

# Knebworth

Primary & Nursery School



## Communications Policy Autumn 2017

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## Introduction

This communications policy sets out clear expectations for oral and written communication which should be adhered to by all members of the school community.

## Definition

Good communication promotes partnership. At Knebworth Primary and Nursery School we aim to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate. For the purposes of this policy, communication includes not only the content of the message but also how that message is communicated.

## Values

Our values link closely with British Values. They underpin everything we do at Knebworth Primary and Nursery School, providing a solid foundation to all our work. Our values are:

**Enthusiasm, Freedom, Kindness, Equality, Responsibility and Fairness**

## Objectives

All communications at Knebworth Primary and Nursery School should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents, governors and other stakeholders well informed at appropriate times
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional
- Use jargon free, plain English and be easily understood by all
- Be actioned within a reasonable time frame
- Be of a frequency and volume appropriate to the issue at hand and to ensure that all children receive appropriate attention.
- Use a method most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience
- Take account of relevant school policies such as Equal Opportunities and Acceptable Use of Information Technology
- Be compatible with our school values

## External Methods of Communication

The school has many lines of communication to maintain:

- with parents and carers
- with other schools
- with the community
- with local churches
- with outside agencies.

Good communication between school and home is essential to help children to make good progress. Parents can help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve. At Knebworth Primary and Nursery 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 and carers well informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents play in supporting the school. Staff will seek to establish open, professional relationships with parents which involve appropriate boundaries and forms of addressing each other. In our communications we seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of discrimination. We wish to recognise and celebrate the contributions made to our society by all the cultural groups represented in our school.

## Communications with Parents / Carers

### *Letters*

Staff will endeavour to respond to parents' letters in a timely way, taking into account their other responsibilities and priorities. This may take the form of an acknowledgement initially, within 48 hours, if more time is required to compile a complete response. We aim to complete a full response within 10 days. Any letter of complaint will be referred to the Headteacher. Parents should follow the school complaints procedures before writing directly to the head. If the complaints process is by-passed, parents will be directed to the appropriate stage of the process. A member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will approve any letters to parents before they are sent. Copies of all correspondence with parents will be held on school records.

### *Email/ Texts*

The school uses *Parentmail* to communicate with parents. Weekly newsletters, urgent notices and updates are sent out in this manner. Parents should only communicate via [admin@knebworth.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@knebworth.herts.sch.uk). If a parent communicates with the school using email and it is of a material nature, a copy will be printed for the relevant pupil file. We will email an acknowledgement within 48 hours and complete a full response within 10 days.

### *Telephone calls*

Staff will be informed by Office Staff if there is a telephone message for them. Teaching or meetings will not be interrupted for any member of staff to answer telephone calls. A contact form will be used to record the details of telephone conversations between staff and parents. We aim to return calls within 48 hours; however, further investigation may be required.

### *Social Networking Sites / Blogs*

Knebworth Primary and Nursery School has the following social media accounts:

- Facebook
- Twitter - @titancam

Both can be accessed via the school website. If you request to follow we will need to confirm who you are before accepting you. Please contact the office if you have not been accepted after a week – technology does sometimes go wrong.

If parents are unsure of why, when or how something has happened in school, they should always contact the class teacher in the first instance.

Knebworth Primary and Nursery School acknowledges that certain year groups may have 'closed' Facebook pages run by parents. We understand that these should be used to ask queries about homework, school events and so on in an informal manner. The school does not expect these sites to be used in a negative way to discuss parents' opinions about staff, school protocols or new initiatives.

Staff will not communicate with parents or pupils via social networking sites (such as Facebook) or accept them as their "friends". (See also the E Safety Policy).

## Written reports and Parents' Evenings

The school provides 3 written reports over the year. Two are discussed and reviewed at parents' evenings in autumn and spring. In the summer a slightly longer report is written. Each report identifies areas of strengths and areas for future development. Parents and pupils have opportunities to comment on progress as well as support their child in achieving their targets through work at home. Apart from two parents evenings, we also hold open evenings which are less formal. Pupils attend with their parents and share their work. Parents' evenings and open evenings give parents the opportunity to celebrate their child's successes and to support their child in areas where there is a particular need for improvement.

We want to hear from as many parents as possible about the great things we are doing as well as what we could be doing better. Parents' evenings are an important time for leaders and governors to undertake consultations to ensure that all voices are heard.

