

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY SEPTEMBER 2011

At Canonbury, we believe that good communication between school and the home is essential. Children achieve more when schools and parents work together. Parents can help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve, and how they can help.

In our school we aim to have clear and effective communications with parents and the wider community. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values through keeping parents well informed about school life. This reinforces the importance of the role that parents play in supporting the school in educating their children.

These are our principles:

- Communicating with stakeholders, particularly parents, is a core part of what we do, not an afterthought.
- We will always try to share as much information as possible about any issue.
- If we cannot share information we will explain why.
- We will endeavour to work as transparently as possible by offering clear explanations for major decisions.
- We will communicate in a timely fashion and try to avoid parents receiving information about the school from other sources first.
- We will communicate in a voice which is courteous, jargon free and warm.
- Where information relating to the school is available in the public domain, we will direct people to it.
- We acknowledge that some information is of a confidential nature and will always respect that confidentiality.
- We will do our best to communicate with all school communities.

Strategies

We communicate with parents through a range of different strategies. Some of our communications are the result of a statutory requirement; others reflect what we believe is important to our school:

Talking with staff

Class Teachers are always available for a 'quick word' at the start or end of the day. However, if you need to talk with the class teacher in more detail, please make an appointment for a telephone conversation or a meeting in person, as talking at length in the playground before or after school is difficult for the teacher and the children.

A member of the Leadership Team will always be in the playground at the start and end of the day. Many parental queries and concerns can be dealt with at this time. It is also possible to make appointments through the school office.

Meetings

There are a number of meetings through the term which provide opportunities to discuss current developments in the school:

- **New parents** - we hold two meetings for new parents each July. The first is for nursery parents/carers. The second is for new children going into reception. The school also organises a coffee morning for new parents at the start of the Autumn term which is a social opportunity for parents to meet each other and members of the school Leadership team, as well as representatives of the school PTA and Parentlink.
- **Home Visits** - The EYFS team make home visits in the summer term for nursery and reception pupils to share information with new parents and to complete on-entry records which contain information about the child.
- **Transition meetings** – we hold transition meetings for children moving from Nursery to reception in July. We have a KS1 meeting in September for children in Years 1 and 2 to discuss assessment and national tests at the end of Year 2. We have a Year 6 meeting to discuss SATs in March. We hold a secondary school transition meeting at the end of Year 5 in July.
- **Year 6 journey and other residential trips** – where a major trip is taking place, such as the year 6 residential trip, the trip leaders will organise a meeting for parents well in advance to provide detailed information about all aspects of the trip.
- **Open Mornings** – current parents are invited to spend a morning in the school observing lessons and viewing work once a term.
- **Coffee mornings** – these occur half termly and will always have a specific focus, such as behaviour, SEN, Literacy strategy, etc.
- **Parentlink** - this is a forum chaired by a parent, to discuss progress and hear parental views on school issues. Meetings are held half termly. The Head teacher and/or a member of the Leadership Team are always present at these meetings. Parents can raise issues for discussion by emailing the chair via the website link.

Website

The school website <http://www.canonburyprimaryschool.co.uk/> is regularly updated with diary dates and information about the school, including up to date policies, current news about what is happening in school and news of any changes to routine. The school diary can also be found on the website and is regularly updated.

Monthly newsletter

Details of school events, reminders, requests for help and news are shared in our monthly newsletter. This comes out in a recognisable colour format and is given to the eldest child in each family. The newsletter is also published on the website.

Staff communication to parents and carers

Copies of letters sent home are kept in the school office. Details for the protocol for communicating with parents and carers via text and email are provided in appendix 1.

Noticeboards

There are large white boards at the entrance to the main playground and by the main nursery entrance door which detail daily events and notices. In addition, there are PTA and Parentlink noticeboards in the main playground and Nursery playground areas which are updated with minutes

of meetings and other relevant information. An internal notice board in the school office reception area provides staff and governor details

Parents evenings and school reports.

Parents are expected to show an interest in the school's teaching methods and in their child's progress by attending Parents' Evenings, workshops and open days and reading their child's reports. Parents are also invited to meet their child's senior teacher and class teacher in September to have an overview of the academic year ahead and to be able to see how the learning environment is organised.

