



Striving together for excellence and enjoyment'

COMMUNICATION POLICY

Policy updated: March 2024
Policy Review: March 2028

Signed (Headteacher)

Signed (Chair of Governors)

Key Objectives:

All communication at Pirton School should:

- Keep staff, children, parents and other stakeholders well informed.
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional
- Use jargon-free English and be easily understood by all
- Use the method of communication most effective and appropriate to the context and audience.
- Either be neutral or offer a balanced presentation of political views

Effective communications enable us to share our school aims and values as well as keeping parents well informed about school life. This reinforces the vital role that parents play in supporting the school and their child/ren.

Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents, it is essential that relationships are professional and parents are addressed in a formal manner in all communication, whatever the form.

Pirton School aims to make our communication as accessible and inclusive as possible. We will ensure that all of our parents can access a form of communication, making alternative arrangements where necessary (e.g. EAL, SEN, IT access or literacy issues). We will seek parental feedback on the school communication via our annual parent survey.

Procedures

The School Office can be contacted between 8.15am and 4.00pm on school weekdays.

Postal Address	Telephone	Email:
Pirton School High Street Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 3PS	01462 712370	admin@pirton.herts.sch.uk

Messages, Queries, Concerns	Person to Contact
If your child is absent from school...	Please notify the School Office each day of absence by 9.00am either by telephone on 01462 712370 (where you can leave a message) or in person. Please note that the Headteacher has discretion to authorise or unauthorise an absence.
If you have a quick message for your child's teacher about collection, concerns, home learning...	Talk to your child's teacher on the playground after the class has been sent home or before school starts. There is always a member of staff on the playground in the mornings. Urgent messages may be left at the School Office if you do not get a chance to speak to the teacher. You can contact the school office by email, phone or in person if urgent.
If you would like to talk about your child's learning, progress or attainment...	Contact the school office by email or phone and ask them to make an appointment for you to meet with your child's teacher. If, following your discussion you would like more information, you can follow the same process to make an appointment to meet with a senior member of staff. The office will know who the most appropriate member of senior staff is and will arrange this.

If you are concerned about social behaviours or bullying...	Contact the school office by email or phone and ask them to make an appointment for you to meet with your child's teacher. If, following your discussion you would like further support or do not feel that your concerns have been resolved, you can follow the same process to make an appointment to meet with a senior member of staff. The office will know who the most appropriate member of senior staff is and will arrange this.
If you would like to discuss something related to your child's teacher...	Contact the school office by email or phone and ask them to make an appointment for you to meet with the Assistant Head or Headteacher. The office will know who the most appropriate member of senior staff is and will arrange this.
If you would like to discuss your child's special educational needs...	Contact the school office by email or phone and ask them to make an appointment for you to meet with the SENCO and your child's class teacher. Whilst you can email the SENCO directly, she is not in school everyday and so it is better for communication to be sent via the office.
If you would like to find out about after school clubs or have a query...	Check the School website, www.pirton.herts.sch.uk , or email the Office on admin@pirton.herts.sch.uk or ask at the School Office.
If you have a pay query...	Enquiries can be made to the School's Office staff. We operate a cashless office and all payments should be made via Arbor.
If you have a School dinner enquiry...	We use School Grid. The website is www.schoolgrid.co.uk . For further information, contact the school office by email or phone.
If you wanted to check if the School is open...	Please check the school website, www.pirton.herts.sch.uk , your emails or Hertfordshire School Closures online.

If having followed the processes above for your specific concern, you wish to meet with the Headteacher, you can contact the office using the processes outlined above to arrange a meeting with her.

Communication may take place in the following ways:

Formal letters (sent via the School Office)

Letters will be acknowledged in 3 working days from receipt and a reply sent within 10 working days unless the sender has been given a legitimate reason for the delay, such as consultation or investigation. Copies of correspondence will be placed on the child's file.

