

POLICY ON COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

1. Perran-ar-Worthal CP School recognises the importance of clear and effective communication between home and school. The school is committed to ensuring an open and accessible ethos where parents are well informed of routines, of any changes to the norm that may affect their child and where they also have a clear understanding of their child's progress and how they can help with further support at home. The school sees communication as a two-way process where a strong partnership between home and school is vital in the development of a safe and happy learning experience for a child.

Aims of the policy

2. These are:

- To provide a robust communication service that ensures all stakeholders are well informed of any element that affects the safety and learning experiences of a child.
- To ensure the communication between home and school is a two way process.
- To engage ALL parents in their child's learning experiences.
- To quickly address any concerns that the parent or school may have about a child.
- To maintain a child-centred approach where the parents and school work in a positive and effective joint partnership for the best interests for the child.
- To provide parents with as much notice as possible for forthcoming events and term dates, including INSET days.

Forms of communication used

3. At Perran-ar-Worthal CP School, we use several ways in which to communicate:

- Weekly newsletters
- School website
- Letters
- Home/school reading records
- Informal meetings
- Formal meetings
- Statutory information required from parents
- Email
- Notices outside the school

- By telephone
- Via the school secretary (by phone or at reception)
- Parent questionnaires
- Governing body
- Parent governors
- Via Friends of Perran-ar-Worthal School (FOPS)
- School Council
- Announcements at events
- Information area (outside school office)

Procedures

Electronic communication

4. The school website is accessible to all and is used to celebrate children's learning experiences, as well as inform parents of forthcoming events. The website contains a comprehensive calendar and the school newsletters, which are posted to the site each week. The website can be found at <https://www.perran-ar-worthal.cornwall.sch.uk/website>
5. Where parents have provided an email address, the newsletter will also be sent electronically from the school office.
6. It is acceptable to use emails to communicate between home and school where a face-to-face meeting may not be necessary or may be difficult to arrange. Any emails sent via the school secretary will be passed to the relevant member of staff.
7. In the event of the school needing to close due to poor weather conditions, the school website will be used to inform parents in addition to the local radio. Where parents have provided the school with an email address, this will also be used in an emergency. The school website has a parents' page where parents can find useful information outlining procedures for school closures.

Written communication

8. Letters are sent out via pupils to parents when necessary about forthcoming trips, clubs, events, etc. It is expected that permission slips will be returned to the office by the date indicated on the letter to enable a child to attend an event. Letters will provide information on the requirements for an event, e.g. clothing, packed lunch, times for leaving school and returning, etc.
9. Home/School Reading Records and Home Learning Books can be used to pass information between home and school if so desired as these books are checked regularly.
10. Weekly newsletters provide parents with school news and will often include information about forthcoming events or any topical school-related issues, such as reminders about appropriate uniform and PE kits, etc.
11. In addition to specific FOPS letters, newsletters will also include a section from FOPS relating, for example, to forthcoming fundraising events.
12. At the end of the academic year, all pupils will receive their annual report on their progress. Reports will be sent home via the children during the summer term, allowing enough time for parents to make an appointment to discuss the report with their child's class teacher.

Visits and meetings

13. We encourage prospective parents to make an appointment to tour the school. Whenever possible, the headteacher will make herself available to conduct the tour and answer any questions parents may have.

14. Once the school receives confirmation of pupils starting in the Early Years class, the Early Years teacher will provide Learning Together sessions during the summer term prior to the children starting. This is an opportunity for parents and pupils to meet the Early Years staff, for children to become familiar with the school environment and for parents to get to know each other. The headteacher, school secretary and, when available, members of FOPS will also make themselves available to parents at this time to answer any questions.

15. The classroom doors are unlocked between 8.45am and 9.00am each morning. Children of all ages are expected to become independent enough to enter the classroom by themselves and quickly settle to task during this time. This ensures teachers are able to begin the day on time. However, on a Friday morning, all classes have an open-door session when parents are invited in between 8.45am and 9.00am for their children to share their work during the week. This is also an opportunity to briefly speak with your child's class teacher or to arrange a meeting at a more convenient time.

16. At the end of the day, teachers take their class to the playground to hand over to parents. Class teachers may catch a parent to discuss an immediate matter. Equally, a parent may wish to catch their child's teacher to discuss any concerns. Very often, questions are answered satisfactorily during this time. Sometimes, it is not possible for a teacher to speak to a parent immediately after school due to another commitment, such as running an after-school club or needing to attend a meeting. If either the teacher or parent feels a further meeting is necessary, then an appointment can be arranged.

