon as possible; Pensans School will always tell parents/carers personally if their son or daughter is injured, or has suffered some mishap unless the emergency services take this responsibility and instruct otherwise.

8. Disputes between parents

8.1. The school cannot get involved in disputes between parents in the event of separation or divorce. All correspondence and information will be sent to all holders of parental responsibility (letters, school reports, calendar, invitations to school events) unless there is a court order to the contrary. We can usually arrange for separate appointments at Parents' Consultations if required. The interest of the child must always be paramount and it is important that parents agree on decisions to avoid the child or the school being involved in disputes including, for example, participation in school trips.

9. Consultation

9.1. Consultation between the school, parents and pupils operates in the following ways:-

9.2. Questionnaires are issued to parents on a range of issues and through a variety of means (hard copy, through electronic surveys, email). They may be distributed at specific parental events or via "pupil post".

9.3. The consultation process via questionnaires addresses key service areas such as the school curriculum, changes to the timing of the school day, uniform, the framework for parental consultation evenings, homework, the school's reporting system, primary school transition, the quality and accessibility of the school's materials, etc

9.4. The Pensans Local Board of Governors meets once a term and is consulted on a wide range of issues.

9.5. Written communication about pupil progress takes place formally for each student through a report each summer term. Reports are issued with a reply slip inviting parents to comment on the report they have received.

9.6. Parents are invited to two Parent Consultations each year to meet the student's form tutor and review the overall progress of the student.

9.7. Parents of each year group are invited into school at the beginning of each term to find out about the new Project for that term. Then at the end of term they are invited to attend an event to see the outcomes of the Project and see their child's work.

9.8. The Pupil Parliament / Head Student Team is consulted on a range of key issues relating to the school. Meetings take place at least every half term, with additional meetings for specific issues.

9.9. Members of the Leadership Team undertake "Learning Walks" regularly and discuss learning with pupils as part of this exercise.

9.10. As part of the school's system of Departmental Self Review, pupils are involved in Student Voice feedback to review the teaching and learning within different subjects and contribute their own thoughts on subject strengths and areas for development.

9.11. Pupils are encouraged to be constructive about how the school can improve provision and may be selected as subject ambassadors to promote, improve and celebrate the work.

9.12. The Teaching and Learning Group meets periodically to share best practice in improving standards of Teaching and Learning

9.13. Consultation between external agencies takes place with a view to improving the service provided by the school, for example, there are multi-agency meetings hosted by the school.

9.14. The Special Educational Needs Team works closely with individual pupils, parents/carers and external experts and meetings are held frequently to discuss best practice and provision for individuals and groups.

10. Guidelines

10.1. All communications should:

- Keep staff, children, parents and carers, governors and the wider community well informed
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional
- Use jargon-free, plain English and be easily understood by all
- Be carried out within an agreed timeframe
- Use the method most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience.

10.2. All letters sent out by Pensans School are authorised by the Headteacher (or delegated member of the Leadership Team) and a copy placed on the school website and the KS1/KS2 letter display board near reception.

10.3. If needed to aid communication, the school will provide interpreters, and support for parents or children with disabilities or special needs.

10.4. Photographs are used in and around the school for many purposes, including displays, records of practical work and records of important school events. Photographs of children will only be used if they add value to a student's or group's work.

10.5. We may use photographs of children or their work when communicating with parents and the wider community; in newsletters, in the school PR, with news releases or on the school website. The local or national press may on occasions publish photographs of children participating in events at school.

- Children who are not allowed to have their photographs taken or who cannot be filmed are marked centrally on our data management system. The office team can run these reports when required.
- Photographs will be checked to ensure that they are suitable before use.

11. General Marketing, PR and the Local Community

11.1. As well as informing parents about their own child, a co-ordinated approach will convey a positive message about the school to families and to the wider community.

11.2. Clear signage and a welcoming reception area are the starting point for visitors. Good news stories and positive messages will be displayed via the noticeboards around school and on the electronic screens in reception.

11.3. Successes will be highlighted throughout the year. Some will be suitable for reporting solely on the school website/newsletter/social media while others may also be turned into press releases for distribution to community and local media.

11.4. When press coverage is achieved, parties who may be interested such as parents, staff, governors and the community will be informed via email, social media, the newsletter and the school website.

11.5. When selecting pictures for publications and press releases which include pictures of children, the image will be checked to ensure that they do not include any children whose parents have informed us they do not wish their child to be photographed.

11.6. All publications and prospectuses will be mindful of the equal opportunities policy, reflecting and celebrating the diversity of our community and avoiding stereotypes.

12. Pensans School Website

12.1. Our school website www.pensansprimary.co.uk provides parents with access to key information, a range of school communications and documents such as newsletters, policy documents and the school calendar.

12.2. Pensans School updates its website regularly to inform all members of the school and local community.

12.3. Pensans School is aware of the statutory requirement for schools to ensure key documents and data are available on the website. A full list of these documents can be found in Appendix 1.

13. Mobile Phones

13.1. Mobile phones are not allowed to be used on the school premises.

13.2. If for some reasons a student needs a phone for after school, it must be switched off and handed to their teachers as soon before registration.

13.3. Staff members and visitors are only able to use mobile phones outside of school, in the staff room or outside of school.

13.4. Cameras on mobile phones must not be used unless permission has been given and never in such a way as to harass or cause distress to another student or member of staff.

13.5. The school monitors the use of ICT to protect from inappropriate sites but parents need to be aware that it is not possible for the school to filter or monitor websites accessed by children on personal mobile phones with 3G internet access.

13.6. In an emergency, parents are advised to contact Reception, not to contact their child directly. Children should go to the School Office if they need to contact home during the school day because of an emergency only.

14. Freedom of Information

14.1. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides public access to information held by public authorities. It does this in two ways: • public authorities are obliged to publish certain information about their activities; • members of the public are entitled to request information from public authorities. 1

14.2. As well as responding to requests for information, Pensans School must publish information proactively. The Freedom of Information Act requires every public authority to have a publication scheme, approved by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), and to publish information covered by the scheme.

14.3. The scheme sets out Pensans Schools commitment to make certain classes of information routinely available, such as policies and procedures, minutes of meetings, annual reports and financial information.

14.4. Pensans School had adopted the Model Publication Scheme from the ICO (see appendix 2 or online at <https://ico.org.uk/media/fororganisations/documents/1153/model-publication-scheme.pdf>)

15. Monitoring and Review

15.1. This policy will be regularly monitored, and reviewed in September 2021.