



Communications Policy

Thakeham Primary School

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Signed

Headteacher: *S. Norton*

Chair of the Resources and Strategic Organisation Committee:

WR Marshall

At Thakeham Primary School we believe that good communication between the school and the home is essential. Children achieve more when schools and parents work together. Parents can help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve, and how they can help. In our school we aim to have clear and effective communications with parents and the wider community. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values through keeping parents well informed about school life. This reinforces the importance of the role that parents play in supporting the school in educating their children.

These are our principles:

- Communicating with stakeholders, particularly parents, is a core part of what we do, not an afterthought.
- We will always try to share as much information as possible about any issue.
- If we cannot share information we will explain why.
- We will endeavour to work as transparently as possible by offering clear explanations for Major decisions.
- We will communicate in a timely fashion and try to avoid parents receiving information about The school from other sources first.
- We will communicate in a voice which is courteous, jargon free and warm.
- Where information relating to the school is available in the public domain, we will direct People to it.
- We acknowledge that some information is of a confidential nature and will always respect that Confidentiality.
- We will do our best to communicate with all school communities.

Internal methods of communication

- All staff receive a Staff Handbook, updated annually, providing them with important information about organisation and procedures within the school.
- An integrated programme of meetings to facilitate involvement of staff both formal and informal: e.g. staff meetings, teaching assistant/MMS meetings.
- Time put aside for structured opportunities for staff to engage in team working and to contribute to subject leaders' reflection on priorities, activities and future plans.
- For all meetings there should be an agenda and notes should be taken, action points progressed and feedback given to staff.
- Information and notification of initiatives are communicated through the use of email, where appropriate. Email is a quick, effective way of communicating information; however it should not replace face to face meetings where discussion is required.
- Written communications should be placed in pigeon holes, in the staffroom, which staff must check daily, handed to staff personally or emailed.
- Staff meetings take place every week. Part-time class teachers are expected to communicate the main points and any handouts to their colleague with whom they share the class.
- The school diary is kept in the office and any dates/bookings must be confirmed with the Headteacher before being confirmed
- Each term an overview of meetings, dates etc is prepared and emailed/copied to staff. It is the responsibility of staff to ensure that they check future dates/actions
- All staff receive a weekly bulletin by Friday for the week ahead with activities and tasks that are due to take place. Break/lunch duties are also included. Staff should read and check this carefully.
- The whiteboard in the staffroom is used to communicate daily messages
- Important information on a range of topics is displayed on the staffroom noticeboard.

Communication with Parents/Carers

Schools have many lines of communication to maintain: with parents and carers, other schools, the community and with outside agencies. Our aim is to have clear and effective communications with all parents and the wider community. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values through keeping parents well informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents play in supporting school.

Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional. We will try to make written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of racial discrimination.

Talking with staff

Class teachers are generally always available for a 'quick word' at the start/end of the day, though many do run clubs after school and are busy setting up/settling children in at the beginning of the day. Therefore if you need to talk with the class teacher in more detail, please make an appointment for a telephone conversation or a meeting in person. Appointments can be made through the school office (phone or email).

Meetings

There are a number of meetings throughout the year which provide opportunities to discuss current

Developments in the school:

- **New Reception Intake** - we hold a meeting in May/June for parents who have children starting school in Reception that September to meet the classteacher, Headteacher and school PTA (FOTS). Routines, topics and expectations are discussed.
- **Six Weeks In** – Around week 6 (or before) of the Autumn term we hold a coffee morning for parents of Reception children which is a social opportunity for parents to meet each other, the classteacher and Headteacher to chat informally about classroom arrangements and how the children are settling in.
- **Curriculum Information:** At the beginning of the academic year teachers hold a meeting for parents to discuss the curriculum topics for the year ahead, class routines, expectations, home learning etc.
- **Year 1 Phonics** – Arrangements for the statutory Year 1 Phonics test, sample tests and useful home support ideas are shared by the classteacher with Year 1 parents during this meeting in the summer term
- **Year 2 SATs** - We have a KS1 SATs meeting in the Summer term for parents of children in Years 2 to discuss arrangements for the forthcoming assessments led by the classteacher
- **Year 6 SATs** – We have a KS2 SATs meeting in the Autumn term for parents of children in Years 6 to discuss arrangements for the forthcoming assessments led by the classteacher
- **Transition to Secondary School** – During the Autumn term Steyning Grammar School staff hold a meeting for parents of children in Year 6 ahead of their transition in Year 7.
- **Residential Trip** - Where a major trip is taking place, such as the biannual Year 5/6 residential trip, the trip leaders will organise a meeting for parents well in advance to provide detailed information about all aspects of the trip.

