ST ANDREWS CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL
Communication with Parents and Carers

Effective communication with parents and carers is a key element in ensuring that our children are able to be the best they can be and achieve their potential. At St Andrew's School we value our relationship with parents and carers and strive to ensure that it is positive, conducted politely and in a professional manner, and builds on what we do with our children in school. To this end we operate an 'open door' policy where we hope parents and carers feel able to contact us at any time with worries or concerns.

There are many occasions when we need or wish to communicate with parents and carers and these guidelines set out what parents and carers can expect from us to ensure that communication is effective and what, in turn, we expect from parent and carers.

Formal Communication

This takes the form of parent consultation meetings, special educational needs review meetings and annual written reports.

On Parent Consultation Evenings school staff will ensure that

- Parents and carers have an opportunity to make a suitable appointment on the advertised evenings and that other opportunities are provided if the advertised evening is not convenient.
- That the appointment time is advised in advance of the evening.
- Children's work is available to view and that parents and carers are not asked to wait for long periods.
- Parents and carers are informed of positive achievements, together with areas for improvement and that relevant assessment data is available.
- Parents and carers have the opportunity to ask questions.
- Parents and carers have the opportunity to talk to a senior member of staff or the Headteacher if they wish to.

We ask that parents and carers do the following

- Attend the meeting at the agreed time or contact school in advance if they are unable to attend.
- Agree to a further appointment if the meeting is likely to exceed the time allocated so that other parents are not kept waiting.

The above points also apply to Special Educational Needs review meetings but on these occasions appointment times are agreed between class teachers and parents / carers. In addition, paperwork relating to the child will be made available for parents to read outside the meeting.

End of Year Reports

School staff will ensure that

- Reports are written in a clear format with minimal use of educational jargon.

- They are sent home on the advertised date, or if this is not possible, parent and carers are advised when they will be available.
- Copies of reports are sent to all parents, not living in the family home but with parental responsibility, who request a copy.
- Parents or carers are given an opportunity to discuss the report with class teachers.

We ask that parents or carers do the following

- Discuss the report with their children.
- Return the slip attached to the report to confirm receipt and to add any comments about the report.

Informal Communication

It is important that parents and carers are notified about things happening in school and this is achieved through the Headteacher's weekly newsletter, the parent notice board located by the entrance gates, notices sent by Parentmail or text and spoken communication between school staff and parents or carers.

Often something has happened in school or at home that parents or school staff wish to communicate. In addition parents or school staff may have good news to pass on or worries or concerns that need to be raised.

In these circumstances school staff will ensure that

- Comments made on the playground are brief, as private as possible and only in the child's hearing if appropriate.
- Parents or carers are invited into the classroom or another suitable private place if appropriate.
- A mutually convenient appointment is made if a longer discussion is needed. If this is necessary, school staff will endeavour to meet with parents as soon as is possible.
- Parents or carers are telephoned about the concern at home if they do not usually pick up from school or if it is felt more appropriate to do this.
- If parents communicate a concern via e mail, an acknowledgment will be sent the same day if possible. **In these circumstances discussion about the concern will not be continued via e mail. Parents will be invited to meet with school staff or a telephone call will be made.**
- A letter will be sent to parents if this is considered appropriate with the opportunity given for a further visit to discuss the contents of the letter.
- Home / school diaries are checked regularly to pick up messages. All messages are initialled by a member of staff to show they have been read.

We ask that parents and carers do the following

- Discuss concerns with the class teacher in the first instance.
- Avoid longer discussions before school as staff are getting ready for the day ahead.
- Write concerns communicated via the home/ school diary on a separate piece of paper so that the diary remains a record of positive comments.
- Ask to meet with the class teacher in the classroom if the concern is of a more private nature. There are also rooms within school that can be used for a confidential conversation and parents and carers should feel able to ask for this opportunity if necessary.

School staff will always ensure that conversations with parents are constructive, have an agreed outcome with a list of actions if necessary and are conducted in a polite and relaxed environment. In addition, school staff will follow up concerns raised either formally in a meeting, if this is appropriate, or informally by a brief word or telephone call.

At no time will school staff tolerate angry or abusive language from parents and carers. Should this unlikely event occur, parents or carers will be asked to leave the school site and another opportunity for discussion will be arranged. Letters or e mail communications that are offensive will be passed onto the Headteacher and governors if necessary. Likewise, all school staff are expected to conduct themselves professionally when communicating with parents.

Complaints

As mentioned above, our 'open door' policy ensures that parents feel welcome and able to communicate freely with us and that school staff feel able to communicate concerns with parent and carers. We hope that after the opportunity for discussion and, if necessary, the involvement of the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or a senior member of staff, a solution to any concern is reached. However, there may be the rare occasion where parents and carers are not satisfied with the way a concern has been dealt with and parents should not feel afraid to continue to pursue a solution to their concern. In these circumstances, St Andrew's School has a Complaints Policy which follows Essex County Council guidelines and provides information about how a complaint can be made. A copy is available from the school office and the office will help parents with the process if necessary.