



# CASTLE PRIMARY SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

## **Aim**

To support Castle Primary School in its aim to become a thriving and successful school we must communicate effectively with each other, with our pupils, with their parents and with other members of the wider school community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

## **Definition of communication**

Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It involves:

The management of relationships and the need to involve people. Communication is as much about attitude and behaviour as it is about message. We should also remember the importance of listening. **Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications and needs to recognise that the quality of their communications reflects on the school's reputation.**

For the purposes of this policy communication includes not only the message but also how that message is communicated; not only the responsibility for communication but also how effectively that responsibility is carried out.

## **Objectives:**

All communications at Castle Primary School should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents, Governors and other stakeholders well informed.
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional
- Use jargon free, plain English and be easily understood by all
- Be actioned within a reasonable time
- Use the method of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience.
- take account of relevant school policies in particular Equal Opportunities & Computer Use
- be compatible with our core values as reflected in our Mission Statement and Strategic Development Plan.

## **Internal Methods of Communication**

### **Meetings**

There is an integrated programme of meetings to facilitate involvement of staff both formal and informal. All formal meetings should be structured and minuted and members invited to contribute to the agenda. It is important that time is put aside for structured opportunities for staff to engage in team working and to contribute to subject leaders' reflection on priorities, activities and future plans. For all other meetings notes should be taken, action points progressed and feedback given to staff.



# CASTLE PRIMARY SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

## ***Availability of Minutes/Notes of Meetings***

The approved minutes of meetings are available on request from the Headteacher.

## **Email**

Information and notification of initiatives are communicated through the use of e mail where appropriate. Email is a quick, effective way of communicating information however it does not replace face to face meetings where some discussion is required. To ensure that each member of staff is using e mail effectively, the following actions should be taken:

## **Mobile Phones**

Staff - Mobile phones should not be used during lessons or when in contact with the children. In exceptional cases such as family illness the circumstances should be discussed with the Headteacher. Non-intrusive work related mobile phone use is acceptable during PPA or management time. During trips and off site provision, staff should ensure they can be contacted by mobile phone at all times.

**Pupils - Pupils should not bring mobile phones to school. Any exceptions must be discussed with and approved by the Headteacher.**

## **Written Communications**

These are placed in pigeon holes, in the staff room, which staff should check regularly, handed to staff personally or emailed.

## **Staff Briefings**

Staff Briefings take place on a weekly basis (8.30am Fridays). The diary for the following week is discussed and information shared. The main points are also printed in the weekly **Bulletin** that is e mailed to all staff and a hard copy placed in their pigeon holes. A copy is also pinned on staff notice board.

## **Notice Boards**

Staff Notice Board is located in the staffroom. Parents notice board is located in the main reception area outside the office and outside opposite the main pedestrian entrance.

## **External Methods of Communication**

Schools have many lines of communication to maintain: with parents and carers, other schools, the community and with outside agencies.

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.

Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with

*Castle Primary School Communications Policy 2010.*



# CASTLE PRIMARY SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

parents, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional. To this end parents will always be addressed in an appropriate manner

and staff will avoid developing close friendships with parents. We try to make our written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of racial discrimination. We wish to recognise and celebrate the contributions made to our society by all the cultural groups represented in our school.

## **Communications with Parents/Carers**

### **Letters**

Staff will endeavour to respond to parents' letters as quickly as possible. Any letter of complaint should be referred to the HT. Letters to parents must be approved by the HT before they are sent. Copies of all correspondence with parents will be placed in pupil files.

### **E mail**

The school has a text messaging and email system it uses to communicate to parents. Any communication that needs to be sent to parents using this system must be approved by the Headteacher. If a parent communicates with the school using email, a copy should be printed. Staff should forward e mails from parents to the Headteacher and should always do so if the content is a complaint. A hard copy of any e mail sent to a parent or received by you from a parent should be filed and a copy stored in the school office. The same applies to all internal email transmissions concerning pupil matters.

### **Telephone calls**

Staff should check their phone messages each day. A file note will record the details of the conversation. Office staff should not interrupt teaching for staff to answer a telephone call.

### **Social Networking Sites/Blogs etc**

Staff will not communicate with parents or pupils via social networking sites (such as Facebook) or accept them as their "friends". The exception to this rule would be when school has established the Learning Platform for the purpose of teaching and learning.

### **Written Reports.**

Once a year we provide a full written report to each child's parents on their progress in each subject. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development. Pupils are also given the opportunity to comment on their own progress and parents are invited to make a similar comment.

In addition, parents meet their child's teacher three times during the year for a private consultation at Parents' Evening. This gives them the opportunity to celebrate their child's successes, and to support their child in areas where there is a particular need for



# CASTLE PRIMARY SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

improvement. We encourage parents to contact the school if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being.

When children have special educational needs, or if they are making less than the expected progress, we find it helpful to meet with parents more regularly. We will also make any reasonable adjustments to our arrangements if this will enable a parent with a disability to participate fully in a meeting at our school, or to receive and understand a communication.

## **School Prospectus**

The school prospectus contains a range of specified information to give parents a full picture of provision at our school. This is updated every year at the beginning of the Spring Term.

## **School Website**

The school website provides information about the school and an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience.

## **Home-school communication**

A calendar of school events will be produced at the start of each term and issued to parents.

A school Newsletter is sent to parents at the end of each half term. It contains general details of school events and activities. Parents expect the newsletter, and appreciate the regularity of the contact. We send other letters of a general nature when necessary and store copies on the school's website.

Children in all classes have a planner or reading diary. This enables parents to record a wide range of information that they wish to share regularly with the teacher. Teachers use the planner or reading diary to record homework assignments, and as a regular channel for communication with parents.

The school encourages parents to share any issues about their child at the earliest opportunity. Teachers arrange to see parents as soon as possible. Many parents have the opportunity to have a brief word with the teacher when they collect them after school or before school from 8.45 onwards.

We arrange various meetings for parents throughout the year. Meetings are held prior to any residential trip to inform parents of planning, content and arrangements. A meeting for new parents is organised each June/July.

## **Communication with other schools and outside agencies**

Prior to pupils joining Reception, they are invited to visit the school to enable us to gain further information about them to help and support their transition to Castle Primary.

*Castle Primary School Communications Policy 2010.*



# CASTLE PRIMARY SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

We recognise that children have diverse needs, and we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed on better ways to meet these needs, so that children may participate more

fully. Support comes from medical services (such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy), from Educational Psychologists, from health professionals and specialists. It also comes from various welfare-focused services, such as Educational Welfare, Social Services and Child Protection Units.

We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our school should provide a safe and secure environment. We are the people most in contact with our children, and we are therefore in a unique position to identify and help abused children. So when any member of staff has concerns about a child, these will be passed on to the Designated Officer for Children Protection, or the Deputy Designated Officer, who may share this information with the Social Services.

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. This is a requirement under the Data Protection Act 1998. Parents have a right to view the information we hold, and we have contact details of the agencies to which our information is passed.