



The Federation of Cowick and Pollington-Balne CE Primary Schools



Home-School Communication Policy

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Contents	Page Number
1. Introduction and aims	3
2. Roles and responsibilities	3
3. How we communicate with parents and carers	4
4. Absence and emergency communication	6
5. How parents and carers can communicate with the school	6
6. Concerns	8
7. Breach of the home-school communication policy	8
8. Monitoring and review	9
9. Links with other policies	9

1. Introduction and aims

At The Federation of Cowick & Pollington-Balne Primary School, we recognise the vital role that effective communication between home and school plays in supporting our children's learning and development. Our Home-School Communication Policy is designed to foster strong partnerships with parents/carers, ensuring that they are informed, engaged, and involved in their child's educational journey. By promoting open dialogue and collaboration, we aim to create a supportive environment that enhances children's learning experiences, celebrates their successes, and addresses any challenges they may face. By 'Growing Stronger Together', we can empower our children to reach their full potential.

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/carers has a positive impact on pupils' learning because it:

- Gives parents/carers the information they need to support their child's education
- Helps the school improve, through feedback and consultation with parents/carers
- Builds trust between home and school, which helps the school better support each child's educational and pastoral needs

The aim of this policy is to promote clear and open communication by:

- Explaining how each school communicates with parents/carers
- Setting clear standards and expectations for responding to communication from parents/carers
- Helping parents/carers reach the member of school staff who is best placed to address their specific query or concern so they can get a response as quickly as possible

In the following sections, we will use 'parents' to refer to both parents and carers.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Executive Headteacher (EHT) / Head of School (HoS)

The EHT/HoS is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy
- Regularly reviewing this policy

2.2 Staff

All staff at The Federation of Cowick & Pollington-Balne Primary School are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's ICT and internet acceptable use policy
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)

Staff will **aim** to respond to communication during core school hours (8.45am to 4.00pm) or their working hours (if they work part-time). In line with promoting staff wellbeing and helping our staff find a suitable work-life balance, staff may have to work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond outside of these hours, but they are **not expected** to do so.

Parents can request a copy of our ICT and internet acceptable use policy from the school office.

2.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance
- Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school

Abusive or aggressive behaviour – in person, by phone, by email or through social media posts – will not be tolerated. Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with our Parent Code of Conduct.

Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours or during school holidays.

Parents will find a copy of our Parent Code of Conduct on our school websites.

When children join, parents are required to complete a detailed admissions form with contact information and permissions. This is then transferred to the Arbor system. Parents can request that our admin team update their personal information.

It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that the school always holds up to date information about contacts, addresses and telephone numbers.

The school must have two contacts per child registered on Arbor to comply with safeguarding guidance. Parents who have parental responsibility for the child/ren should be listed as the first two contacts.

3. How we communicate with parents and carers

The sections below explain how we keep parents up to date with their child's education and what is happening in school.

Parents should monitor all of the following regularly to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child.

3.1 Written / Email Communication

We regularly communicate with parents through Class Dojo / Email to keep them informed of:

- Upcoming school events and important dates
- Scheduled school closures. For example, for teacher training days
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests
- Payments e.g. Nursery invoices and school dinners
- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- Extra-Curricular Clubs

3.2 Day to Day Communication

For daily communication, face-to-face contact is much preferred and a dialogue between staff and parents often clarifies information. If this is not possible, please contact the school office to ask the teacher to contact you by phone or by email.

The beginning of a day is a busy time for teachers, as they are preparing to teach, so are only available for messages to be passed on to. Class teachers are available at the end of the school day for short, informal conversations such as queries about trips, homework etc. If you need anything clarifying or need more time, then please book an appointment and the teacher will be able to suggest a time (normally after 3:10pm – Pollington-Balne; 3.30pm Cowick) within the next few days. Some questions can easily be answered by our office staff or by looking on our website.

Our half termly school newsletter is uploaded to our website and a link sent out on Class Dojo. It includes upcoming events and there is a calendar tab on the website with dates for the full term.

Where possible, we try to give parents at least 2 weeks' notice of any events or special occasions (including non-uniform days, special assemblies, or requests for pupils to bring in special items or materials).

3.3 Meetings & Reports

We hold 2 parents' evenings per year. During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum or schemes of work, their child's wellbeing, or any other area of concern.

The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings between parents' evenings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress or wellbeing. Likewise, if parents have any concerns about their child's progress, it is better that they let the school know this sooner rather than later so that actions can be put in place straight away.

Parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these needs.

