

THE VINE INTER-CHURCH PRIMARY SCHOOL



COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS POLICY

Policy Development: September 2023

Policy Ratification: October 2023

Policy Review: July 2024

Impact on Christian Values

*Openness and honesty is integral to our communication and this has been aimed for in this policy.
Contentment can only be achieved through steady work and developing trusting relationships.*

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- d Targeted meetings
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3.1 Informal

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1 Aims

At The Vine Inter-Church Primary school we aim to establish open and honest communications with parents/carers. Communication, both informal and formal, takes place through direct and indirect interactions between parents/carers and school staff. Effective communications enable us to:

- ⇒ share our aims and values through keeping parents/carers informed about school life reinforcing the importance of the role that parents/carers play in supporting the school in educating their children.
- ⇒ ensure that pupils receive continuity of education, care and support within both home and school settings.

2 Direct Communications (Face to Face)

2.1 Direct Communications - Informal

a School gate and Classroom door

We encourage parents/carers to share any issues about their child at the earliest opportunity. Teachers aim to make themselves available at the start and end of the school day however the needs of the class must come first and sometimes an appointment will be needed to allow enough time for a thorough discussion. Members of the leadership team open the main school gates each morning in order to make themselves available for parents/carers who have any concerns.

b Telephone calls

Members of the school staff are encouraged to be proactive and to contact parents/carers to discuss any concerns. These may include:

Accidents or incidents

Telephone calls will be made where immediate contact with a family member is required i.e. for pupil injury or incident. A member of staff will call the first named emergency contact as listed. Where no contact is made, a call will then be made to the second named contact. In the event that no contact can be made, the member of staff will either leave an answer phone message (ascending order as before) or ensure that repeat calls continue to be made to the contact numbers, where possible. Parents/carers are reminded regularly to update their contact details.

Attendance

If a child is absent from school we ask parents/carers to contact the school by 9:10am. If we have not heard by then a member of the school office will telephone families where the absence causes concern to find out the reason.

c School events

During the year parents/carers may be invited to share learning with their child's class or year group. For example, to attend an exhibition (e.g. an Egyptian museum), a performance (e.g. Nativity) or a demonstration (e.g. phonics). Parents/carers may also be invited to lead the learning, sharing information about their culture or faith, talking about their career or sharing their hobby.

2.2 Direct Communications – Formal

Concerns

We encourage all parents and carers to put any concerns into writing through an email and via the school office. Office at office@thevine.cambs.sch.uk. Communication will be treated privately and replied to within 5 working days by the appropriate member of staff.

a Induction for new Foundation Stage pupils

Once Foundation Stage places have been allocated parents/carers are invited to attend a Welcome Evening. Members of school staff including teachers, teaching assistants, office staff and the school kitchen attend along with representatives from governors. Parents/carers have the opportunity to find out about school routines, the Foundation Stage curriculum, to buy uniform and opportunities for their child to visit the school. In September Foundation Stage teachers and teaching assistants pay a home visit to discuss each child's pre-school development, this lays a valuable foundation for future communications.

b New school year meeting

A meeting is held early in the autumn term to provide parents/carers with information about the curriculum and year group routines and expectations. A curriculum overview and a timetable for the year is provided.

c Coffee mornings

During the school year there are a number of opportunities for parents/carers to discover more about school life. This takes a range of forms including workshops with a range of practical activities for parents/carers and their children to share, information sessions when teachers share relevant information about a specific curriculum area e.g. numeracy, Learning Walks guided by a member of the Strategic Leadership Team or joining a teaching session.

d Targeted meetings

Meetings are held to provide information about specific school events e.g. residential visits or attendance.

e Inclusion

Additional interventions

The Inclusion Team run a number of individual and small group programmes throughout the year. Parents/carers of pupils invited to take part in these programmes are informed by letter. Parents/carers of pupils who receive additional support from other agencies such as speech and language or educational psychology may be invited to a meeting to discuss the extra provision.

Pupils with EHCPs

Pupils with a statement of Special Educational needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) have an ASP (additional support plan) setting out the specific targets that their child is working towards. The ASPs are reviewed regularly and are discussed with parents. Parents of children with statements of special educational needs or EHCPs are invited to an annual review meeting which involves all professionals involved in meeting their child's needs.

f Child Protection

A member of school staff will attend meetings held for pupils who are designated as children in need or those on the child protection register. Whenever possible, concerns about the welfare of a child will be shared with parents/carers prior to any such meeting. When a log of concern is received a member of the leadership team will usually discuss this with one of the parents involved.

g Domestic violence notifications

When the school receives a notification of an incident involving domestic violence a member of the leadership team will discuss the incident with one of the parents/carers involved.

h Learning mentor induction

We value the contribution made by parents/carers who are able to volunteer their time to help in school. To ensure that our Learning Mentors feel confident about their role in school we offer a short induction session providing essential information about a range of issues including child protection procedures, confidentiality, positive behaviour management and fire procedures.

i Parent consultations

Parents/carers are invited to meet their child's teacher formally twice a year, towards the end of the autumn, and spring terms. This gives parents/carers the opportunity to celebrate their child's successes and to support the child with their targets (areas for development.) Parents/carers are able to look at their child's learning during these meetings. Parents/carers are allocated a 10 minute time slot; if more time is necessary, staff are happy to arrange another meeting. These meetings are held in a hybrid manner at the discretion of the school. They can be held virtually or in person. If the meetings are held in person, they are established in shared spaces so that no teacher is alone with parents/carers; this is to provide support to teachers in the event of any disagreement.

j Church services

Parents/carers are invited to join the school for special services and celebrations including Harvest, Christmas and Easter.

