



Downe Primary School

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

	Name of School	Downe Primary School
	Policy reviewed by:	Staff & Governors
	Policy review Date	December 2021

	Date of next Review	December 2023
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Aims

In our school we aim to build on our partnerships with parents and the wider community through effective communication and an open-door policy. We communicate through a range of different strategies; some as result of a statutory requirement and others reflect what we believe is important to our school and complies with our ethos and values. Good communication between school and home is essential. Children achieve more when school and parents and/or carers work together. Parents and/or carers can help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve and how they can help.

Contact details

The school holds emergency contact details for all children on the School Information Management System (SIMs) and parents are contacted on an annual basis to ensure that these are up to date. Parents are expected to inform the school immediately in the event that contact information needs to be revised. Depending on the nature of the communication, the school will use the most practicable means to contact families.

General Communication

Parents and the wider community will be informed of school activities through a variety of ways. The school subscribes to ParentMail which allows us to email letters to parents and carers. Not only is it more environmentally friendly as it decreases paper usage, but reduces photocopying and other costs in the school. We urge families to provide us with a valid email address. Text messages can also be sent to parents via ParentMail. The school also communicates daily through the Class Dojo platform.

The school office welcomes interactions with parents and carers and other stakeholders. We strive to help to sort out any queries or problems in a professional and friendly manner. If the office is unable to help for any reason they will contact the person who is able to help as soon as possible. The School Office is staffed from 8.30 am until 4 pm (an answer phone system is in place for times when staff are unavailable to answer the telephone).

Email

We ask parents and carers to email admin@downe.bromley.sch.uk for the purposes of administration, 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 aim to respond to parents and carers' emails within 10 working days.

We encourage parents to make direct contact with their child's class teacher via Class Dojo messaging but only when an urgent response is not required. We ask parents/carers to be mindful that teachers are engaged with teaching during the school day, and therefore cannot generally respond to emails at this time. We will aim to answer queries via Class Dojo as promptly as possible and usually within 48 hours. Teachers will set their times on Class Dojo messenger so that they will not receive alerts during non-working hours, in order to support a healthy work life balance.

Letters

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 10 working days (during term time); to cover sickness and investigations.

All formal letters to families must be approved by the Headteacher before they are sent

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/carers to phone the school on 01689 853916. If the call requires a response from a member of staff, we aim to do this within 2 working days

Telephone calls will be made where immediate contact with a family member is required i.e. for pupil injury or pupil 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 live 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. Text messages via Parent mail can also be sent as a backup if the school is unable to make contact.

Parent and Teacher Progress Meetings

Parents meet their child's teacher twice during the year to discuss their child's progress. These can be via telephone, Google Meet or face to face, in order to facilitate working parents and high attendance to meetings. In addition, parents will receive attainment reports that show how their child is performing in standardised tests in both Autumn and Spring terms.

In the Summer term parents will be provided with a full written report that details their child's attainment, progress and attitude to learning in all curriculum areas.

Open Door Policy

Parents and carers are welcome to contact the school to discuss their child's progress, ask questions, gain support or to have the opportunity to talk about their child or home issues which may be impacting on their child at any time. Teachers should always be the first point of contact for parents or carers if they have any questions or concerns about their child's learning or wellbeing in school as they know the children best.

Parents and carers are asked to telephone the school office to request a call back from the teacher or a meeting with the teacher. We will always endeavour to come back to parents as quickly as possible with a day/time for this to take place.

Appointments can also be made with the Headteacher. Our aim is to see the parents and carers as quickly as possible; we try to arrange a meeting on the same or the next day where possible.

End and start of the day handover information to teachers is often possible, however any full conversations should be scheduled to allow staff to safely receive and dismiss pupils in line with safeguarding procedures.

Communication with separated parents

Requests from split parents for separate communication are accommodated. Newsletters and documents are always sent to both contacts listed within SIMS (school management information system) via ParentMail and Class Dojo. Separate appointments to see the class teachers at parent's evenings are accommodated if necessary.

Complaints

All formal letters of complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the school's complaints procedures. (See separate Complaints Policy).

Requests for Information

Please refer to our GDPR Policy for freedom of information and Subject Access Requests. This will detail procedures and protocols, including timings.

School Website

The school website contains a range of specified information that gives parents and carers a full picture of provision at Downe Primary School.

Home-school communication

There is a Home / School agreement which will be sent home at the beginning of the year for parents/carers to sign and return.

Absence Requests

All requests for absence within term time, must be made in writing to the Headteacher. As a general rule, these will not be authorised, however some extenuating circumstances may provide grounds for the absence being authorised.

All requests for absence for medical appointments or similar, should also be made in writing, attaching evidence of the appointment at the point of request. If no evidence is provided, the absence will be marked authorised.

The Friends of Downe

The Friends of Downe (FDS) encourage parents/carers to join them in trying to raise funds to benefit all children. The FDS organises a wide range of events and activities involving pupils, parents/carers and local residents all of which raises the profile of the school in the community. They communicate via the FDS Facebook group and via the School, through communication methods such as Class Dojo, ParentMail and posters on the FDS noticeboard.

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
- Home-school agreement
- Staff wellbeing