E-mail (sent via the School Office)

All e-mail communication will be treated as letters and should be checked carefully for technical errors and tone. Emails will be acknowledged in 3 working days from receipt and a reply sent within 10 working days unless the sender has been given a legitimate reason for the delay, such as consultation or investigation. **Under no circumstances should staff contact children, parents or conduct any school business using personal email addresses.**

Telephone Calls

Staff should take notes about the content of telephone calls, as they would with meetings with parents. Notes from telephone calls, including main points of discussion and action required/taken should be logged and filed in the child's file.

Arbor

We encourage all parents to inform the school of their current e-mail address, to allow them access to Arbor which is a quick, economic and efficient method for the school to communicate with parents. A record of those who do not have access to Arbor is maintained and these parents will receive a paper copy of any correspondence.

Arbor is used to send out a variety of information, either to a target group, or to all parents. The newsletter, information about whole school events and all letters relevant to the whole school are sent out to all parents and in addition, some specific communications regarding trips and events are sent out to the relevant groups and parents. It is our aim to have 100% of parents signed up to Arbor to facilitate paperless communication.

Absence reporting

If a child is absent from school and we have no indication of the reason, administrative staff will contact a parent via Arbor, phone or email on the same day to find out the reason for the absence. This is logged on Arbor and in addition on CPOMS if considered necessary.

Meeting with parents

We ask that parents follow the processes outlined above to arrange a meeting with a member of staff. Parents should not come to the school to talk to a member of staff without an appointment. Staff members may be unavailable to meet should this happen.

Parents (like all visitors) should report to Reception prior to meeting with a member of staff. If the meeting is due to take place outside office hours, separate arrangements can be made.

When meetings with parents take place outside normal school hours, the member of staff will ensure that another colleague is nearby and aware that they are in a meeting. They may ask another member of staff to join the meeting.

With the exception of scheduled Parent Consultations, meetings will take place between the core working hours of 8am – 5pm only.

The key discussion points, actions and decisions will be recorded.

When a child is accompanying a parent for a meeting, the staff member may ask the child to remain out of the meeting or a part of the meeting, particularly when a parent is discussing a teacher or any aspect of the school.

Planned meetings

At the beginning of the school year, class meetings are arranged for family members to attend where the new class curriculum, routines and additional information will be shared. Should a class teacher change during the year, these meetings will be revisited where possible.

Meetings are held prior to any residential trip to inform parents of planning, content and arrangements.

Meetings for new Reception parents are held in the Summer Term each year.

Staff should call any meeting to a close in the event of a parent becoming angry or abusive. The member of staff should report such an incident to a member of the Leadership Team and seek further advice. The Headteacher will be responsible for deciding on the follow up and the process for future meetings.

Social Networking Sites

Some members of our staff are members of the village community or have connections with members of our parent body that are separate to their role in school. Staff will never communicate with parents via social networking sites about matters linked to school. All communication about school is via the processes outlined in this policy. Members of staff will never accept children as their “friends” on social media. Where members of staff are approached on social media and asked to be “friends” or to “follow” them by parents and the only connection is school, the member of staff will decline.

Written reports/Parent Consultations

Once a year, a full written report is sent to parents on their child’s progress and attainment. The report identifies areas of strength and areas for further development.

Children are also given the opportunity to comment on their own progress and parents are invited to make a comment.

In addition, parents have the opportunity to meet their child’s teacher twice a year at parents’ evenings. These dates are published in advance and we ask parents to make every attempt possible to attend. In only the most exceptional circumstances will a meeting be offered at an alternative time.

When children have special educational needs, or where there are concerns regarding behaviour or progress, we may arrange to meet with parents more regularly.

School Website

The school website (www.pirton.herts.sch.uk) provides information about the school and an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience and provide guidance on admissions for prospective parents and children. It also has a regularly updated area for information for current parents including blogs. In addition, it has up-to-date policies, all newsletters, letters sent home to parents and information guides such as phonics information. Key dates for the year are shared via the calendar on the website and regularly linked in newsletters.

Communication with other school and outside agencies

Before joining our school, new children are encouraged to visit the school. We offer taster days/sessions. Following parental permission, we will contact the previous school to help gather key information to aid this process. We will receive the individual child’s file from the previous school once that child is on roll.