



Communication with Parents/Carers Policy

November 2023

To be reviewed November 2024

Rationale

Cleeve Meadow School recognises the importance of clear and effective communications with parents/carers and is committed to being open and accessible for all who have an interest in the school. We believe that our students achieve more when everyone works together and that effective communication will improve relationships within the school and promote partnerships with parents and the wider community. This policy addresses the main ways in which the school ensures effective two-way communication between parents/carers and school. It aims to clarify the framework within which we operate to ensure that communication is carried out with all stakeholders and interested parties effectively and clearly.

The school has developed clear protocols for various types of written and verbal communication:

Communications with parents/carers can take a variety of forms:

- verbal (through open days, meetings or by telephone),
- written (through letters, emails, texts and notes in home contact book, home-school agreements, questionnaires, reports and the school website).

How the school will communicate information to parents/carers

General:

As a general guide, we aim to make our written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We aim to ensure that all written communications should:

- Keep parents and carers well informed
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional
- Use jargon-free, plain English and be easily understood by all
- Use the method most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience.
- If needed to aid communication, the school will provide interpreters, and support for parents or children with disabilities or special needs.

Letters

- All general letters sent out by the School to all parents are authorised by the Head Teacher (or delegated member of the Leadership Team) and a copy placed on the school website.
- Letters sent out on behalf of the school should use Standard English, using inclusive and accessible language and should be on Cleeve Meadow School headed paper.
- Letters sent out to individual parents should address parents as Mr, Ms or Mrs rather than using first names

Emails and Texts

- Emails and text messages should also be appropriate in tone.

Home school contact book

- We recognise that the home school contact book is used for informal communication between parents/carers and school and that this is usually related to matters within the classroom. However, we expect all our staff to uphold a professional tone in all communications.

Home school agreement

Our home-school agreement explains the school's responsibilities towards the children, the responsibilities of parents, and what the school expects of the children. We ask parents, students and tutors to sign this agreement at the beginning of each school year. The agreement covers our expectations regarding attendance, behaviour, policies including uniform, and homework. Children achieve more when schools and parents work together. Keeping parents informed enables the school to share aims and values and reinforces the important role that parents play

Parents have a responsibility to ensure the school has up-to-date contact details for all carers, including an email address. In the case of sudden incidents affecting the school, such as a fire or severe weather, parents will be texted and information will be put on the website, the Twitter page and on the Local Authority website.

The school website

Details such as term times, home-learning timetable, dates for parents' evenings and other school events will be posted on the school website and reminders may be sent by text, email, or letter.

Letters received by staff and their replies will be kept on file. Particular achievements and articles about life at Cleeve Meadow School may be highlighted on the website and in the Head of School newsletter. These are both key vehicles for communicating in a variety of ways: alerting parents and students to forthcoming issues; celebrating the life of the school; communicating information about school trips; giving students a voice and so forth. Key dates are published on the website on the school calendar. The school also publishes the documents that are statutory requirements for schools to ensure key documents and data are available on the website.

Parents Evenings

Parents/carers are invited to attend Parent Evenings twice a year.

The school cannot get involved in disputes between parents in the event of separation or divorce. All correspondence and information will be sent to all holders of parental responsibility (letters, school reports, calendar, invitations to school events) unless there is a court order to the contrary. We can usually arrange for separate appointments at Parents' Evenings if required. The interest of the student must always be paramount and it is important that parents agree on decisions to avoid the child or the school being involved in disputes including, for example, participation in school trips etc.

Annual Reviews

Annual Reviews are an important chance to discuss your child's needs thus ensuring that the school are supporting your child to progress and develop as well as possible. Annual Reviews will be held at the school in the Spring and Summer term and will involve parents and key members of staff who are working with your child. Parents and students will be invited to contribute as much as they feel able and will be provided with support to do this should it be required. A member of the local authority SEND department will also be invited to attend, the meeting can however go ahead without their attendance if all parties are in agreement.

How the school will respond to communication from parents/carers

Cleeve Meadow School recognises that communication is a two-way process and aims to ensure parents are listened to and their concerns dealt with in a professional, timely and appropriate manner. The School has the following service standards to ensure a prompt response for communication requests by parents.

The following response times are usually adhered to:

Responding to parents – any requests for information, any concerns, requests for references or progress are dealt with within 5 working days (term time only)

Initially, concerns should be addressed to the class teacher, front office staff or Deputy Head Teacher.

Concerns may be raised either via the daily contact book, or by letter, e-mail or phone call.

- Notes in your child's home-contact book will be addressed within 3 working days
- Letters will receive either a verbal (usually by phone) response within 3 working days or a written response within 5 working days or as soon as possible thereafter depending on the nature of the communication. Verbal responses will generate a brief written note of the discussion and its outcome, to be held in the child's file for future reference.
- Concerns raised by phone will be addressed within 3 working days.
- Email communication will be responded to within 3 working days. Staff are expected to set up an automated 'out of office reply' when they are away e.g. on courses.
- Communication sent at weekends may not be dealt with until the following working week, and emails sent in holidays will probably elicit no reply until term-time.

Complaints Procedure

Any letter of complaint will be referred to the Head teacher immediately in line with Cleeve Meadow School Complaints Policy. There is a system in place for monitoring the nature of complaints at the school in order to identify trends and address any recurring issues.

Consultation with parents/carers

Consultation between the school, parents and students operates in a variety of ways depending on the nature of the consultation. Questionnaires are issued to parents on a range of issues and through a variety of means (hard copy, through electronic surveys, email). They may be distributed at specific parental events or via “student post”. The consultation process via questionnaires addresses key service areas such as the school curriculum, changes to the timing of the school day, uniform, the framework for parental consultation evenings, homework, the school’s reporting system, primary school transition, the quality and accessibility of the school’s materials, etc.

Leaders report the findings of questionnaires to Governors and plan any necessary action in response to these to continually improve provision.

Related Policies

- Attendance Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection Policy