



DAWPOOL

Dawpool C.E. (Aided) Primary School

Communication Protocol



*'The Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Patience,
Kindness, Generosity, Faithfulness, Gentleness
and Self-Control'*

(Galatians 5: 22-23).

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Overarching Policy Statement

The quality of relationships between all members of school, staff and pupils, and the relationship with parents and carers is the area that is most commonly associated with the ethos of a church school. Underpinning these relationships are our core values:

... and the Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Generosity, Faithfulness, Gentleness & Self Control. (Galatians 5: 22-23)

Jesus was clear in his instructions: 'Love your neighbour as yourself' (Matthew 22:39).

We have a series of overlapping networks of relationships, which includes governors, staff, children, parents, church members, and members of the community which the school seeks to serve. Our pastoral work will strive to meet the significant challenge to create and maintain such networks in ways which reflect the Gospel. Those who are in leadership roles, which includes all who have a particular responsibility, ensure that by their personal example they set the highest standards expected.

It is from this premise that Christian love will pervade all aspects of life at Dawpool C.E. (Aided) Primary School. It will influence how we reward and teach discipline. It will affect how we value work and the achievements of pupils and staff. It will be seen in the way in which the school environment is created and cared for, in the way in which the needs of pupils, parents, and community are met, and in the way in which teaching and non-teaching staff work together effectively as a team. Pastoral care pervades all aspects of school life and therefore will be reflected in the way the school is organised and the policy documents are written and implemented.



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.

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

1. Why partnership and good communication is important

At Dawpool C.E. (Aided) Primary School,

- 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

'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord. 'Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' (Jeremiah 29:11)



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 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 they need to be active partners in their 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 parents in contact with the person best placed to help them 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 a parent has a particular issue they wish to discuss. This will ensure the member of staff they want to see is prepared and able to focus on the conversation.
- Appointments can be made in a number of ways: sending a note in with the child, or telephoning or emailing the office to leave a message.
- Generally speaking, we recommend that concerns are discussed with the child's class teacher in the first instance, as this will be the person who will know the child and their family best. If this doesn't provide the information needed or if parents feel that the issue hasn't been resolved, then they should contact the member of staff identified in Appendix 2 – Our Communication Process.



- To enable the school to hear the views of parents, a questionnaire will be issued in the spring term of each academic year. The findings will be incorporated into the school's improvement planning.

3. Social Media

At Dawpool, we have a *'shared aspiration to create the very best church school . . where the whole school community are valued as individuals and as God's children'* (Vision statement). If people take grievances to, and/or make adverse comments about the school on the various social media outlets that exist, this vision is put in jeopardy. Jesus was clear in his instructions: 'Love your neighbour as yourself' (Matthew 22:39). The book of Proverbs (12.6) tells us that 'Words have the power to destroy and the power to build up.' They can be filled with hate or hope, bitterness or blessing, complaining or compliments. How many of us will hear criticism more loudly than affirmation? Will hear words of rejection over and above words of acceptance? We ask that our school community think carefully about the comments made on social media, using them to be witnesses to the school's core values: *Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness Generosity, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-Control*. We expect words to build one another up and celebrate what is special about our school. The school reserves the right to take whatever action deemed reasonably necessary to protect itself against adverse social media comment.

4. 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 that is requested. 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 requested. Should the person who is needed be unavailable, arrangements will be made for someone to deputise or for the meeting to be rearranged for the earliest opportunity in discussion with parents.

'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord. 'Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' (Jeremiah 29:11)



5. Regular Meetings and Correspondence

Throughout the course of the school year, we provide information relating to children's learning, achievement and activities as well as offering opportunities for parents to come into school for formal and informal meetings. We have set out a detailed schedule of meetings and correspondence, so that everyone knows when these occur and what to expect (see appendix 3).

6. Other Communication Options

We try hard to provide all the information needed to help parents be active partners in their 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 all 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. The website is updated regularly and contains a wealth of information for each class and the whole school; including calendar events. The website should be used as the first point of contact for dates.

A contact sheet is issued annually for parents to check and update where necessary. If any parent feels they are not receiving communication, it is vital they let the school office know as soon as possible.

In some circumstances, we may send reminders and short information notices using text or email. This enables information to be communicated quickly to selected groups. The receipt of information on a timely basis is sometimes vitally important and again, it is the responsibility of parents to ensure their contact details are up to date.



Paper copies of letters are sent out directly to parents. These are given out in class and the children asked to put them in their bags and deliver them straight to their parents. We ask all families to check their child's bag daily.

7. General Governing Body Communication Protocols

Parental Support: The Governing Body of Dawpool C.E. (Aided) 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.

Partnership: The school is committed to the concept of partnership in supporting all children. We have set out here the commitment the school makes to sharing information and how the school can be contacted for any matter that needs to be discussed. If there is any concern that a member of staff has not met the commitments set out in this policy, this needs to be brought to the attention of the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors immediately.

Complaints: A copy of the School's Complaints Policy can be found on the school's website.

