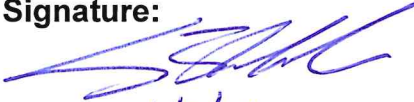



Pear Tree Primary School incorporating PIPs Before and After School Club



Communications Policy

Date agreed	January 2022
Date for Review	January 2025
Head Teacher	Boo Edleston
Chair of Governors	Simon Holden
Signed on behalf of the Governing Body by: Name: <i>SIMON HOLDEN</i>	Signature:  Date: <i>4/2/22</i>
Signed on behalf of the School by: Boo Edleston Headteacher	Signature:  Date: <i>30/1/22</i>

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to set out expectations for how school and home can successfully communicate and to ensure the best partnership of support for each child's learning.

Ongoing research continues to demonstrate the vitally important role parents play in the education of their child.

“Parents, Carers and families are by far the most important influences in a child's life. Their support can play a vital role at all stages of education. Parents who take on a supportive role in their child's learning make a difference in improving achievement and behaviour. Schools can benefit from developing positive partnerships with parents [and] engaging with parents to give them the chance to understand the role that they play in their child's learning and development and foster parental involvement.”

(“Why Get Parents Involved?” www.educationscotland.gov.uk)

“Parental involvement in children's education from an early age has a significant effect on educational achievement, and continues to do so into adolescence and adulthood. Effective home-school partnerships are essential to ensure that each child gets the most out of their school and the education system”
(“The Impact of Parental Involvement on Children's Education” Dept. for Children, Schools and Families)

Throughout this document the word “parent” is used extensively but Carers of Looked After Children should regard the terms “parent” and “carer” as being synonymous.

1. Why partnership and good communication is important

At Pear Tree Primary School we believe that:

- Every child is entitled to the best learning opportunity and we are committed to working in partnership with parents to deliver this.
- The child is the most important consideration in any conversation.
- A three-way process of communication between the child, home and school is essential for all children to thrive and flourish.
- All communication should be open, honest, accessible, timely, respectful and appropriate.
- Communication is about more than information exchange: it is about the development of positive relationships.
- Communication involves active listening by both the school and parents so that both parties have a clear understanding and expectation of what the school is aiming to achieve. Parents can and should work with the school to achieve this and thus be able to help their own children more.
- Activities inviting parents into school are a good way for us to build relationships with parents and to develop a welcoming ‘family atmosphere’

within school. However these activities are not a statutory obligation of the school and parents are not obliged to attend.

2. Methods of Communication

- We have an 'open door' policy and actively seek to engage with parents.
- We continually seek to refine how we liaise with parents in order to meet our aim of providing all the information needed to be active partners in a child's learning journey.
- We recognise that everyone has their own preferred method of communication as well as availability and we aim to accommodate this wherever possible, but hope that what we have set out in this document will put you in contact with the person best placed to help you as soon as possible.
- We are committed to being a 'listening' school and always welcome parents who want to meet with our staff. However, we do recommend that an appointment is made if you have a particular issue you wish to discuss. This will ensure the member of staff you want to see is prepared and focused on you.
- Appointments can be made in a number of ways: sending a note in with your child, writing a note in your child's homeschool diary or telephoning the office to leave a message.
- We provide regular opportunities (when COVID is not a limiting factor to the free circulation of visitors within our school), to accompany your child at school with various activities throughout the year, assemblies which parents and grandparents are invited to attend and library sessions every Friday afternoon
 - All children have a home school diary. This is an additional layer of communication where parents and teachers can communicate directly via short notes as regularly as needed. It is expected that this is brought to school and taken home every day to better facilitate this.

Generally speaking, we recommend that you discuss concerns with your child's class teacher in the first instance, as this will be the person who will know you and your child best. If this doesn't provide you with the information you need or you feel the issue hasn't been resolved, then you should contact the member of staff identified in **Appendix 2 – Our Communication Process**.

