

The Mease Spencer Academy



Parent Communication Policy

September 2024

Aims

Positive relationships are central to our approach at The Mease Spencer Academy. To achieve this we must communicate effectively with each other, with our pupils, with their parents/carers and with other members of the wider community. We need to ensure communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate. Developing great communication is one of our core REFLECT values and as such, is a thread that runs through everything we do.

Definition of good communication

Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It involves:

The management of relationships and the need to involve people. Communication is as much about attitude and behaviour as it is about the message. We should also remember the importance of listening. Every member of staff and parent/carer has a responsibility to support effective communications and needs to recognise that the quality of their communications should be respectful, constructive and purposeful.

For the purpose of this policy, communication includes not only the message but also how that message is communicated.

At The Mease we have an expectation that all members of our school community (children, parents, staff and visitors) are treated with the upmost respect when communicating with one another. Therefore, it is expected that all involved communications remain calm and communicative. If the communication is breaking down and becomes threatening or upsetting for any person steps will be taken to calm the situation and this may result in a meeting being called to a close or in a person being asked to leave the premises.

Objectives

All communications at The Mease should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents, Governors and other stakeholders well informed
- Be open, honest, ethical, respectful and professional
- Use jargon free, plain English and can be easily understood by all as much as possible

- Be actioned within two working days
- Use the method of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience
- Take account of other relevant policies in particular Equal Opportunities, Positive Relationships & Behaviour policy, Parent and Visitor Code of Conduct and the Complaints Policy. These are all available on our school website.

Parent responsibility

To allow communication to be effective it is the responsibility of parents and carers to provide the school with correct current information and update this information as appropriate. This includes phone numbers, home address, medical information and family situations. It is important if a pupil is to be collected by someone other than the specified adult that the teacher is aware before the end of the school day.

Forms of communication between staff and parents/carers

Please note, all communication between staff and parents/carers should take one of the below forms. Messages for the class teacher must not be passed on via club leaders. The school should contact parents/carers directly with any communication.

Dojo messages

Class dojo is an app that facilitates messages between staff members and parents and for general messages to be shared with the class or whole school community. Class dojo is intended to be used to share positive information such as a child's achievements and also to inform of any school events or activities. Direct messages should be brief and polite and dojo should not be used to air complaints. If something cannot be conveyed in a brief message please arrange a phone call or meeting as an alternative. We endeavour to use face to face or phone conversation as the first means of contact, parents are encouraged to do the same.

Staff may take time to respond to messages because of teaching and other commitments. Teachers and other staff have two working days between the hours of 8.30am and 3.45pm with which to respond (during term time). Please do not make further contact about the same issue within this time frame. If a parent needs to contact a member of staff urgently, they should ring the school office where a message can be given to the teacher. Staff should not have Dojo on their personal devices for GDPR purposes. Staff are not expected to respond to dojo messages outside of their working day hours.

Any misuse of this facility will result in being blocked from the site. Parents should also not use dojo to message teachers about end of day arrangements – this needs to be a phone call to admin as teachers may not be able to check messages during the day.

Letters

Letters may sometimes be sent to particular groups of children within school such as School Council children. Most letters sent to groups of parents are given by paper copy from the staff member it relates to.

Letters to the whole school, including newsletter will usually be posted on Class Dojo. Newsletters are also uploaded to the website.

Telephone Calls

The school office is open between the hours of 8.15am and 4:00pm (3:30 on Friday). Should a parent/carer wish to contact a teacher during school hours the office will take messages and pass on in a timely manner. Office staff will not interrupt teaching for staff to answer phone calls. The member of staff will call back if necessary, at a convenient time. This time may vary due to teaching and other duties throughout the day.

Parent/carers are encouraged to phone the school office to make appointments to meet with staff, particularly the Principal, this ensures a suitable amount of time to discuss anything in detail.

Social Networking Sites/Blogs etc

Staff will not communicate with parents or pupils via social networking sites (such as Facebook) or accept friend requests from parents or students. The Principal must be informed of any parent or pupil sending requests.

