



## **Communications and Meetings Policy**

Status: Non -Statutory

### **Introduction**

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
- 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 the school communicates with parents/carers
- Setting clear standards 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

### **Dignity at Work**

- Parents, Pupils and Staff have a right to be treated with dignity and respect in the workplace.
- Conduct at all times should encapsulate the values of Respect, Care, Integrity and Trust

### **Roles and responsibilities**

#### **Head Teacher**

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

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

#### **Staff**

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this 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)

To protect their work-life balance, staff will not respond to communications outside of school hours- 8.00am until 1800 hours or their working hours (if they work part-time), or during school holidays.

## **Contacting the School**

### **Telephone**

Please use the main reception number to leave a message for a teacher to contact you:

- Office staff will relay messages to teachers as soon as possible.
- If a call is urgent, please inform the school receptionist who will attempt to find a senior member of staff to speak to you.
- We will try to respond to you within three working days, if not the same day.
- Please note lessons will never be interrupted for teachers to take calls.
- You are not permitted to record the telephone call, and if you do so covertly the Governing Body will not allow you to use any such recordings as evidence in a complaint.

### **Email**

Please also note that we do not expect staff to be constantly available via email, or to have extensive contact with parents via this medium. We operate an email curfew to protect staff work – life balance, and do not expect staff to respond either frequently or in detail to an email from a parent. Staff have been advised that it is better to call you to discuss your queries or concerns, or to speak with you in person. Staff have been asked to advise their line manager if they receive frequent or lengthy email communications from a parent, who will reinforce our policy. We thank you in advance for your support and cooperation in this respect.

Parents/Carers are not able to email staff directly (with the possible exception of the SENCO). Parents should send all emails to the school office, marked for the attention of the relevant member of staff:

- Teachers are not in a position to check emails consistently throughout the day and the school does not expect work email to be checked during a teacher's personal time.
- We aim to respond to you as soon as possible and within three working days. Part-time staff may take longer to reply.

### **Meetings**

The day-to-day care, welfare and safety of your child is managed by the person who is placed closest to them. In the first instance, please approach the following members of staff who are responsible for your child in the following order:

- 1) Classroom Teacher (if query is relevant to a specific subject)
- 2) Year Team Leader (if query is relevant to a specific subject)
- 3) Deputy Head Teacher or Assistant Head Teacher
- 4) Head Teacher

- Meetings should always be pre-arranged with members of staff.
- If you urgently need to see someone, for instance, if there is a serious family emergency or a child

protection issue, please phone ahead and the office staff will do their best to find a senior member of staff to see you.

- For non-urgent meetings we will aim to meet with you within five working days. The school will determine the level of urgency at its discretion, to enable it to manage multiple demands.

### **Meeting conduct expectations**

We expect meetings to be conducted in cordial terms, even if you are unhappy with the school. We will listen to your concerns and try to resolve them. You will be expected to use a cordial and low tone, and not raise your voice towards the staff. You are not permitted to record the meeting, and if you do so covertly the Governing Body will not allow you to use any such recordings as evidence in a complaint. If the staff cannot immediately resolve your concern they will give you a timeframe for when they will feed back to you. A set of brief notes will be kept of the meeting (a PMR – parent meeting record).

Ground rules that support a conducive and productive environment which are based on:

- letting everyone participate,
- listening with an open mind,
- thinking before speaking,
- attacking the problem and not the person

### **Contacting You**

Our preferred method of contacting you is via parent mail/ text message, for generic events (trips, school closures, special reminders, and initiate an 'Attendance Call' if your child is not present in class when the register is taken. Staff will contact you by phone in preference to email, in order to discuss progress and behaviour or arrange a meeting.

### **School Website & Social Media**

Coldfall Primary School observes the DfE guidance as detailed in 'What maintained schools must publish on their websites [ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online>]

We use our School website to inform parents of school dates, calendar events, policies and procedures and subject information and generic educational information. All parents who are signed up to Parent mail will receive the monthly newsletter, Headlines.

### **Communication strategy for persistent correspondents**

If an individual's behaviour is causing a significant level of disruption, regardless of whether or not they have raised a complaint, the school can implement a tailored communication strategy. For example:

- restrict the individual to a single point of contact via an email address
- limit the number of times they can make contact, such as a fixed number of contacts per term

However, regardless of the application of any communication strategy, the school will provide parents and carers with the information they are entitled to under The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005, within the statutory time frame.

### **No Response**

If you have not received a response from the school within three working days, please contact the school by emailing [office@coldfall.haringey.sch.uk](mailto:office@coldfall.haringey.sch.uk) and we will follow up on your inquiry. Communication with parents and carers is important to us, and we will continue to monitor this policy and our approach to improve the process further.

### **Communications between staff and students**

We do not permit staff to directly email our students. This is to safeguard both staff and students.

### **Reminders for staff**

- A data subject can request any and all information written about them, including emails, and the employer can make a search of staff school emails at any time, without notice or permission.
- An email is a legal contractually binding way to make a commitment. Staff should ensure they do not make commitments, either on their own behalf or on behalf of the school.
- All email language and content should follow professional etiquette standards at all times.
- Staff must follow all safeguarding and professional standards at all times in the actions and content within the emails.

### **Online Meetings**

Coldfall Primary School will use Zoom for video conferencing.

Setting up

- No 1:1s video sessions, groups only
- Only use the school-allocated platform
- Check that the link is running in an incognito tab (or equivalent) to make sure it isn't public.
- Set up two-factor authentication. Generate a random meeting ID when scheduling event and send a password to join. Send the invitation out with the ID and password.

- Never start without another member of staff in the 'room' and without other colleagues/the school being aware of the session.
- Make sure only the invited/pre-approved participants are included in the video conferencing session.
- Aim to work from a quiet space where others are unlikely to walk by or interrupt. If you need to switch off the camera or mute the microphone, do so.
- Make sure everyone is aware that a recording is being made and to whom it will be available.
- Remind participants about the safeguarding policy and reporting process. Remind the participants about expectations and behaviours required during the video conferencing session and beyond.
- Language must be professional and appropriate.

**March 2024**