We encourage parents to contact the school at other times if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being. When children have special educational needs or if they are making less than expected progress, we may request to meet with parents more regularly. To fully support staff and parents we may invite additional school staff to the meeting. We will also make any reasonable adjustments if this will enable a parent with a disability to participate fully in a meeting at our school, or to receive and understand a communication.

## School Prospectus

The school prospectus contains a range of specified information to give parents and other stakeholders a full picture of provision at Knebworth Primary School and Nursery. This is updated at least annually.

## School Website

The school website provides information about the school and an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience. It is currently being redesigned (November 2017). It includes an electronic version of the school prospectus. The school website is updated on a regular basis.

## Home/School Communication

1. Yearly Diary - A yearly calendar of school events will be produced at the start of the academic year and issued to parents via Parentmail. A copy will be available on the school website as well. At the start of each term an updated version will be sent out in the same way. The weekly newsletter will contain the key events for that half term.
2. Head's Newsletter - The head's newsletter is sent to parents on a weekly basis. It contains a message from the head, diary dates, celebrations and general details of school events and activities. We send other letters of a general nature when necessary and store copies on the school website.
3. Reading Diaries – these should only be used to write messages about a child's reading. Please do not use these books to communicate any other messages.
4. Class DoJo – this APP is used to share homework and examples of pupils work.

The school encourages parents/carers to share any issues about their child at the earliest opportunity so that we can respond appropriately. Parents may take the opportunity to have a brief word with their child's class teacher at the end of the day but for more in-depth discussions please make an appointment via the office.

We arrange various meetings for parents throughout the year such as for information evenings about curriculum matters. In addition we hold learning sessions where parents can find out more about how we teach maths, reading and other subjects.

## Communication with other schools and outside agencies

Prior to pupils joining Reception, they are invited to visit the school as part of our transition programme to enable us to gain further information about them to help and support their transition to Knebworth Primary and Nursery School. A home visit by staff is also carried out as part of the induction arrangements.

We recognise that children have diverse needs and we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed of better ways to meet these needs, so that children may participate more fully.

Support comes from

- Medical services (such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, CDC and physiotherapy)
- Educational Psychologists
- Attendance Improvement Officers
- Health professionals and specialists
- Social Services
- Child Protection Units

We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility and that our school should provide a safe and secure environment.

When any member of staff has safeguarding concerns about a child, these will be passed on to the Designated Senior Lead (DSL) for Child Protection who may share this information with social services or the local Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). We are legally obliged to do so. These agencies may independently of the school decide on a course of action. Where this occurs the school will endeavour to liaise with parents in a timely manner. Parents should be aware that any meetings following a referral to social services will have to be reported back.

We hold information on pupils in our school, and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. Parents have a right to view the information we hold about their child(ren) and we can provide contact details of the agencies to which our information is passed.

## Communication by parents/carers

We welcome communication from parents/carers and expect any communication to reflect the values that the school is trying to instil in the pupils. All members of the school community should uphold our values to provide positive role models for our pupils.

Any communications should be at an appropriate volume and length and take into account the requirements and resources of a mainstream primary school and the need to cover all members of the school community.

Knebworth Primary and Nursery School expects parents/ carers who wish to contact the school to:

- Treat all school staff with courtesy and respect.
- To listen actively.
- Avoid any use, or threatened use, of violence to people or property.
- Respect the needs and well-being of pupils and staff within the school.
- Avoid any aggression, verbal abuse or swearing.
- Recognise the time constraints under which members of staff in schools work and allow the school a reasonable time to respond.
- Recognise that resolving a specific issue can sometimes take some time.
- In the case of a complaint, follow the school's complaints procedure.

If any of the above expectations are not met, a representative of the school will communicate their perceptions to the parent(s)/carer(s) involved. The school will take appropriate steps to resolve matters.

## Lines of Communication Flow Chart

1. In the first instance all parents should liaise directly with their child's class teacher regarding any queries about their child's learning, school procedures, changes or other issues.
2. If this has not resolved any queries, parents should seek an appointment with the appropriate key phase leader. The office should be able to direct you to the correct person.

3. If a parent should wish to take a query further then, in line with the Complaints Policy, they should complete the complaints form and address it for the attention of the Head Teacher. Either the Head Teacher or deputy Head Teacher will handle these complaints.

Decisions about changes or new initiatives are made by senior leaders as well as teaching staff. All teaching staff discuss changes before they are implemented – therefore class teachers will be able to assist parents with any queries they have over operational changes and new initiatives.

The governing body reviews this policy every two years. The governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this if the government introduces new regulations, or if the governing body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.