Contacting the Governing Body: We wish to make clear that we are eager to hear of 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 Governors or a particular other named governor to contact them.

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



Inappropriate Behaviour: The Governing Body will not under any circumstances tolerate violence, aggressive or threatening behaviour 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

**Dawpool C.E. (Aided) Primary School
6 School Lane
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Telephone: 0151 648 3412

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Website: www.dawpool-ce.eschools.co.uk



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:

2.1. Type of query & member of staff to contact:

For any issue relating specifically to your child (learning, progress, behaviour, equipment, timetables etc.) you should initially speak to your child's class teacher. A face to face meeting is probably best for this type of issue. Please arrange this meeting by contacting the school office or writing a note directly to the class teacher.

If you feel that any issue, as described above, has not been resolved or you need more advice following these discussions, please contact one of our Senior Leadership team as appropriate:

- Mrs Ashton (KS1 Leader)
- Mrs Hall (KS2 Leader)
- Mrs McCann (Deputy Head Teacher)

Serious concerns or informal complaints should be directed to Mr Burrows, Head Teacher.

Formal Complaints (as per Complaints Policy) should be directed to Mrs Robson, Chair of Governors. A copy of our Complaints Policy can be downloaded from our school website.

Questions about Special Educational Needs should be directed to Mrs McNee, SENCO.



Child Protection concerns should be directed to the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) as follows:

- Mr D. Burrows (Head Teacher)
- Mrs C. McCann (Deputy Head Teacher)
- Mrs S. McNee (SENCO)

Queries regarding letters, admin, attendance, school dinners, clubs, payments, finance etc. should be directed to Mrs Kenney and Mrs Parr in the 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.

3.1. Beginning of the year

In September your child's class teacher will invite you to a 'Learning Links' meeting that will provide you with lots of information including:

- Curriculum and homework information.
- How you can help your child at home with their learning.
- Expectations of your new child's year group.

3.2. Termly Information

Each Year Group has a page on the school website which is updated weekly to include the latest curriculum information. Parents are encouraged to look at these pages regularly to find out what their child is doing in school.

'The Dawpool News' is published on a Friday afternoon each week and is a means for parents to be kept informed of developments and events within school. This is sent via email. The latest copy of the Dawpool News can also be downloaded from the homepage of the school website. All copies of the Dawpool News are archived on the school website under 'The Dawpool News' tab.

We are working towards our main method of communication with parents being via e-mail. Make sure the school office has your email address so you can receive information automatically. We encourage all parents to sign up for this service and it is vital that the school office is notified of any changes to e-mail addresses.



Letters with returnable consent forms, e.g. class letters, school trips and extra-curricular activities will often be sent home in paper format. We ask parents to check your child's bag regularly.

Where a group of parents needs to be kept updated about a situation at short notice, e.g. a class who are delayed returning from a trip, we will send a text message as this is a quick and efficient way of providing updates.

The phone will be used to contact parents in the case of an emergency. It is vitally important therefore, that emergency phone numbers are kept up to date and we ask that all parents take responsibility for informing the office of any change to home or mobile phone numbers. We will also use the phone to contact parents in situations where a quick response is required.

Communication procedures relating to first aid and medical emergencies are detailed in the 'first aid' policy which is available on the school website.

3.3. Teacher and Parent Consultation Meetings

These are important meetings where class teachers meet one to one with parents to discuss their child's progress, behaviour and attitudes so that we can work together to help your child realise his or her full potential.

In the autumn and spring terms there is a parents' evening where one to one appointments are used to discuss the following agenda:

- Attendance and punctuality
- Behaviour for learning
- Overview of Year Group expectations and progress to date
- Areas of strength and areas for development

In the summer term, after parents have received their child's end of year School Report, there is an opportunity for parents to visit their child's classroom and view their child's work. The teacher will be available to speak to should you have any questions.



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.

3.4. Annual Reports to Parents

Written reports are sent out in the Summer Term for all Year Groups from Foundation 1 to Year 6.

Throughout their time at school, children are required by law to take a number of statutory tests which are set by government. Parents will receive the following information after the tests:

- Phonics screening test result at the end of Year 1.
- Teacher assessment results at the end of Year 2.
- SATs test results at the end of Year 6.

3.5. 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 published in the 'Dawpool News' 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. Where possible, these meetings will be held in the evening to enable working parents to attend. An overview of the sessions and any other details will be placed on the school website 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

4.1. Protocols for informal discussion with class teachers before and after school

Teachers will be in their classrooms before the start of the school day and after school to safely welcome and send home all 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. A copy of the school's 'Arrivals and Departures' policy is available on the school website.

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 to make an appointment with them.

4.2. Protocols for meetings with parents

Meetings in addition to Parents' Evenings 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 open 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.
- A member of staff or a 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. The school reserves the right to stop a meeting if it becomes discourteous. Reasons for the meeting being stopped will be given verbally.
- Agreed actions will be confirmed verbally or in writing at the end of all meetings.
- Follow up communication will be issued in a timescale agreed at the meeting.

This protocol will be reviewed by the Governing Body annually.