



Platt C.E Primary School **Communication Policy** **(the best way to communicate with our school)**

Key Objectives:

All communications at Platt CE Primary School should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents and other stakeholders well informed
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional
- Use jargon-free English and be easily understood by all
- Use the method of communication most effective and appropriate to the context and audience
- Either be neutral or offer a balanced presentation of political views

Communication with parents and other important stakeholders

Effective communications enable us to share our school aims and values as well as keeping parents well informed about school life. This reinforces the vital role that parents play in supporting the school and their child/ren.

Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents, it is essential that relationships are professional and parents are addressed in a formal manner in all written communication, whatever the form.

Platt CE Primary School aims to make our written communication as accessible and inclusive as possible, we will ensure that all of our parents can access a form of communication, making alternative arrangements where necessary (e.g. EAL, SEN, IT access or literacy issues). We will seek parental feedback on the school communication via our annual parent survey.

Communication Procedures

The school office can be contacted between 8.30am and 3.45pm on school weekdays.

Postal Address	Telephone	Email:
Platt CE Primary School Maidstone Road Platt Kent TN15 8JY	01732 882596	office@platt.kent.sch.uk

Message, Queries, Concerns	Person to Contact
If your child is absent from school...	Please notify the school office each day of absence by 10.30 am either by telephone on 01732 882596 (where you can leave a message) or in person. Please note that this notification does not guarantee that absences will be authorised.
If you have a quick message for your child's	Talk to your child's teacher on the playground after the class has been dismissed; all teachers are outside every afternoon. Urgent

teacher about collection, concerns, home learning...	messages may be left at the school office if you do not get a chance to speak to the teacher.
If you would like to talk about your child's learning progress...	Make an appointment to meet with your child's teacher via the school office. If, following your discussion you would like more information, make an appointment to meet with the relevant School Leader.
If you are concerned about social behaviours or bullying...	Make an appointment to meet with your child's teacher via the school office. If, following your discussion you would like more information, make an appointment to meet with the relevant School Leader.
If you would like to discuss something related to your child's teacher...	Make an appointment to meet with the Deputy Headteacher via the school office.
If you would like to discuss your child's special educational needs...	Make an appointment to meet with the SENCO via the school office.
If you would like to find out about after school clubs or have a query...	Check the school website, email the office on office@platt.kent.sch.uk or ask at the school office.
If you have a query about Breakfast club...	Please contact Claire Metcalfe on 07742 112228
If you have a pay query ...	Enquiries can be made to the school's office staff.
If you have a school dinner enquiry...	You can contact Contract Dining on 01622 890 922 info@thecontractdiningcompany.co.uk
If you wanted to check if the school is open...	Please check the school website, your parentmail or Kent school closures online.

If having followed the above the steps above, your question or concern is not resolved, please make an appointment with the school office to meet with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

If you would like to contact the Governing Body, they may be contacted directly, in writing, via the school office. All correspondence must be sealed and addressed to the Chair of the Governing Body, Paul Vallance.

Communication maybe via the following forms:

Formal letters (sent via the school office)

Staff will endeavour to reply to parents' letters as quickly as possible. Letters will be acknowledged in 3 working days from receipt and a reply sent within 10 working days. Letters must be approved by the Headteacher or a Deputy Headteacher before posting. Copies of correspondence with parents will be placed on the pupils file.

E-Mail

Email is a quick, effective way of communicating information. However it does not replace face-to-face meetings where some discussion is required.

All e-mail should be treated as letters and should be checked carefully for technical errors and tone. Staff should acknowledge e-mail within 3 working days and send a full reply within 10 working days, unless the sender has been given a legitimate reason for the delay, such as consultation or

investigation. **Under no circumstances should staff contact pupils, parents or conduct any school business using personal email addresses.**

Telephone calls

Staff should take notes about the content of telephone calls, as they would with meetings with parents. Notes from telephone calls, including main points of discussion and action required/taken should be logged and filed in their pupils file.

If a child is absent from school and we have no indication of the reason, administrative staff will contact a parent on the same day, to find out the reason for the absence.

