

Jesus said “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

Matthew 13:31-32

Tewin Cowper C of E Primary School



Believe Grow Succeed

Communication Policy

Version 1

Reviewed by Headteacher: Autumn 2025

Approved by FGB: Autumn 2025

Next Review Date: Autumn 2027

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1. Introduction

Positive communication is an essential element of the aims and vision of Tewin Cowper CofE VA Primary School. This enables our children and families to feel valued and listened to. The majority of this communication takes place through the frequent verbal interactions between families and staff as children are brought to and collected from school as well as by email, telephone and other electronic communication.

2. Aim

To ensure that Tewin Cowper is a thriving and successful school, we must communicate effectively and respectfully with each other, with our children, with their families and with other members of the wider community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are open, honest, respectful, ethical and professional.

3. Contact Details

The school holds emergency contact details for all children on Arbor. Families are expected to inform the school immediately if contact information needs to be revised/updated. Depending on the nature of the information being shared, the school will use the most practicable means to contact families.

Communications with Families

Hereafter the term 'families' will be used to refer to all those individuals who have a role in the up-bringing and care of the child.

Outside of teaching their designated class, all staff have additional duties which they perform either before school, during break/lunch or after school. These duties will include care of children, organisation of extra-curricular activities, continued professional development opportunities or whole-school coordination of a curriculum subject. Teaching staff will aim to return contact within 48-hours of the request being made via telephone and/or email. If a meeting is deemed necessary or appropriate, staff will aim to arrange this within 5 school days. If the school feels that more than one member of staff is needed to attend the requested meeting, school reserve the right to exceed this number of days. The following list, whilst not exhaustive, covers the main ways in which we will communicate with families. All response times are indicated in the following paragraphs, where extensions are needed the family will be updated with an expected response time.

Each morning, there are adults by the entrance gates that you can speak to. These adults are there to help bring children into school, take messages and listen to any concerns. The school office is manned from 8am until 4pm every day.

The school subscribes to Arbor, allowing us to send messages and email letters to families. Not only is this more environmentally friendly as it decreases paper usage, but it also reduces photocopying and other costs in the school. Families must provide us with a valid email address.

Families are permitted to use e-mail as a means of providing a quick, effective way of communicating information about their child or to arrange a meeting with their teacher. All emails will be received by the school office (admin@tewincowper.herts.sch.uk) and will be directed to the relevant member of staff accordingly. Staff reserve the right not to respond to emails that are sent directly to them from families. Families are reminded that teachers are teaching, and their priority is being with the children. They are actively discouraged from checking emails during the teaching sessions, therefore requests which require immediate or quick action should be communicated via the school office. We request that messages are only sent between 8am and 4.30pm.

All electronic communication requiring an answer should be responded to within 48 hours. Staff are not expected to, and are discouraged from, checking and responding to electronic communications outside of the hours stated. However, staff are encouraged to work flexibly and respond to this type of communication in a way that suits them to balance their working hours. Staff do not expect families to read, respond or action emails outside hours that suit them. Indirect communication does not replace face to face meetings where sensitive discussion is required. All staff and families should seek face to face communications when indirect communication is not appropriate. Staff and families are discouraged from entering into in-depth discussions about a child's progress or well-being by electronic communication.

4. Home/School Communication

The school uses Arbor to send message to families. This is not a reply service.

The school uses Tapestry to send home photographs, messages and reminders. In the Early Years it is also used as a direct method of communication on a one-to-one basis for families. This means that families in the early years can contact their child's class teacher directly. We ask all families to make comments on posts sent home so we can share these with the children and other staff. In years 1 -6, families should contact the teaching team through the school office.

Inbound Telephone Calls

All telephone calls will be answered by staff in the main office. It is our policy that office staff do not interrupt teaching for staff to answer a telephone call unless it is an emergency. Messages are taken and forwarded to the relevant person. If the call requires a response from a teaching member of staff, we aim to do this within 48 hours. Very often a member of the office staff can relay a response to the family.

Outbound Telephone Calls

Outbound calls will be made where immediate contact with a family member is required i.e. for illness or injuries. A member of staff will call the first named emergency contact as listed. Where no contact is made, a call will then be made to the second named contact and so forth. In the event that no live contact can be made, the member of staff will either leave an answer phone message or ensure that repeat calls continue to be made to the contact numbers where possible.

Written Reports

Each year, families receive a detailed written progress report that highlights their child's strengths and outlines the next steps in their learning. In addition, we provide shorter interim reports at the end of the autumn and spring terms to keep families informed about how their child is progressing and whether they are on track.

Newsletter

Our Newsletter is sent out monthly via an email link and contains information about what has happened and important upcoming reminders and dates. Families are strongly encouraged to read the monthly newsletter. In addition to the monthly newsletter, families will receive a weekly email from the teaching team. This will include what the children are working on within class and information about the following week.

Parent Consultations

All families are provided with two, 10-minute meetings each academic year. Families are asked to book a single appointment for an allocated date and time and to attend together. Should there be exceptional circumstances that mean you cannot attend, your child's class teacher will offer one further appointment to the family. Please note we offer one appointment per child. Families are welcome to request additional meetings should they have further concerns regarding their child's progress or well-being throughout the year.

Annual Reviews for Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan

All children with an Education, Health and Care Plan will have an Annual Review each academic year to discuss their progress in relation to the aims and objectives of their plan and termly review meetings are held to ensure provision and support is appropriate.

Individual Pupil Plans

Children on the Special Educational Needs Register have an updated Individual Pupil Plan (IPP) every term which is provided to families. Each plan offers practical advice to families on how they can work with school staff to support their child in achieving targets to assist the child's progress.

School Website

The school website www.tewincowper.herts.sch.uk provides an opportunity to share information about the school and is an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience.

5. Complaints

All formal letters of complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the school's separate Complaints Policy. Emails will NOT be treated as a formal letter of complaint. All formal letters to families must be approved by the Headteacher before they are sent. Formal correspondence with families will be kept in the child's personal folder and held for a period of time in accordance with

our Disposal of Records Schedule. The school does not accept or act upon anonymous communication unless in relation to matters of serious Child Protection.

Requests for Information

Please refer to our Data Protection and GDPR Policy for copies of children's records, freedom of information and Subject Access Requests (SARs). This will detail procedures and protocols, including timings.

6. Final Note

Although it is a rare occurrence, when communication becomes inappropriate, aggressive, vexatious, persistent, or disproportionate and the school deems it is unacceptable, then actions will be put in place. This behaviour will not be tolerated and may result in a parent/carer being banned from the premises. These actions will involve: The headteacher, senior management and the school Chair of Governors, and if appropriate, the police. As stated in paragraph 2 'communications should be honest, respectful, ethical and professional', staff will strive to adhere to this and hope this will be reciprocated by the wider school community.