

Delves Lane Primary School



Home-School Communication Policy

1. Introduction and aims

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/carers has a positive impact on pupils' learning because it:

- › Gives parents/carers the information they need to support their child's education
- › Helps the school improve, through feedback and consultation with parents/carers
- › Builds trust between home and school, which helps the school better support each child's educational and pastoral needs

The aim of this policy is to promote clear and open communication by:

- › Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers
- › Setting clear standards and expectations for responding to communication from parents/carers
- › Helping parents/carers reach the member of school staff who is best placed to address their specific query or concern so they can get a response as quickly as possible

In the following sections, we will use 'parents' to refer to both parents and carers.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- › Ensuring that communications with parents/carers are effective, timely and appropriate
- › Monitoring the implementation of this policy
- › Regularly reviewing this policy

2.2 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- › Responding to communication from parents/carers in line with this policy and the school's ICT and internet acceptable use policy
- › Working with other members of staff to make sure parents/carers get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)

Staff will **aim** to respond to communication during core school hours 8.30am – 3.30pm or their working hours (if they work part-time). In line with promoting staff wellbeing and helping our staff find a suitable work-life balance, staff may work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond outside of these hours, but they are **not expected** to do so.

2.3 School Office

School office staff are responsible for:

- › Responding to communication from parents/carers in line with this policy and the school's ICT and internet acceptable use policy
- › Issuing log in details and any support with our school's communication systems
- › Ensuring any communications are directed to the appropriate member of staff in a timely manner
- › To be first point of contact for all communications and will act in a professional manner

DLPS ICT and Acceptable use policy can be found on our website

<https://delveslaneprimary.durham.sch.uk/> and via your Arbor Parent Portal, where you can also agree and consent to this policy.

2.4 Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance
- Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with our parent code of conduct.

Parents/Carers should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours 8.30am – 3.30pm, or during school holidays.

DLPS Parent & Carer Code of Conduct can be found on our website

<https://delveslaneprimary.durham.sch.uk/> and via your Arbor Parent Portal, where you can also agree and consent to this policy.

3. How we communicate with parents and carers

The sections below explain how we keep parents/carers up to date with their child's education and what is happening in school.

Parents/Carers should monitor all of the following regularly to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child.

3.1 Email

We use email to keep parents/carers informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events/trips
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests
- School Reports
- Payment reminders
- Attendance

3.2 In App Messages (Arbor Parent Portal)

We use in app messages to keep parents/carers informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events
- Class activities or teacher requests
- Feedback on your child's school day
- Any ad hoc information

3.2 Text messages

We will text parents/carers about:

- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- Scheduled meetings
- School absence
- Updates on school trips

3.4 Phone calls

We will call parents/carers about:

- Absence
- Illness during the school day
- Ad hoc messages/information

3.5 School calendar

Our school website and half-termly newsletter includes a full school calendar. We will also keep parents/carers continuously up to date via all school communication channels including social media.

Where possible, we try to give parents/carers at least 2 weeks' notice of any events or special occasions (including non-uniform days, special assemblies or visitors, or requests for pupils to bring in special items or materials).

Any such event will be included in the school calendar.

3.6 Letters

We send the following letters home regularly:

- Letters about trips and visits

3.7 Homework books/school planners

Please refer to our DLPS Homework Policy.

3.8 Reports

Parents/carers receive reports from the school about their child's learning, including:

- An end-of-year report covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, and their attendance
- A report on Key Stage 2 SATs tests, Phonics and End of Reception Early Learning Goals

We also arrange regular meetings where parents/carers can speak to their child's teacher(s) about their achievement and progress (see the section below).

3.9 Meetings

We hold two parents' evenings per academic year. During these meetings, parents/carers can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum or schemes of work, their child's wellbeing, or any other area of concern.

The school may also contact parents/carers to arrange meetings between parents' evenings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing.

Parents/Carers of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these additional needs.

3.10 School website <https://delveslaneprimary.durham.sch.uk/>

Key information about the school is posted on our website, including:

- School times and term dates
- Important events and announcements
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information
- Information about before and after-school provision

Parents/Carers should check the website before contacting the school.