Parentmail

We encourage all parents to inform the school of their current e-mail address, to allow them access to Parentmail through our MIS, which is a quick, economic and efficient method for the school to communicate with parents. A record of those who do not have access to Parentmail is maintained and they will receive a paper copy of any correspondence.

Parentmail is used to send out a variety of information, either to a targeted group, or to all parents on Parentmail. The newsletter, information about whole school events and all letters relevant to the whole school are sent out to all parents on parent mail and in addition, some specific communications regarding trips and events are sent out to the relevant groups of parents. It is our aim to have 100% of parents signed up to Parentmail to facilitate paperless communication.

Meeting with parents

We encourage parents to contact the school if issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being. For everyday issues parents should contact their child's class teacher.

For persistent or serious issues, parents should contact the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

Any parent wishing to meet with a member of staff should contact the school office in advance and request a meeting with that member of staff. The subject for that meeting should be shared in advance to help staff to be fully prepared to ensure the meeting is productive.

Parents should not come to the school to talk to a member of staff without an appointment. If a parent comes to the school without a prior appointment, the member of staff may still choose to meet with them, but there is no expectation to do so.

Parents (like all visitors) should report to reception prior to meeting with a member of staff. If the meeting is due to take place outside office hours, separate arrangements can be made.

If a meeting with a parent is taking place outside normal school hours, the member of staff should try, where possible, to ensure that another colleague is nearby. It is perfectly acceptable to call a meeting to a close in order to allow time for further investigation.

When a pupil is accompanying a parent for a meeting, it is perfectly acceptable to ask a pupil to remain out of the meeting for part of it, particularly when a parent is criticising a teacher or any aspect of the school. It is damaging to the relationship with the pupil for them to witness this, but parents may need to vent particular feelings and this is a useful mechanism for this.

Planned meetings

At the beginning of the school year class meetings are arranged to share the new class charters, curriculum, routines and additional information.

Meetings are held prior to any residential trip to inform parents of planning, content and arrangements.

A meeting for new reception parents is held in July each year. Additional meetings include a Reception settling in /social event for parents and pupils take place over terms 6 and 1.

Possible contentious meetings

A member of staff may ask for another member of staff to accompany them and should always do so when the meeting may be contentious in any way or if their input will add value to the meeting. When

possible, the Headteacher will attend this meeting. The key discussion points, actions and decisions should be recorded.

Staff should call a meeting to a close in the event of the parent becoming angry or abusive. The member of staff should report such an incident to a member of the leadership team and seek further advice. The Headteacher should either accompany the member of staff to a further meeting with the parent or hold it without the original member of staff present.

Social Networking Sites/Blogs etc (See also E-Safety Policy)

Staff will not communicate with parents or pupils via social networking sites nor accept them as their "friends". The exception is networks or blogs set up specifically for the purpose of teaching and learning.

Written reports

Once a year, a full written report is sent to parents on their child's progress in each subject. The report identifies areas of strength and areas for further development.

Pupils are also given the opportunity to comment on their own progress and parents are invited to make a comment.

In addition, parents meet their child's teacher twice a year, at parents' evening. A summary report of progress and attainment are shared before/at these meetings.

When pupils have special educational needs, or if they are making less than expected progress or experiencing behavioural or disciplinary difficulties, we may arrange to meet with parents more regularly.

School Website

The school website provides information about the school and an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience and provide guidance on admissions for prospective parents and pupils. It also has a regularly updated area for information for current parents. In addition, it has up-to-date policies available for parents to view. Copies of all newsletters to parents and information guides are also accessible through the website.

Public Access Documents

Curriculum information, policies and copies of recent letters will be available on the school website. Key dates for the year (where possible) are sent out in September.

Home-school Communication

KS1 pupils are issued with a planner. This enables parents to record a wide range of information that they wish to share with the teachers to communicate with parents. Most importantly, parents should use planners to check independent learning work and pupils' weekly reflection on learning. This can also be used to communicate day-to-day issues with the teacher. Parents and a member of staff should check and sign the planner at least weekly.

A calendar of school events is available on the website, and is updated on the key dates that are sent out in September, the upcoming terms dates are always shared in the newsletter.