Written Reports

Once a year a full written report to each child's parents is provided. Parents are welcome to come in and discuss any of these reports with the class teacher at a mutually agreed time.

Parents are also invited to meet their child's class teacher twice in the academic year for a consultation at Parents' Evening. This gives the opportunity to celebrate successes, and to

support the child in areas where there is particular need for improvement. We encourage parents to contact the school 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 the expected progress, we find it helpful to meet with parents more regularly. We will also make any reasonable adjustments to our arrangements to ensure we can meet with all parents.

School Website/X

The school website provides information about the school and an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience. A calendar of the school events can be found on the website along with newsletters and other important information regarding the school day. The Mease also has an X account which is controlled by the Principal who updates with various information of that is happening in school with the children or to share other information. Should the Principal, or any other person, feel that inappropriate communication or correspondence is being made to The Mease account on X, it will result in reporting and blocking persons from the facility. Classes also have X accounts controlled by the class teacher; the above also applies to the class accounts.

Home – school communication

A school newsletter is sent to parents via Class Dojo and contains general details of school events and activities. This is supplemented by posts on the school story about events and updates in school. We send other letters of a general nature when necessary and store copies on the school server.

The school encourages parents to share any issues about their child at the earliest opportunity. Teachers will also arrange to see and speak to parents as soon as possible should they have concerns. Many parents have the opportunity to have a brief word with the teacher when they collect them after school or before school 8.45-8.55am. Parents are advised that teachers need to take the register at 9.00am and quite often have meetings to attend after school, therefore arranging to meet with the teacher in advance provides more opportunity to talk at greater length.

We arrange various meetings for parents throughout the year to inform of our curriculum or assessment arrangements.

Accident and Emergency Communication

Parents must ensure that school always has current contact telephone numbers and e mail addresses so that contact can be made for any accidents or emergencies.

In the event of an accident – a Meditracker form will be filled out should a child have received first aid and emailed to the parent by the end of the day. However, if a child is seen to have a visible mark on their face or had a bump to the head this is when parents/carers will be contacted immediately by a member of staff from school.

In the event that the school may need to close such as snow the school will send out a dojo message to all parents. The information will also be updated on the school website, the

Derbyshire Council website and on the local radio. The decision to close the school remains with the Principal.

In the unlikely event of a more serious incident, the response will, inevitably, depend on the circumstances. The first and greatest priority will always be to look after the pupils. The second priority will be to give parents the fullest possible account of events as soon as possible.

Communication with outside agencies

We recognise that children have diverse needs, and we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed on better ways to meet these needs, so that the children may participate more fully. Support comes from medical services (such as speech and language therapy), from Educational Psychologists, from health professionals and specialists. It also comes from various welfare-focused services, such as Educational Welfare and Social Services.

Parents/carers will be made aware of when these services are involved with their child, this may be through the SENDCo or class teacher.

We adhere to the law that every child has the 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. We are the people most in contact with the children, and we are therefore in a unique position to identify and help children. So, when a member of staff has concerns regarding a child, these will be passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Deputy Safeguarding Lead and this information may be passed on to social services. As much as possible, we work and communicate with families to support circumstances surrounding the child.

Complaints

It is to be hoped that most concerns can be expressed and resolved on an informal basis. Concerns should be raised with either the class teacher, Vice Principal or Principal. Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. Please contact the school office, either in person, by phone or via email and info@themeasespencer.org.uk to organise an appointment.

Formal complaints – Formal complaints must be made to the Principal (unless they are about the Principal), via the school office. This may be done in person or in writing (on the Complaint Form).

Complaints about the Principal should be made to the Chief Executive Officer of Spencer Academies Trust via the Trust office at info@spencertrust.org.uk

Please see the complaints policy for further details.

Non-compliance with communication policy

The communication policy is set out to create clarity for parents/carers and staff with the interest of The Mease children at the heart. Where the communication policy is not followed by parents/carers, an initial informal conversation will take place between the Principal and the parent/carer. If, following this conversation, the communication policy continues to be ignored, this will be followed up in writing. For parent/carers who excessively cause a significant level of disruption, the school may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan.

Please see Complaints Policy for further details.