

Dry Drayton VC Primary School



Communications Code

Autumn 14

The aim of this code is to foster good communications between parents/carers and the school.

Introduction

The school always welcomes contact with parents/carers because this fosters mutual understanding and support which has a positive effect on pupil performance and their attitudes to learning.

The school wants to ensure that parents/carers always have an appropriate and helpful response to their communications. However, unlike some businesses and other occupations, the professional duties of staff can make it difficult for them to speak or meet with parents/carers during the school day.

Due to teaching commitments, staff will be unavailable between 8.45 am and 3.15 pm each day. There are also other times outside these hours when they attend meetings. The important business of working with and responding to parents/carers must be managed within this context.

The Headteacher tries to be available on the playground before school to take any urgent or brief messages. If, due to other commitments she is not there, please give the message in at the school office. The class teacher will then be informed.

Principles for responding to parents/carers

In order to achieve the most effective balance for children, parents/carers and teachers, we have always followed the following principles:

- welcoming contact from parents/carers
- responding as quickly and fully as possible to parents/carers
- involving parents/carers in our work with children
- sharing information as often and as fully as possible with parents/carers.

Guidelines on responding to parents/carers

It may be helpful for parents/carers to know how they can expect their telephone calls, letters, emails and requests for meetings with the school to be dealt with. The following guidelines show how we aim to respond to parents/carers.

Telephone calls

Messages: All telephone calls are received through the main office. A message will be taken and sent to the relevant person as soon as possible. Staff will normally take details of the caller's name and telephone number

and purpose in calling. The person concerned will try to respond as soon as possible and by the end of the next school day if possible. The school's telephone number is 01954 780618.

Urgent calls: The call will be put through to the most appropriate or available senior member of staff if possible or a message will be taken.

Messages for pupils: Messages for children will be taken by a member of staff and passed on as soon as possible.

Busy times: The office is busy between 8.45 and 9.15 in the morning and 3.00 and 3.30 in the afternoon. At these times and at other times, your call may be recorded on an answer machine. This is checked regularly and if you leave a message, it will be passed on.

Telephone calls made at arranged times: If teachers have arranged with parents/carers for them to receive calls at particular times of the school day, those teachers will try to ensure that they are available. Should other commitments or events make this impossible, a staff member will take a message and the person concerned will try to call back the same day.

Letters and emails

The school will always try to **acknowledge** letters and emails received from parents/carers within five working days during term time. The school email is office@drydrayton.cambs.sch.uk . The postal address is Dry Drayton Primary School, Park Street, Dry Drayton, Cambs, CB23 8DA. The fax number is 01954 710618.

If more time is required to provide a fuller response or to arrange a meeting, staff will try to include in the acknowledgement details of when these will happen.

Staff will try to respond to the most pressing concerns of parents/carers as quickly as possible. It is our intention to try to **respond** to any letter or email as soon as we can and within five working days within term time. If there is likely to be a delay we will let you know the reasons why.

Complaints

We will investigate a complaint and aim to respond within ten working school days. If we cannot provide a full response within ten working school days then we will write to the complainant explaining this and giving a date by which we will endeavour to provide a full response.

For further information please see our complaints policy

Meetings

Where situations are more complex, a face-to-face meeting is preferable to a letter or phone call and this will be arranged at the earliest convenience for parents/carers and staff.

Meetings with class teachers - the class teacher is the first point of contact for any concerns about a child. Teachers are not available between 8.45 am and 3.15 pm but mutually agreed appointments can be made outside these times either through the office or directly with the class teacher.

Depending on the nature of the situation, a meeting may include

A more senior member of staff

- SENCO
- Headteacher
- Education Officer
- Other agencies eg. Special Needs service, Health worker

A record will be kept of each meeting and notes shared with all parties where appropriate.

Parents/carers will only be invited to discuss their own children. Staff will not talk about children in front of other parents/carers.

All meetings and discussions are confidential between the staff involved and the parents/carers and parties should not divulge information to others without the agreement of parents/carers and the school.

ParentMail

The school has a system of sending all standard forms of communication home to parents/carers who have requested it via parentmail. For all other correspondence, hardcopies will be provided.

We use 'ParentMail' to allow e-mail communications to be sent to all registered parents/carers. We would like parents to register with 'ParentMail' website and provide all new parents with the relevant form for registering. Once registration has taken place, where possible, all general school communications will be delivered to parents/carers' email addresses.

Website

The school now seeks to put as much information as possible on its website. Most general information that parents/carers would seek can be readily found by logging on at www.drydraytonprimaryschool.uk . Parents/carers are encouraged look at it on a regular basis.

Protocol for communications

The school undertakes to treat all communications with parents with courtesy. It expects to receive the same in return. Both parties will work towards identifying and resolving problems quickly and efficiently.

Where difficulties cannot be resolved, the Headteacher and /or the Chair of Governors may be involved. An Education Officer or other agencies will be invited in situations which are particularly difficult.

The school reserves the right to take appropriate action if aggressive behaviour from any party occurs on school premises.

Home-school communication

In the autumn and spring terms, parents meet their child's teacher for parent consultations. Where possible it is more effective for parents to attend the consultation together so that a common approach to supporting the child in their learning can be agreed. If exceptional circumstance mean this is not possible we will try to arrange separate consultations.

There is an in depth report in the summer which gives feedback on all areas of the curriculum.

A calendar of school events will be produced at the start of each term and communicated via the school Newsletter and on the website.

There is a Home / School agreement for parents to sign will be shared at the Autumn consultation evening.

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 have been 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.