The school's newsletter is published monthly and is sent to all parents, it is also available on the school website. Members of the school will be invited and are encouraged to contribute appropriate items to the newsletter which should be e-mailed to the Headteacher.

Communication with other schools and outside agencies

Before joining new pupils are encouraged to visit in the school prior to starting. We offer taster days/sessions. Following parental permission we will contact the previous school to help gather key information to aid this process. We will receive the individual pupil file from the previous school once that child is on roll.

Visits from External Agencies (See also Equality Information and Objectives Policy)

As part of our curriculum and extra-curricular provision, we will regularly invite guest speakers, experts and representatives from a range of organisations and institutions to the school to speak to and engage with our pupils. Prior to these visits, we will agree the terms and content of their input into the provision and ensure that it is in accordance with our policies. From time to time, for PSHE provision for instance, these individuals may represent partial groups or promote partial political views. Where this is the case, this will be clearly explained to pupils, along with the reasons for the partiality. We will also ensure pupils have access to alternative views, in order to give them access to a balance of views. No group or individual will be allowed to present views which are contrary to our Equality Information and Objectives Policy

Safeguarding including child protection (See also Safeguarding Policy)

We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our school should provide a safe and secure environment. We are the people most in contact with our children, and we are therefore in a unique position to identify and help abused children. Because of this when any member of staff has concerns about a child, these will be passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Leader, who may share this information with the Social Services.

We are supported by and regularly communicate with various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed on ways to meet pupils' needs, to ensure that all pupils can participate fully in school life. Support comes from such services as Educational Welfare, Educational Psychologists, Social Care etc.

Confidentiality

We hold information on pupils in our school and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. Details will be sent to parents about the types of data we hold, why we hold that data, and who we may pass it on to. This is a requirement under the Data Protection Act 1998. Parents have a right to view the information we hold, and we have contact details of the agencies to which our information is passed. (Please see our data protection policy)

Communication with colleagues at Platt CE Primary School

Meetings

An annual programme of meetings will be agreed and calendared for staff and the timetable facilitates informal meeting and planning /support time for teaching colleagues. All formal meetings should be minuted and members invited to contribute to the agenda. It is important that these are focused on developmental, not administrative, matters and time is set aside for structured opportunities for staff to engage in team working and to contribute to the school's reflection on priorities, activities and future plans. For all formal meetings, notes should be taken, action points progressed and feedback given to staff.

Minutes of meeting should be copied to relevant staff, the Headteacher and saved on staff shared area in the pertinent folder.

E-mail (See also E-Safety Policy and Agreement)

The school gives all staff their own email account to use for all school business. Email can be an efficient way of communicating with colleagues and passing on information. However, it should not be used as a substitute for face-to-face contact and staff must consider whether it is the best way to communicate in each situation and understand that there is permanent record of any communication. Teachers should ensure that they:

- Do not engage in private /personal correspondence with a pupil. This includes texting and social networking.
- Under no circumstances should they contact pupils or parents, or conduct any school business, using personal email accounts or text messaging.

- No chain letters are sent and no advertisements are embedded in any communication.
- Any political views are neutral or balanced.

Staff Briefings and Meetings

Staff Briefings take place at 9.00am on Mondays, where the week's events and information are shared with the all teaching staff, where any issues are raised and events from the next week are shared, including staff absence. A two week calendar of events is on display in the staff room.

There is also a fortnightly leadership meeting and a weekly teaching staff meeting.

Staff Handbook

A copy of the Staff Handbook is shared with all staff at the beginning of the academic year. A hard copy is available in the staffroom and updated annually. An electronic version is given to all staff and it contains essential information and should be read by all staff. This is annually shared in September.

Notice Boards

Staff notice boards are located in the staff room. These are maintained and updated by office and leadership team. Care should be taken that any display which has as its focus a political issue, presents a balanced view or an overview that communicates about the diversity of opinion on this matter or indicates where alternative perspectives may be found.

Links with Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Equality Information and Objectives Policy
- E-Safety Policy and Acceptable Use Agreement for staff and pupils
- Safeguarding and Safe Recruitment Policy