

# COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

## WEST HAMPSTEAD SCHOOL



September 2016

## **1. Introduction**

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

## **2. Aims**

Our school aims to ensure all communications are:

- Clear
- Comprehensive
- Two way
- Timely
- Respective Responsibilities

This explains the school's aims and values, the school's responsibilities towards the children, the responsibilities of parents, and what the school expects of the children.  
School

The school will undertake to ensure that:

- Parents and children have clear lines of communications
- The curriculum is clearly communicated to parents
- Parents are informed of forthcoming events within appropriate timelines
- All communications will be treated as confidential within the school context

Parent/Guardians/Carers

Parents will undertake to:

- Read the key communications issued by the school
- Raise issues or concerns at the earliest opportunity with the school in the appropriate manner
- Act on the communication (for example, attending special meetings)

### **3. Open Door Policy**

#### **3.1. Email**

We ask parents to email [admin@westhampstead.camden.sch.uk](mailto:admin@westhampstead.camden.sch.uk). For the purposes of administration we require all emails to go to a central email address. However, all emails will be treated with full confidentiality and the responses will be made by the member of staff addressed. Please note all emails should specify the member of staff to whom the query is addressed.

We will provide oral or written acknowledgement of the email within 2 school days and we will respond to parents' emails within 10 working days (during term time; to cover sickness and investigations).

#### **3.2. Letter**

Letters can be handed into, or posted to, the school office. As with emails all letters will be treated with full confidentiality and the responses will be made by the member of staff addressed. Please note all letters should specify the member of staff to whom the query is addressed. Please let the office staff know if the letter contains information about your child which you would like the class teacher to receive urgently.

We will provide oral or written acknowledgement of the letter within 2 school days and we will respond to letters within 10 working days (during term time; to cover sickness and investigations).

#### **3.3. Telephone**

This would be appropriate where enquiries are deemed more urgent by the parent, such as communicating particular information about the child to the school. We ask parents to phone the school on 0207 435 8646. If the call requires a response from a member of staff, we request that a parent/carer concern form is filled out. We will provide oral or written acknowledgement of the concern form within 2 school days and we will respond to the concern form within 10 working days (during term time; to cover sickness and investigations).

#### **3.4. Appointments**

If necessary parents can visit the school to ask questions, gain support or to have the opportunity to talk about their child/home issues with either the child's class teacher or the Senior Management Team. Parents are asked to phone the school office on 0207 435 8646 to make an appointment.

This allows the school time to organise cover to make staff available to speak to the parents. We will aim to make appointments within 5 working days and are willing to meet either before (from 8.00 am) or after school (3.30 – 4.30 pm) to fit in with parents.

Parents are asked not to approach teachers to discuss their child if they meet them outside of school as this does not allow for confidential discussion.

#### **3.5. Absence Requests**

We ask parents to complete a school 'Absence Request Form' which we require to be given to the school a minimum of 10 working days before the requested date, in order to receive a response before the date of the absence.

### **4. School prospectus and website**

Our school prospectus and website contain a range of specified information to give parents and carers, and the wider public, a full picture of provision at our school.

### **5. Home-school communication**

5.1. A diary of school events will be produced at the start of each term and communicated via the school Newsletter and on the website. The school Newsletter is sent to parents weekly. It contains general details of school events and activities. We send other letters when necessary.

5.2. There is a Home / School agreement which will be sent home when a child starts at the school for parents to sign and return.

5.3. At the beginning of each term, all teachers write to the parents or carers of the children in their classes with details of the work to be covered during the forthcoming half-term. We invite parents and carers to support their child's work through a range of suggested activities to be shared with the child at home. This information will also be posted on the class pages of the school website.

5.4. We welcome and value all feedback from parents and carers about our school's policies and practices. We conduct an annual survey to canvas the views of parents and carers about our school.

5.5. We arrange an annual curriculum meeting for parents and carers. These are evening meetings to explain various areas of our curriculum and approaches to teaching and learning. We hold a meeting for new parents/carers each July, and for Year 6 parents and carers concerning the national tests. All residential visits that children make to involve a number of meetings with parents and carers regarding the planning and content of the visit, and a post-visit review.

5.6. If a child is absent from school, and we have had no indication of the reason, we contact a parent (by telephone, if possible) to find out the reason for the absence.

### **6. Written Reports**

6.1. In the Summer term, parents receive a report with details of the child's attainment and progress in all areas of the curriculum and their attitude to learning.

### **7. Parent Consultations**

7.1. Parents meet their child's teacher twice during the year for parent consultations. To support parents attending a variety of afternoon and evening times are offered.

7.2. Where possible it is more effective for parents to attend the consultation together so that a common approach to supporting the child in their learning can be agreed. If exceptional circumstance mean this is not possible we will try to arrange separate consultations.

### **8. Email**

8.1. We encourage all parents to inform the school of their current e-mail address. Email is used to send out a variety of information, either to a targeted group, or to all parent. The newsletter, information about whole school events and all letters relevant to the whole school are sent out to all parents by email and in addition, some specific communications regarding trips and events are sent out to the relevant groups of parents.

### **9. Governors**

9.1. The names of governors is on the school website. Governors should be contacted via the school (email: [admin@westhampstead.camden.sch.uk](mailto:admin@westhampstead.camden.sch.uk)) or written communications left at the school office and will be forwarded to the Chair of Governors). As governors support the school in a strategic role, if parents contact them on a matter to do with the management of

the school, governors will be unable to respond and will direct them to take their concern to the school.

### ***10. Communication within our school***

10.1. So that we all know what is going on, the weekly diary is emailed out to all staff on Thursday. There is a timetable in the staff room of the week's activities, which is updated on the whiteboards in the staff room and school office.

10.2. All our procedures are detailed West Hampstead A – Z and in the shared area (induction pack for new staff)

10.3. Written communications with members of staff are delivered through pigeonholes or by email.

10.4. Staff members' personal details will not be shared with other members of staff or persons external to the school, without due authority.

### ***11. Communication with Outside Agencies***

11.1. Close contacts are maintained with support agencies including the Educational Psychologist, Primary Learning Support Services, the Peripatetic Music Service, the EWO, the School Nurse.

### ***12. Confidentiality***

12.1. We store useful information about pupils in our school and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. Details about the types of data we hold, why we hold that data, and who we may pass it on to is outlined in our Data Protection Policy. This is a requirement under the Data Protection Act 1998.

### ***13. Freedom of Information***

16.1. Refer to West Hampstead School's Freedom of Information Policy.