- **Parent Consultation Meetings:** We do encourage parents to contact the school at any time if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being, but we also provide two formal opportunities to meet one to one with the class teacher during the academic year. The first meeting is midway through the autumn term and identifies areas of strength and targets for future development. Parents are invited to meet with their child's teacher again during the spring term to review their child's progress towards the targets and again the updated targets are shared in writing with parents. Parents are able to look at their child's work during these meetings. Parents will be given information and advance notice about such events in the newsletter and by letter.

Parents are also invited to discuss their child's Annual Report with the classteacher on a specific date following publication of the reports.

Parents of SEN& D children will meet with their classteacher and the InCo three times a year, in addition to parent consultation evenings. This gives them the opportunity to celebrate their child's successes, and to support their child in areas where there is a particular need for improvement as per the ILP targets.

- **Parent Workshops** – these occur throughout the year and have a specific focus as linked to the School Strategic Development Plan e.g. Talk 4 Writing, Maths, Assessment for Learning etc. Governors who are linked to the area of focus for the workshop will also be invited to attend and meet parents.
- **Celebration Assemblies** – Each Monday a special assembly is held where a variety of awards are presented including Super Learning Hero Awards, Headteacher Awards, Handwriting Awards, Sports Awards and pupils' achievements outside of school.
- **Fabulous Finishes** – Each class topic concludes with a celebration of children's work which can take a variety of formats. Wherever possible parents are invited to these.
- **Art Gallery/Open Afternoon** – Each year children's Art work and curriculum work will be available to view at an Open Afternoon and immediately after school. It is not a parent consultation appointment.

Open events are also organised for prospective parents of whose children are due to start school the following autumn term.

We encourage parents to contact the school if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being. **Concerns or complaints should not be discussed via social media.**

We will make reasonable adjustments to our arrangements if this will enable a parent with a disability to participate fully in a meeting at our school, or to receive and understand communication.

Letters/Emails

Letters are used to communicate with parents on a wide variety of topics. To support the work of the 'Eco Warriors' in school, all letters will be communicated to parents as an attachment in an email (unless a parent has requested to receive paper copies). Occasionally letters/forms may be sent out in paper form.

Parents are asked to check their email accounts and their child's book bags daily to ensure they do not miss important information.

Letters to parents must be approved by the Headteacher before they are sent. Copies of all correspondence to individual parents will be placed in pupil files.

Staff will respond to parents' letters/emails within 48 hours (2 school days). This does not include weekends, school or public holidays. Any letter of complaint must be referred to the Headteacher immediately.

The school has an email system it uses to communicate with parents. Any communication that needs to be sent to parents using this system must be approved by the Headteacher. Staff should forward relevant emails from parents to the Headteacher and should always do so if the content is a complaint. A hard copy of any email complaint received by staff from a parent should be placed in pupil files. All emails requiring an answer should be responded to within 48 hours (2 school days).

Texts

The school have bought into a text message service which it uses to:

- inform parents of children who are due to receive awards as part of the Celebration Assembly
- inform parents of any school closure
- alert parents to any health and safety/urgent travel/parking information
- provide notice of a head bump
- provide a final reminder to parents of events/letters to be returned to school etc

As this service is at cost per text message sent and a limited number of characters can be used to express a message, emails/letters/telephone calls will be used wherever possible.

Website

The school website <http://www.thakehamps.co.uk> provides information about the school, its curriculum, assessment and policies to name but a few examples. It is an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience.

Reading Records

Each child has a Reading Record which is used both at home and school to record children's reading activities. At school children also have a separate book which is used during English.

Fortnightly Newsletter

Information about key developments, events, opportunities and achievements are shared in our fortnightly newsletter. This is emailed to all parents on alternate Fridays and published on our website.

Curriculum Information Letters

These outline the intended learning across the curriculum areas for each topic and copies are sent to parents. These are also available on the school website.

School Prospectus

The school prospectus contains a range of specified information to give parents a full picture of provision in our school. This is updated every year and placed on the website.

Annual Report to Parents

At the end of the summer term children will receive an end of year written report and parents can subsequently arrange to meet with teachers if there are any concerns... In our school we ask the children to comment on their own progress, and parents to make a similar comment using the annual report format. We also give parents/carers of children in Year 2 and Year 6 the details of their performance in the national tests, and details of national comparative performance. Children in Year 1 receive information stating whether their child has passed the Year 1 Phonics Assessment.

The leadership team, ably supported by the school office team aim to ensure information and messages are delivered to parents/carers in a timely fashion. It is parents' responsibility to ensure they read the information communicated to ensure they remain up to date with information provided and respond within the timescales requested.

Good communication is vital to positive home-school partnership as well as communication with the wider community. We hope that this policy will support such partnerships, further developing the school's place in the community and promoting school improvement.