17. The headteacher, whenever possible, will make herself available to parents at the start and end of the school day. Many concerns are often quickly addressed satisfactorily during this time. However, if a more in-depth meeting is required, appointments can be arranged through the school office.

18. Throughout the academic year, parents will be invited to attend three formal parental consultation meetings (one per term) to discuss their child's progress in reading, writing and maths, attendance, behaviour and the effort put into home learning activities, including reading, throughout the term. In the first instance, parents will be asked to book a meeting from the teacher's list of available times and dates. Parents will be informed when these lists will be displayed in reception by the school office.

19. Sometimes, working parents may find it difficult to identify a suitable appointment on the list. In these cases, teachers will offer a more convenient time to ensure every parent has the opportunity to attend. Parents who are unable to get into school to book an appointment can do so via the school office. Where parents are no longer together and wish to have separate meetings, the school will ensure an additional meeting is arranged.

20. Parents of pupils with Special Education Needs (SEN) will be invited to attend additional termly review meetings with the SENCO, the Learning Support Coordinator and the class teacher. As these meetings will discuss the child's progress in great detail, it is acceptable for parents of pupils with SEN not to book an additional meeting with the class teacher as part of the normal parental consultation process.

Telephone calls

21. Parents must contact the school office on 01872 863004 before 9.00am if their child is unwell. If the school secretary is unable to answer the phone, a message should be left; messages are checked regularly, including the time the message was left.

22. If arrangements have been changed for picking a child up at the end of the school day, it is expected that parents contact the school to enable the school secretary to pass on the message to the child's class teacher.

23. During an off-site event, if it is likely that pupils will be returning to school later than expected due to unforeseen circumstances, the school will contact parents by phone as early as possible to indicate the likely time of return. If a large group is involved, the trip leaders will inform the school who will then clearly display the likely time of return on a noticeboard for parents to see as they arrive at school.

24. The school will contact parents if their child is unwell or if they have had an accident during the school day and it is thought necessary for the parents to be informed as soon as possible. As part of the school's first aid policy, the school will contact parents if their child has received a bang to the head. In addition, a completed 'head bang' letter will be sent home on the same day with the child. This is to ensure that parents have all the relevant details if their child needs to go to hospital having shown signs of delayed concussion.

25. Parents may phone the school to speak with the headteacher or another member of staff, although staff may not always be available to take the call. If the staff member is unavailable, the school secretary will take a message and the member of staff will return the call as soon as possible.

26. The class teacher or headteacher will contact parents if they have a concern about a child that needs to be discussed. If a child has received three detentions within six weeks, the headteacher will arrange a meeting with the parents to discuss the next stage of discipline as outlined in 'The Behaviour Policy', which can be found on the school website. Where a child has been physically hurt by another child due to poor behaviour, both parents will be contacted by the headteacher or a senior member of staff on the day.

Statutory information and documents

27. On entry, parents are asked to complete a number of forms to ensure that all details held on file for their child are correct. It is vital that the contact details for every child are up to date. Once a year, the school will request parents to check the details held on file for their child. It is the parents' responsibility to provide the office with updated details to ensure we are able to contact parents in an emergency.

28. If parents find it necessary to take their child out of school during term time, a form requesting pupil absence must be completed. This can be obtained from the school office.

Medical information

29. In addition to contact information, it is expected that parents will provide the school with up-to-date medical information, including details of the use of asthma inhalers. If a child is taking any form of medication, the office will provide parents with the appropriate forms to complete.

30. Where there is a more complex medical condition, parents will need to make an appointment to meet the child's class teacher and headteacher to ensure the school is made fully aware of the child's condition and medical needs. Please see 'Medical Conditions Policy' on the school website.

Unsatisfactory communication

31. Where parents are dissatisfied following a meeting with their child's teacher, they can raise this with the headteacher. Where a parent continues to feel dissatisfied with the school's response, they may refer to the 'Complaints Policy' which can be found on the school website.

32. Where a member of staff feels threatened by a parent or receives an inappropriate level of aggressive communication, governors will be informed.

33. If a parent demonstrates aggressive behaviour on the school site that could be distressing for the children and staff, they will be asked to leave or be escorted off the site.

Complaints and compliments

34. We aim to work closely with parents to support all children and good working relationships are vital. Therefore, we politely ask that all communication remains civil.

35. Parents have the right to complain if they have concerns about anything relating to the school, but are politely asked to avoid posting defamatory remarks in public that may damage the reputation of the school, e.g. on social media.

36. Where parents feel an improvement in communication is necessary, the annual school questionnaire can be used to provide the school with constructive feedback. Equally, this is also an opportunity for parents to inform the school of what they feel is going well. The school values feedback from parents in an effort to continually improve and provide the best possible learning environment for the children.