



Caldecote Primary School

Communication Policy

January 2019

Communication Policy

Schools have many lines of communication to maintain: with parents and carers, with other schools, with the community, with outside agencies, and within the school. Good communication between the school and the home is essential, and children achieve more when schools and parents work together. Parents can naturally help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve.

In our school we aim to have clear and effective communications with all parents and with 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 the school.

Aims

Our school aims are to ensure all communications are:

- Clear
- Comprehensive
- Two-way
- Timely
- Respective Responsibilities

This explains the school's aims and values, the school's responsibilities towards the children, the responsibilities of parents, and what the school expects of the children.

School

The school will undertake to ensure that:

- Parents and children have clear lines of communication
- The curriculum is clearly communicated to parents
- Parents are informed of forthcoming events within appropriate timelines
- All communications will be treated as confidential within the school context

Parent/Guardians/Carers

Parents will undertake to:

- Read all communications issued by the school
- Raise issues or concerns at the earliest opportunity with the school in the appropriate manner*
- Act on the communication (for example, attending special meetings)
- Not discuss school issues on Social Media

**Issues should be raised with a class teacher in the first instance; these may then be escalated to the Key Stage leader followed by the Deputy / Headteacher if necessary. All complaints should follow the procedures set out in the complaints policy.*

Separated parents

In the case of separated parents the school endeavours to ensure all those with parental responsibility are kept informed about matters related to school and their children's attainment and progress. The school will undertake to obtain the details of all those with parental responsibility through its admissions form or directly from the parent who the child lives with. We also welcome being contacted by those with parental responsibility directly - providing us with the necessary details for our systems. Please see our 'Separated Parents Policy' for further information.

Methods of Communication

If you have concerns about any child at the school or in the community including concerns of neglect and abuse, please contact one of the school's designated persons for child protection through the school office and they will make you their top priority at that moment.

Playground message taker

A member of the Senior Leadership Team will be on the playground each morning to take messages for teachers or the office. They will wear a hi-viz tabard so they are easily seen.

Twitter

This is our main form of instant communication about what is going on in school. We also use this for information about trips e.g. ETA if a journey is delayed.

Email

We ask parents to use the email address office@caldecote.cambs.sch.uk. For the purposes of administration we require all emails to go to a central email address. However, all emails will be treated with full confidentiality and the responses will be made by the member of staff addressed. Please note all emails should specify the member of staff to whom the query is addressed.

We will respond to emails within 5 working days (during term time).

Website

The school seeks to put as much information as possible on its website. Most general information that parents/carers would seek can be readily found at:

<http://www.caldecoteprimaryschool.org.uk/page/default.asp?title=Home&pid=1>

Parents/carers are encouraged look at the website on a regular basis.

Letter

Letters can be handed into, or posted to, the school office. As with emails all letters will be treated with full confidentiality and the responses will be made by the member of staff addressed. Please note all letters should specify the member of staff to whom the query is addressed. Please let the office staff know if the letter contains information about your child which you would like the class teacher to receive urgently.

We will respond to letters within 5 working days (during term time).

Telephone

This would be appropriate where enquiries are deemed more urgent by the parent, such as communicating particular information about the child to the school. We ask parents to phone the school on 01954 210263. If the call requires a response from a member of staff, we aim to do this within 2 working days.

Headteacher Drop-ins

These are held regularly throughout the year at different times e.g. early morning, during the day, late evening. Parents are invited to 'drop-in' to have an informal discussion with the head about any school related item.

Appointments

If necessary, parents can visit the school to ask questions, to gain support or to have the opportunity to talk about their child/home issues with either the child's class teacher or the Senior Leadership Team. Parents are asked to phone the school office on 01954 210263 to make an appointment giving a brief outline of what they wish to discuss.

This allows the school time to organise cover to make staff available to speak to the parents. We will aim to make appointments within 5 working days and are willing to meet either before (from 8.00 am) or after school (3.30–4.30 pm) to fit in with parents.

