

Whitehill Junior School



Parent/Carer Communications Policy

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Curriculum Committee every three years (Or sooner if significant changes to governing body.)

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body in March 2021

It is due for review in March 2024

Key questions during the review should be:

- Does the policy still meet the needs of all stakeholders at Whitehill Junior School?
- Does the policy still reflect the communication's practice at Whitehill Junior School?

	Headteacher	Chair of Governors
	Mr Steve Mills	Dr Wendie Ray
Date:		

Introduction

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

At Whitehill we aim to have clear and effective communication with parents and the wider community. Effective two-way communication enables us to share our core purpose 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.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Home-School Agreement
- Child Protection Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

Aims

The following are the key aims of Whitehill's Communications Policy:

- Communicating with stakeholders 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 of key 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

Strategies

We communicate with parents / carers 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. The following highlights *some* of the key formats of such communication.

Talking with staff

Class teachers are always available for a 'quick word' at the start or end of the day and are usually on the playground at this time. However, if you need to talk with the class teacher in

more detail, please make an appointment either directly with the teacher or via the school office.

In addition to the class teachers, the headteacher and other members of the leadership team are usually on the playground before and after school. Many parental queries can be dealt with at this time. Again, it is also possible to make appointments through the school office.

Meetings

There are a number of key meetings throughout the term which provide opportunities to discuss current developments in the school either internally or with the parents / carers directly:

- **Pupil Progress Meetings** – Termly meetings are held to discuss the progress of all pupils with the class teacher, the inclusion coordinator and members of the leadership team.
- **Parents Evenings** – Parents / carers are invited to come in and review their child's progress with their class teacher in the autumn and spring terms. Parents of pupils requiring additional support in school will be invited for a third face to face meeting in the summer term.
- **Information Evenings** – From time to time subject leads will organise a meeting for parents to bring them up to date with key subject developments.
- **Residential Trips** – Where a major trip is taking place, such as the Year 4 and Year 6 Residentials, the trip leaders will organise a meeting for parents will in advance to provide detailed information about all aspects of the trip.

Website

The school website (www.whitehill.herts.sch.uk) is regularly updated with information about the school, including up to date policies, current news and information about changes to routine. The school calendar can also be found on the website and is regularly updated.

Twitter

The school makes use of a secure Twitter feed (@whitehilljunior) to share news and photographs of key events and also to inform parents of timely information regarding changes to routine or timings. Parents are invited to follow the school to receive the updates.

Headteacher's Blog

The headteacher endeavours to publish a weekly blog on the school website each Friday. This will contain a review of the week in school and also look forward to the following week drawing attention to key planned events.

School Gateway

Parents / carers are encouraged to sign up for electronic communication where possible. Where this is the case, any letter being sent home will be sent via this email based system, thus minimising the need for paper copies. Where a parent / carer indicates that they do not want to use this system, a paper copy is sent home via the pupil.

Email

In addition to the formal School Gateway email communication, the school will also make use of email for communicating with individual families. Emails to staff will usually come through the school office email address (admin@whitehill.herts.sch.uk).

Termly Curriculum Newsletter

At the beginning of each term, the class teachers will produce an overview of the key learning opportunities taking place and highlight any special events or topics. It will also outline how parents / carers might be able to support their child at home.

Home School Agreement

Our Home School Agreement outlines the key school aims and responsibilities towards the pupils, the responsibilities of the parents / carers and what the school expects of the pupils. We ask parents / carers and children to sign this agreement when their child starts at Whitehill.

School Reports

At the end of the summer term pupils will receive a detailed End of Year written report after which parents / carers can subsequently arrange to meet with teachers if there are any concerns. In addition to this report, we also give pupils in Year 6 details of their performance in the National Tests and details of national comparative performance.

Reading Record Books

Each pupil has a reading record book. These are the responsibility of the pupils to keep up to date and we ask that parents / carers sign to indicate when pupils read at home. We encourage parents / carers to use this books as an additional means of communication with the class teachers.

Home-School Communication Book

Some pupils may require more detailed information or more regular communication with the child's class teacher. In these circumstances the teacher, in consultation with the Inclusion Coordinator may set up a Home-School Communication Book. In these situations, it may be necessary for the parent / carer to sign an 'agreement' acknowledging the way the book will be used. (See Appendix 1)

School Prospectus

Our school prospectus is reviewed annually and is available via the school office containing a range of information to give new parents / carers a full picture of provision at Whitehill. A copy is also available via the school website.

Public Access Documents

There is a statutory requirement for the school to make available a range of documentation for parents / carers. This documentation which includes key school policies, Governing Body information as well as national and local authority information is available via the school website as well as through the school office.

Google Classroom

The school is beginning to make greater use of Google Classroom, particularly since the need to plan for blended and remote learning. This suite of resources allows teachers and pupils to engage with each other on an individual, small group or whole class basis. In addition, pupils who are unable to attend school in person, do have the facility to be present (virtually) in the lessons.

Conclusion

Good 'two-way' communication is vital to a successful home-school partnership. The raising of standards cannot be achieved without such a partnership. Whilst this policy doesn't provide an exhaustive list as to the methods of communication employed at Whitehill it outlines the main methods used and their rationale.