4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

Parents/Carers should use the list in appendix 1 to identify the most appropriate person to contact about a query or issue, including the school office number and email address.

4.1 Email

Parents/Carers should always email the school, and mark it for the attention of the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within two working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within five working days.

If a query or concern is urgent, and parents/carers need a response sooner than this, they should call the school.

4.2 Phone calls

If parents/carers need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should email the school office and the relevant member of staff will contact them within two working days.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will respond to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure parents/carers have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within five days of your request.

If the issue is urgent, parents/carers should call the school office.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues
- Changes to school pick up (**please contact us by 1.30pm**)

For more general enquiries, please call the school office.

4.3 Meetings

If parents/carers would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the appropriate email address (see appendix 1), or call the school to book an appointment.

We try to schedule all meetings within five working days of the request.

While teachers are available at the beginning or end of the school day if parents/carers need to speak to them urgently, we recommend they book appointments to discuss:

- Any concerns they have about their child's learning
- Any concerns around school
- Updates related to pastoral support, their child's home environment, or their wellbeing

4.4 Home-school communications app

Parents/Carers can use the school Arbor Parent Portal App to:

- Report an absence
- Send non – urgent messages
- Consents
- Update personal information
- Update emergency contacts
- Book Wraparound care and activity clubs
- Make payments

If you require any support using the app please contact the school office

5. Inclusion

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school.

5.1 Parents/Carers with additional communication needs

We aim to make communications accessible to all. We have taken the following steps to achieve this:

- All whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) are made available in multiple formats on request
- All communications are written as clearly and concisely as possible
- Accessibility is considered when designing/updating the school website such as: using text colours that show up clearly against the background colour
- Staff will endeavour to provide information in an accessible format

Parents/Carers who need help communicating with the school can request reasonable adjustments, such as:

- School announcements and communications in accessible formats
- Interpreters for meetings or phone calls

Please contact the school office to discuss these.

5.2 Parents/Carers with English as an additional language (EAL)

We currently make whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) available in the following languages:

- English

Parents/Carers who need help communicating with the school can request the following support:

- School announcements and communications translated into additional languages
- Interpreters for meetings or phone calls

We can make additional arrangements if necessary. Please contact the school office to discuss these.

6. Monitoring and review

The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every year.

The policy will be approved by the governing board and reviewed every 3 years.

7. Links with other policies

This policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- ICT and internet acceptable use
- Parent & Carer code of conduct
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints
- Home-school agreement
- Staff wellbeing
- Social media policy

All relevant policies can be found on our website in the school policies section

<https://delveslaneprimary.durham.sch.uk/key-information/school-policies/>

Appendix 1: school contact list

Who should I contact?

If you have questions about any of the topics in the table below, or would like to speak to a member of staff:

- Email or call the school office on delveslaneprimary@durhamlearning.net or 01207 503984, our office hours are Monday – Thursday 8.30am – 3.30pm and Friday 8.30am – 3.30pm
- Put the subject and the name of the relevant member of staff (from the list below) in the subject line (for emails)
- We will forward your request on to the relevant member of staff

Remember: check our website first, much of the information you need is posted there.

We try to respond to all emails within a minimum of 24 hours, no longer than 48 hours, with the exception of weekends and school holidays, it may not always be possible to stay within these time frames during busier periods.

| I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT... | WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO |
|---|---|
| My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework | Your child's class teacher |
| My child's wellbeing/pastoral support | Your child's class teacher |
| Payments | School office |
| School trips | Your child's class teacher |
| Uniform/lost and found | Your child's class teacher |
| Attendance and absence requests | If you need to report your child's absence, you can use the Arbor Parent Portal, school email or call 01207 503984 and select option 1. If you want to request approval for term-time absence, email the school office or the request form can be found on our website |
| Bullying and behaviour | Your child's class teacher in the first instance |
| School events/the school calendar | Website, Facebook and school office |
| Special educational needs (SEN) | School office |
| Before and after-school clubs | School office |
| Hiring the school premises | School office |
| Governing board | Chair of Governors – Mrs J Dobson |

| I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT... | WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Catering/meals | School office |

Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy.

Our complaints policy can be found on our website <https://delveslaneprimary.durham.sch.uk/>