If parents are unable to keep an appointment, they should give adequate notice i.e. ring the school if it is on the same day. Parents should not expect to meet teachers during the school day unless by prior arrangement.

Parents are asked not to approach teachers to discuss their child on the playground or if they meet them outside school as this does not allow for confidential discussion. Staff will not talk about other 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, unless there are safeguarding concerns which the school must share with the relevant authorities.

Home–School Communication

Written Reports

In autumn and spring, parents receive a termly report with details of their child's attainment and progress in the core subjects and their attitude to learning. There is a more in-depth report in the summer which gives feedback on all areas of the curriculum.

In addition, parents meet their child's teacher twice during the year for parent consultations. To support parents attending, a variety of morning and evening times are offered. If parents are unable to attend then the written report will be sent home via their child.

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 if time permits.

A calendar of school events will be produced at the start of each term and communicated via the school Newsletter and on the website. The school Newsletter is sent to parents bi-weekly. It contains general details of school events and activities.

When starting at Caldecote School, parents will be asked to sign and return a Home/School agreement.

Parent Forum

The Parent Forum is the place where parents/carers, staff and governors meet to discuss issues that are important to parents in their children's education. The Parent Forum is for everyone, and anyone can attend a meeting. However, to make sure that all classes are represented at meetings, there are two designated representatives for each class.

The Parent Forum does not have the power to make decisions unless the school has specifically asked for a decision to be made. However, the staff and governors want to hear the views of parents so that they can make sure that those views feed into the decisions made by the school.

The Parent Forum meets at least three times a year. Additional meetings can be scheduled if the need arises. Meetings alternate between evening sessions and afternoon ones. Dates of meetings are advertised well in advance.

Parentmail & Agora (online payments)

We encourage all parents to inform the school of their current email address, to allow them access to Parentmail and Agora, which are quick and efficient methods for the school to communicate with parents and for them to make online payments for lunches and trips. Those who do not have access to Parentmail will receive a paper copy of any correspondence but the school does not accept cash or cheques for any payments.

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 Parentmail. In addition, some specific communications regarding trips and events are sent out to the relevant groups of parents.

Governors

A notice board detailing the names of governors is on the school website. Minutes of governors meetings are also posted on the school website. Governors should be contacted via the school (email: office@caldecote.cambs.sch.uk or written communications left at the school office, which will be forwarded to the Chair of Governors). As governors support the school in a strategic role, if parents contact them on a matter to do with the management of the school, governors will be unable to respond and will direct them to take their concern to the school.

Communication with the Community

Members of the local community are invited to school functions such as Special Assemblies, Harvest, Christmas Fairs, Christmas Carol services and school productions.

Guest speakers from local churches and businesses, community organisations and charities come into school to speak to the children. We also try to involve parents and governors as much as possible.

Parents are invited to special events, e.g. Mother's / Father's Day lunches, and are able to spend time playing with their child/children.

Communication with Other Schools

The school regularly communicates with staff and children of other primary schools. Such communication may be by means of personal contact with specific staff or through more formal contact such as cluster groups and by means of sports fixtures and other inter-school events.

The school is a member of Network ^{cb}23, a cluster of 13 primary schools and 2 secondary schools in the local area. The Chair of Governors is a member of the chairs group of this network.

Communication with the local secondary schools is predominantly for Y6 children. We have particularly close links with Comberton & Cambourne Village Colleges.

Communication with Outside Agencies

Close contacts are maintained with support agencies, including the START team (Statutory Assessment and Resources team, school admissions, the LCSB (local children safeguarding board), the EWO (education welfare office), the locality team (including health services) and the Peripatetic Music Service.

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. We will be compliant with the Data Protection Act 2018. Parents have a right to view the information we hold, and we have contact details of the agencies to which our information is passed.

Exceptions

There may be occasions where the school needs to invoke alternative or more bespoke communication protocols to operate effectively or to respond to more unique situations. This will be done with reference to our other guiding policies and in line with the schools governance framework and responsibilities.