We ask that parents refrain from taking grievances to, and/or make adverse comments about the school or its pupils on the various social media outlets that exist as this can create unnecessary upset and escalate a situation that might otherwise be easily and quickly resolved by having a conversation directly with the school. The school reserves the right to take whatever action deemed reasonably necessary to protect itself against unwarranted adverse social media comment.

3. Staff Availability

Staff will always try to meet with parents as soon as their timetable allows. Please bear in mind that teaching commitments have to be met and also there are other circumstances that lead to staff not being available at school at the time you might want. All teaching staff have Preparation, Planning and Assessment (PPA) time as part of their working week and there are times they may be absent for training

or liaison with other schools or agencies to ensure we are continually delivering best practice for all children in school.

Members of the Senior Leadership Team also attend meetings off-site for various reasons and so may not be available at the time you require on the usual 'open door' basis. Should the person you need to speak with is unavailable, arrangements will have been made for someone to deputise or for the meeting to be fitted in at the earliest opportunity, in discussion with yourself.

4. Regular Meetings and Correspondence

Throughout the course of the school year, we provide information relating to your child's learning, achievement and activities as well as offering you opportunities to come into school for formal and informal meetings. We have set out a detailed schedule of meetings and correspondence, so that you know when these occur and what to expect. This is attached as **Appendix 3**.

5. Other Communication Options

We try hard to provide all the information needed to help you be an active partner in your child's personal learning journey. We know that open and effective communication between home and school helps children to learn, thrive and achieve their potential.

- We value your thoughts and ideas as to how things might work better and will try to accommodate them wherever we feel this will positively affect all children.
- Information published by the school can be found on the school's website. Each class has its own page, which can be accessed by clicking on the appropriate tab. The website is updated regularly and contains a wealth of information for each class and the whole school; including calendar events.
- We are committed to being as environmentally friendly as possible so we do try to limit the amount of paper used and ask for your support by requesting as much information as possible to be sent via email.
- We send reminders and short information notices using the SMS texts. The school office will ask you about adding your email address and mobile number to our communication database. An update to your contact details will be requested at the start of each year for you to check and where necessary update. If you don't think you are receiving correspondence, please let the school office know as soon as possible. Your receipt of information on a timely basis is sometimes vitally important.
- From time to time letters need to be sent out directly to parents, for example when a written response is needed. These are given out in class and the children asked to put them in their book bags and deliver them straight to you. Please check your child's book bag daily.

6. General Governors' Board Communication Protocols

6.1 Parental Support: the Governors' Board of Pear Tree Primary School is very clear in its understanding of the value of parental support in all aspects of children's school life. In turn, all school employees are directed to engage positively with parents and strive to foster positive relationships that assist children to learn, thrive, flourish and achieve their full potential. We want parents to be active partners in their child's learning.

6.2 Partnership: the school is committed to the concept of partnership in supporting your child. We have set out here the commitment the school makes to sharing information with you and how the school can be contacted for any matter that you wish to discuss. If you feel that any member of staff has not met the commitments set out in this policy, please bring this to the attention of the Head Teacher or Chair of the Governors' Board immediately.

6.3 Complaints: a copy of the School's Complaints Policy can be found on the school's website at www.peartreeprimary.co.uk.

6.4 Contacting the Governors' Board: we wish to make clear that we are eager to hear any questions, concerns, suggestions or complaints from any school stakeholder. Parents, children or staff can leave a message at the school office for the Chair of the Governors' Board or a particular other named governor to contact them.

6.5 School Staff: we greatly value the professionalism and dedication of all our staff and expect them to at all times be treated with respect remembering that their first concern is the safeguarding and education of your child. To reaffirm; we believe communication is a two-way process that involves active listening by all parties.

6.6 Inappropriate Behaviour: The Governors' Board will not under any circumstances tolerate violence, aggressive or threatening behavior and/or verbal, physical or emotional abuse against any member of the school community. We reserve the right to remove right of access to the school from any person who does not behave in an appropriate manner. Such incidents will be dealt with formally, through official channels. All members of the school community have a right to expect that the school is a safe place in which to work and learn.

