



Abbots Langley School

Inspiring life-long learners

Communication Policy

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on a two-yearly basis.

This policy was reviewed and updated in **October 2018**

Next review date: **October 2020**

Aims and objectives

At Abbots Langley Primary School, all our children are given the opportunity to become the best they can be in a friendly, safe and nurturing environment. Our commitment to learning ensures that our dedicated and caring school community is reflective and attentive to the voice of our children.

Our school aims to demonstrate openness and acceptance, tolerance and forgiveness. Values and attitudes are formed and every individual is celebrated as unique. We communicate at all levels by working hard to ensure that every member of our school community has a voice.

We aim to create a community, which does not judge or offer judgment but rather promotes values, acceptance and understanding.

By developing pupil voice, we aim to assist our children to have the skills and confidence in a supported environment to share any concerns they may have, to have the emotional literacy to deal more positively with conflict and to understand the need to behave in a supportive and positive manner so that effective learning will take place. All adults working with our pupils uphold our school's values and demonstrate these in their conduct and approach with our pupils. Children understand the importance of respect and trust by all parties. Other values such as friendship, thankfulness and forgiveness enable children to learn the importance of these elements in managing their behaviour in the culture of a school.

Aim

To support the vision and values of the school, we must communicate effectively with each other, with our pupils, with their parents and with other members of the wider school community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

Definition

Good communication involves the management of relationships and the need to involve people as well as the exchange of information. It involves attitude and behaviour as well as message. It also involves active listening.

For the purposes of this policy, communication includes not only the content of the message but also how that message is communicated; not only the responsibility for communication but also how effectively that responsibility is carried out.

Objectives

All communications at Abbots Langley Primary School should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents, governors and other stakeholders well informed
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional
- Use jargon free, plain English and be easily understood by all
- Be actioned within a reasonable time frame (no later than 10 working days)
- 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

External Methods of Communication

The school has many lines of communication to maintain: with parents and carers, other schools, the community and with outside agencies. Good communication between school and home is essential to help children to make more progress. Parents can help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve. At Abbots Langley Primary 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 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 written 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. We aim to respond within 10 working days. This may take the form of an acknowledgement initially if more time is required to compile a complete response. Any letter of complaint will be referred to the Headteacher. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will approve any letters to parents before they are sent.

Email

The school has an email system it uses to communicate with parents in regular newsletters. Parents are to communicate via admin@abbotslangleyprimary.com If a parent communicates with the school using email and it is of a material nature, a copy may be printed for the relevant pupil file.

Telephone calls

Staff will be informed by Office Staff if there is a telephone message for them. Teaching will not be interrupted for staff to answer telephone calls.

Social Networking Sites / Blogs etc

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 meetings with parents

Once a year the school provides a written report to each child’s parents/carers on their progress.

In addition, parents/carers meet their child’s teacher twice a year for a consultation at Parents’ Evening. This gives them the opportunity to celebrate their child’s success and to support their child in areas where there is a particular need for improvement. 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 Website

The school website provides information about the school and an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience.

Home – school communication

A school newsletter is sent to parents on a weekly basis. It contains general details of school events and activities. We send other letters of a general nature when necessary. Pupils are issued with reading journals to record when they read with an adult at home. The school encourages parents/carers to share any issues about their child at the earliest opportunity so that we can respond appropriately.

Many parents/carers have the opportunity to have a brief word with the class teacher after school when they collect their child(ren).

We arrange various meetings for parents throughout the year such as preparation for residential trips, for new parents and information evenings about curriculum matters. Prior to pupils joining Reception, parents are invited to visit the school to help and support their transition to Abbots Langley Primary School.

Communication with other schools and outside agencies

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 and physiotherapy), from Educational Psychologists, from health professionals and specialists. It also comes from various welfare-focused services, such as Educational Welfare, Social Services and 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 Officer for Child Protection who may share this information with the Social Services.

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 vision and values that the school are trying to instil in the pupils. The communication 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.

The school can expect parents/ carers who wish to contact the school to:

- treat all school staff with courtesy and respect

- 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 or verbal abuse

- 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.

The governing body reviews this policy every two years.