3. Indirect communications (Written)

3.1 Indirect communications – Informal

a Certificates and celebrations

There are weekly Celebration Assemblies celebrating Lead Learners and Courageous Advocates. Pupils who have been celebrated are awarded a Certificate to take home. In addition FS and KS1 are given 'Be Proud' certificates and KS2 are given WOW and FANTASTIC cards for learning and attitude.

b Home-Learning diaries

All pupils in the school have a Home-Learning Diary to record their daily reading activity. This may be simply recording the date, title and page or may be a short summary of the book that has been read. In FS and KS1 parents/carers are encouraged to write a short comment about the reading and in KS2 parents/carers are encouraged to sign to agree that their child has read at home. The Home-learning diaries are also a useful means of communicating with teachers e.g. home time arrangements.

c Notes Home

There are a number of proformas that are used to provide information quickly and efficiently for example, a 'bumped head' letter is issued for playground accidents involving any bumps/grazes above the neck.

d Surveys and questionnaires

When an area of school life is under review a survey/questionnaire may be distributed to gather parent/carer opinion. The results of these are reported to governors and action points are reported through The Grapevine.

e Home-learning

Home-Learning is issued throughout the year with a map of suggested activities and a date for submission. In KS2, Home-Learning books are returned to school each week so that teachers can monitor progress.

f Drop ins and displays

We take great pride in presenting learning carefully in the classrooms and in the shared areas of the school. Parents/carers are invited to enjoy the range of displays whenever they visit the school. In FS2/KS1 after school 'drop ins' are held each term to provide an opportunity for parents/carers to look at their own child's learning but also to enjoy the displays around the school. Written feedback indicates to parents, carers and pupils what is going well (STARS) and what needs to be done to improve (SIGNPOSTS or TARGETS). The most frequent type of feedback is verbal feedback (VF). This is provided by staff within the lesson, so the pupil has the opportunity to immediately address any misconceptions or identify with what they are doing well.

g Governors

Contact information for governors is publicised on the school website.

h Leaflets

The school has several information leaflets from a range of organisations such as health agencies, local community groups and support agencies. These are displayed in both the main school office and the Family Centre.

3.2 Indirect communications – Formal

a Targeted Letters

There are a range of letters that are sent from the school to provide or request information including attendance updates, special leave of absence forms and financial statements. Other letters of a general nature are sent as necessary. Copies of these letters are kept in a file in the school office for parents/carers to refer to as required. Letters with response slips eg: informing parents/carers about learning beyond the classroom are always sent in printed form rather than electronically.

b ScholarPack

The school subscribes to Scholarpack, this allows us to email letters to parents/carers. Not only is it more environmentally friendly as it decreases paper usage, but reduces photocopying and other costs in the school. We urge parents to provide us with a valid email address to make use of this service. Where it is not possible to use Scholarpack, most written correspondence is passed on to families through pupil post. A Vine 'Postie' system is in place whereby the eldest child in each family is given the responsibility for carrying school communications.

c Noticeboards

We have noticeboards on the external wall of the family centre on which we display information about local community events. In addition, some classes may place a portable whiteboard outside their teaching area to provide information or reminders.

d School website & Social Media

The website provides a range of information and is updated regularly. The website contains a rich diversity of information including curriculum maps, copies of standard letters and diary dates. The website provides a particularly effective means of communicating current news eg school closure due to adverse weather. The school operates three social media accounts; Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. These are used to share up to date information, updates and photos from trips and visits and in school learning.

e Reports

End of Year

At the end of each year, we provide a written report to parents/carers identifying progress in the various areas of learning of National Curriculum subjects and identifying areas of strength and areas for future development. Test data is provided to allow parents/carers/pupils to match their attainment against both the national and the school context.

f The Grapevine

The Grapevine is the weekly newsletter that is distributed each Friday. The Grapevine contains a range of information including term dates, attendance data, curriculum highlights, reminders about school routines and expectations as well as information about activities taking place in the wider community including sports, cultural and church events.

g Abm caterers

Three weekly menu's can be viewed on the school website.

h Public access documents e.g. policies, minutes of FGB

We keep a master set of documents in school including school policies, minutes of governing body meetings and a range of national and LA documentation; these are available on request.

i Inspection reports

Copies of inspection reports are distributed to all parents/carers as required by Ofsted and SIAMS regulations.

5 Monitoring and review

The headteacher monitors this policy on a regular basis through consideration of the following:

- parent/carer attendance at a range of meetings
- response to parent/carer feedback
- parent/carer and teacher comments in Home-School diaries
- responses to surveys and questionnaires
- daily contact with school