Parents receive an end-of-year report covering their child's achievement across the curriculum, how well they are progressing, their attendance and results for standardised tests, such as the end of Year 6 SATs.

3.4 School website

Key information about the school is posted on our website, including:

- School times and term dates (including teacher training days)
- School uniform
- School meals
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information
- Information about nursery, and breakfast and after-school club

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

4. Absence and emergency communication

If your child is unwell, please inform us by telephone or email as soon as possible on the first morning of the absence, explaining the reason for absence and expected day of return.

If your child is feeling unwell, sick at school or has hurt themselves badly, especially bangs to the head, we will contact you immediately, so up to date contact details, kept in the school office, are vital.

If the school has to close due to snow or another unexpected emergency, then email, a message on Class Dojo and the local radio will be used.

5. How parents/carers can communicate with the school

Parents should always send an email about non-urgent issues to the school office in the first instance – this will then be forwarded to the appropriate member of staff to respond to.

We aim to acknowledge all emails, where necessary, within 2 school days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call), if appropriate, within 5 school days.

If a query or concern is urgent and you need a response sooner than this please call the school.

5.1 Phone calls

If you need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, please email the school office and the relevant member of staff will contact you, within 3 school days.

cowick.primary@eastriding.gov.uk

office@pollington-balne.eriding.net

If this is not possible, due to teaching or other commitments, someone will get in touch with you to schedule a phone call at a convenient time.

If your issue is urgent, please call the school office. (Cowick 01405 860417; Pollington-Balne 01405 861916).

Urgent issues might include things like:

- > family emergencies
- > safeguarding or welfare issues.

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For more general enquiries, please telephone the school office.

5.2 Meetings

If you would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, please email the school office or call the school to book an appointment.

We try to schedule all meetings within 3 school days of the request.

While teachers are available at the beginning or end of the school day, if you need to speak to them urgently we recommend you book appointments to discuss:

- > any concerns you may have about your child's learning
- > updates related to pastoral support, your child's home environment, or their wellbeing.

5.3 Special Educational Needs

If parents would like to discuss the learning needs of their child, the first stage is to discuss support that is available in the classroom, with the class teacher.

If parents feel that their child's needs are not being met in the classroom, then a meeting to discuss next steps can be arranged with the Special Educational Needs team:

Cowick: Mrs K Rawes (SENDCO); Mrs J Tuxworth (SEN Manager)

Pollington-Balne: Mrs Emma Carpenter (SENDCO)

Reviews and updates will be arranged directly with parents depending on the level of need and the support packages that are in place. If a child has a special educational need or disability, they will have an individual passport or termly support plan.

6. Concerns

A concern may be defined as *'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'*.

If you have a concern, it should normally be possible to find a satisfactory conclusion through informal talks.

In the first instance, you should book an appointment with the class teacher. This meeting will often be a discussion and there may be a need for further investigation or a follow up meeting. A short email explaining the main issue is usually better than a detailed account at this point. These concerns may include issues including friendship problems, unsettledness at home or school, change in family circumstances, confidence with school work, or an incident that your child has recounted involving pupils or staff.

If you feel that the matter has not been resolved after time and/or discussion with the class teacher, or your concern is about the class teacher, please book an appointment to meet with the Head of School via the school office.

Very serious concerns, such as those relating to the conduct of a member of staff, should be raised directly with the Executive Headteacher.

At no stage in the process, should a parent approach individual governors to raise concerns. They have no power to act on an individual basis.

7. Breach of the Home School Communication Policy

If the school suspects, or becomes aware, that a parent has breached the home school communication policy, the school will gather information from those involved and speak to the parent about the incident.

Depending on the nature of the incident, the school may then:

- Send a warning letter to the parent
- Invite the parent into school to meet with a senior member of staff or the Executive Headteacher / Head of School
- Contact the appropriate authorities (in cases of criminal behaviour)
- Seek advice from the local authority's legal team regarding further action (in cases of conduct that may be libellous or slanderous)
- Ban the parent from the school site

The school will always respond to an incident in a proportional way. The final decision for how to respond to breaches of the code of conduct rests with the Executive Headteacher.

The senior leadership team will follow the school's HR processes for any breaches of the policy by members of school staff.

8. Monitoring and review

The executive headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every two years.

The policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- ICT and internet acceptable use
- Parent code of conduct
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints
- Social media policy

Parent Queries

Before contacting the school, please check the following sources of information for an answer:

- Previous emails sent by the school
- School website
- Half termly school newsletter
- Class Dojo

Complaints

If parents would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our Complaints policy.

This can be found on our school website.