We do encourage parents to contact the school at any time if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being, but we also provide two formal opportunities to meet one to one with the class teacher during the academic year. The first meeting is midway through the Autumn term and identifies areas of strength and targets for future development. The targets are recorded for parents to take away as a tool to support their partnership work. Parents are invited to meet with their child's teacher again during the Spring term to review their child's progress towards the targets and again the updated targets are shared in writing with parents. Parents are able to look at their child's work during these meetings. Parents will be given information and advance notice about such events in the newsletter and on the website.

At the end of the Summer term children will receive an end of year written report and parents can subsequently arrange to meet with teachers if there are any concerns. In our school we ask the children to comment on their own progress, and parents to make a similar comment using the annual report format. We also give parents/carers of children in Year 2 and Year 6 the details of their performance in the national tests, and details of national comparative performance.

Home School Agreement

Our home-school agreement has been in place since September 2010. It is a requirement of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. It 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. We ask parents to sign this agreement when their child starts in our school.

The agreement covers the standard of education in our school, the ethos of the school, our expectations on attendance and good behaviour, and our expectations about homework. Our governing body reviews the agreement annually.

Staff communication with parents

At the beginning of each term all teachers will share a summary of their curriculum plans. This enables parents to support their child's work through a range of suggested activities to be shared with the child at home. We also invite parents to take part in the educational visit that is linked to the work.

Children in all year groups Nursery to Year 6 have a home/ school reading journal which enables parents to record comments and class teachers to communicate achievements and targets in reading. In Year groups 4,5 and 6 pupils are also invited to make/ respond to comments about their reading.

School prospectus

From January 2012, a school prospectus will be available containing a range of information to give new and prospective parents a full picture of provision at our school. We will update this for each school year and will add it to our website. An up-to-date copy will also always be available on the carousel in the reception area.

Public access documents

The school makes available a range of documentation for parents. We keep a master set in the school office, and we make this available on request. It contains copies of all school curriculum policies, minutes of governing body meetings and copies of policies that the governing body are required to have in relation to charging and remissions, sex education, health and safety, curriculum, performance management, admissions and action planning following inspection. It also contains a range of national and LEA documentation. A copying charge may be levied where requests for printed materials are made.

Conclusion

Good communication is vital to home-school partnership. The raising of standards cannot be achieved without such a partnership.

Adopted: July 2011

For review: July 2012

EMAIL and TEXT PROTOCOL

for staff communication with parents

This is guidance on when to send an email or text from Canonbury Primary School to parents/carers. It should be used in conjunction with the Communication and E-safety policies.

As a broad overview, emails and texts should be used for communicating essential information only. Parents/carers may wish to email teachers about their children but teachers should use email to set up a meeting so that personal communication about individual children is discussed face to face, by phone or letter and only in the last instance, by email or text.

EMAILS

- Group email addresses will be allocated to each year group and administered by Senior Teachers so that they can communicate information where only one year group is affected (e.g. y6 journey/trip information/secondary transfer meeting).
- Staff should not enter into discussion with parents/carers about children on email but should use it to make a face-to-face appointment or by referral to the office.
- Ad hoc information such as the cancellation of an after school club or a bill for play centre should be sent by text not by email.
- Individual emails to parents/carers should not be sent by the office unless to make an appointment.
- All group emails must be viewed by a member of the SLT before they are sent.
- With permission of the Head Teacher, the PTA may send a group email to all parents e.g. asking for help with a school fair, as well as having a regular section of the newsletter for information.

TEXTS

- Text should be used as a primary resource in informing parents/carers of a school closure (e.g. snow)
- Texts should be used to inform parents/carers of a change to procedure e.g. the closure of an afterschool club or the cancellation of an event.
- Texts can be sent asking for outstanding money for trips/play centre
- Texts can be used to remind parents/carers of upcoming events
- In the event of sickness or an accident parents/carers should be telephoned not sent a text. However, a text may be sent asking the parent/carer to contact the school.
- Texts can be used to inform parents/carers that a newsletter or significant letter has been published and is available online or in the office.
- Texts must not be sent regarding behaviour of an individual child by a teacher or by the office. Contact should be face to face, by phone or letter.
- News of great significance must not be sent by text but should come by email/letter from the Head Teacher.