Appendix 1: School Contact Details

Pear Tree Primary School
Pear Tree Field
Stapeley
Nantwich
Cheshire CW5 7GZ
Telephone: 01270 906120

Email - please send your message to the school office address and it will be forwarded to the relevant member of staff: admin@peartree.cheshire.sch.uk or within working hours – 8.30a.m. to 4.30p.m. Monday to Friday to the class teacher you wish to contact.

Please note that direct emails to individual members of staff, other than Mrs Edleston (Head Teacher) and Mrs Swallow (SENCO- Special Educational Needs Coordinator), will not be replied to during directed teaching time.

Appendix 2: Communication Process

We have set out below the staff who we believe will be best placed to respond to various types of enquiry:

Type of query & member of staff to contact:

- For any issue relating specifically to your child (learning, behaviour, equipment, timetables etc.) you should initially speak to your child's class teacher. A face-to-face meeting or Teams/Zoom based platform should be agreed as this is probably best for this type of issue.
- If you feel that any issue, as described above, has not been resolved or you need more advice following these discussions, please contact the following people as appropriate:

Stage 1 – Class Teacher

Stage 2a – KS1 Mrs Newman (Reception Teacher & KS1 Senior Leader)

Stage 2a – KS2, Mrs Hadfield (Deputy Head Teacher & KS2 Senior Leader)

Stage 2a – Mrs Swallow – SENCO

Stage 2b – Mrs Edleston – Head Teacher

Stage 3 – Simon Holden – Chair of Governors

- Issues relating to other children in your child's class:

Stage 1 – Class Teacher

Stage 2 – Key Stage Leader

- Other serious concerns or complaints – Mrs Edleston (Head Teacher)
- Formal Complaints (as per Complaints Policy) - Chair of Governors – Mr Holden
- Curriculum and/or whole school pupil enquiries – Mrs Hadfield - Deputy Head Teacher
- Further information about Special Educational Needs – Mrs Swallow (DSwallow@peartreeprimary.co.uk)
- Child Protection/Safeguarding issues – Mrs Edleston, Mrs Hadfield, Mrs Swallow, Mrs Newman or Dr Rosemary Jones (governor)
- Health & Safety, Finance, Payments etc. – Mrs Hak, School Business Manager
- Letters, Admin, Attendance, School Dinners, Clubs etc. – School Office

Appendix 3: Schedule of Regular Meetings and Correspondence

Throughout the course of the school year, the following meetings will be held and information will be provided to all parents:

Beginning of the year

In September, your child's class teacher will provide you with lots of information including:

- An example of the year group's regular weekly timetable
- Curriculum and homework information
- How you can help your child at home with their learning
- Expectations of your new child's year group.
- Forthcoming day trips and potential residential visits.

Weekly and Termly Information

- Your child's class web page on the school website will be updated so you can see the focus of your child's learning.

Every two weeks you will receive our Newsletter informing you of wider issues, important information and events in the school. Make sure the school office has your email address so you can receive this automatically via email.

Text Service

- We use the SMS text service to provide urgent information, reminders and updates for parents, as it is a great way for the school to communicate quickly and briefly. Class teachers also use this service to specifically contact the parents and carers of their class. Any parents who choose to sign up to this service must make sure they keep the school office notified of any changes to mobile numbers or any concerns that they are not receiving messages.

Parent Evenings

These are important meetings where class teachers meet one to one with parents to discuss their child's progress, behavior and attitudes so that we can work together to help your child realise his or her full potential. These meetings are open to parents and children to attend. These can happen in person or remotely using a Teams or Zoom platform.

- In the autumn term there is a 'meet the teacher' evening. This is information sharing opportunity to meet your child's new teacher and see their classroom. In this meeting, learning for the term/year ahead is shared. We also hold a parents' evening early in this term to discuss how your child has settled into their class and identify any concerns or ways parents or school can better support a child.
- In the spring term there is a parents' evening held where progress and attainment is discussed.
- In the summer term, after parents have received their child's end of year School Report, there is another parents' evening. Not all parents feel it necessary to make an appointment but if you have anything you wish to discuss with your child's teacher this is an ideal opportunity.
- With regards to transition from one class to the next we allocate sessions in school for all children to spend time in their new class with their new teacher before the end of an academic year. Parents are informed of their child's new class via a letter from the Head Teacher.

Annual Report to Parents

- Reports are sent out in the summer term for all year groups.

Statutory Test Reports

Throughout their time at school, children are required by law to take a number of statutory tests, which are set by government. The results of these tests will be sent out to parents.

- Y1 Phonics Screening
- Yr. 2 Phonics Screening (when undertaken)
- KS1 SATs
- Y4 Multiplication Check

- KS2 SATs
- EYFS Baseline

For parents with children in these year groups, meetings will be held to explain what these tests are, and how and when they take place.

Curriculum Workshops, Information and Transition Meetings

Throughout the year meetings are held to provide information about the various different methods used in school to teach your child and how you can support them with their learning. Dates and times for these workshops are sent home via pupil post and also published in advance on the calendar section of the school website. We encourage you to attend as many of these meetings as possible as the shared understanding between home and school of teaching methods does help children to learn. An overview of the sessions and any other details will be placed on the school website and sent out via the Newsletter or Teachers to Parents communication platform but any parents who cannot attend are always welcome to contact the school if they would like to find out more information.

Appendix 4 – Detailed Protocols for Home-School Communication

Protocols for email communication

The Governors' Board has asked all staff not to respond to emails after pm or at weekends to support staff wellbeing. However, we will endeavor to respond to all email within 72 hours either in writing, in person or electronically. Emails will not be responded to during school holidays. Those teachers who work a part week will not necessarily respond within 72 hours if email contact is made on their non-working days.

Please be aware that staff may need to forward your e-mails to the Head Teacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team if they are unsure of how to assist you, or to obtain further information on your query.

Staff will always try to help you as quickly as possible, but may need to speak to someone else first or ask another member of staff for advice before they get back to you with a response. This is so you and your child can be supported in the best way possible.

If an urgent response is required then email may not be the quickest form of communication as there are occasions when emails cannot be accessed or responded to daily. In these circumstances, a telephone call to the school office would enable you to be more quickly put in touch with the most appropriate p

Protocols for informal discussion with Class Teachers before and after school

Teachers will be in their classrooms before and at the end of the school day to welcome and send home all their children. Please remember that staff are

responsible for the safety of all children in their class at these times and will, therefore, not be able to have long conversations with individual parents.

If you wish to discuss something urgently with a Class Teacher, please arrange a time to meet or speak on the telephone. The office staff will be able to assist with this.

Alternatively, if the matter is not urgent, please ask or write to the Class Teacher (in your child's school diary) to make an appointment with them.

Protocols for Meetings with Parents

Meetings in addition to Parents' Consultation/Information Meetings are sometimes necessary in order for Home and School to share information about an individual child's needs.

- These will be arranged in advance at a mutually convenient time.
- Meetings will be held in an appropriate and/or open and/or private area in the school.
- Staff may ask for a colleague to join the meeting in order to be able to give you the best advice possible or to record information.
- Electronic recording of meetings e.g. on mobile phones is not acceptable.
- A member of staff or governor can take notes at meetings if necessary.
- Teachers and Senior Leaders will always try to help you as quickly as possible, but please be aware that they may need to ask another member of staff for information/advice before they get back to you with a response. This is to ensure that you and your child are supported in the best possible way.
- All meeting attendees are expected to speak courteously, listen to each other and have the opportunity to respond to questions and/or statements.
- If any meeting attendee becomes concerned about their safety during a meeting, it will be stopped immediately. Reasons for the meeting being stopped will be given verbally and, where necessary, the party behaving inappropriately will be escorted from school premises. The Local Authority and/or Police may be informed.
- Agreed actions will be confirmed verbally or in writing at the end of the meeting.
- Follow-up communication will be issued in a timescale agreed at the meeting.