



Woodland View Communication Protocol

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

1.0 We recognise that the relationship which exists between our school and the whole school community is a partnership, and that all good partnerships thrive on excellent effective communication. This policy therefore seeks to define the means by which we are able to maintain effective communications between all stakeholders within our school community in addition to providing an overview of what parents/carers can expect of the school and, in turn, what the school will expect of parents/carers.

This protocol embodies the current national priorities around developing increased opportunity for parental involvement and engagement and recognises the importance of including parents/carers in meaningful dialogue relating to a child and young person's learning. Within all avenues of communication, we expect all members of our school community ensure the tone of communications remain polite, non-confrontational and solution focussed. We seek to develop confidence and trust between parents/carers, children, young people, and staff and recognise the importance that the views of all are listened to so that together we can build the best possible experience for our full school community.

This protocol should be read in line with other key East Dunbartonshire Council policies and protocol related to schools and education, as well as those related to employee welfare.

PARENTAL COMMUNICATION WITH THE SCHOOL

2.0 Enquiries - Parents/carers are welcome to raise matters with the school by visiting reception, by telephone or by letter/email. In many cases, including where a message must be passed to a pupil or a member of staff, such enquiries will be dealt with directly by our school office. Where another member of staff is required to respond, the following will apply:

Non-urgent enquiries – In such cases, please feel free to contact us by telephone, letter, or email. Upon receipt of your message our office staff will forward it to the relevant member(s) of our team. As a school, to facilitate effective communication, we aim to acknowledge and respond to non-urgent enquiries within five working days. In many cases, however – particularly where there is a time factor – responses will be quicker. There may however also be occasions where it is not possible to respond within this timeframe. In these situations, we will acknowledge your enquiry within five working days and respond in line with the Council's Customer Service Standards which state that general correspondence (letters, emails, and enquiries) will be responded to within 15 working days.

Matters requiring an immediate response – Where a matter is of such urgency that it requires an immediate response, it will be passed to the most appropriate member of staff who will

usually be a member of the school's Senior Leadership Team. Where possible, the member of staff will respond to such enquiries at the time of contact however, where this is not possible, you will be contacted as a matter of urgency within 24 hours.

Enquiries by email – All parent enquiries by email should be directed to the school's generic account: office@woodlandview.e-dunbarton.sch.uk. This will allow enquiries to be forwarded to the appropriate member of staff, with line managers copied in as appropriate. Parents/carers are advised on the website of broad remit areas within the school in order that they can mark their email for the attention of that person.

Letters to the School – Parents/carers are welcome to send letters to communicate relevant information (such as: reasons for absence, appointment times, etc.) to appropriate members of staff within the school. All letters of this nature should be handed in to the school office to ensure effective handling of the information/your enquiry. Should you wish to communicate information of a more confidential or personal nature, letters should be addressed to the Head Teacher and marked as 'confidential'.

School Holidays – Any communication received by the school during times of school closure or school holiday will be acknowledged and responded to upon the school reopening. Where communication has been received during a holiday period the timescales for acknowledging and responding to that communication will begin upon the reopening of the school.

Social Media – In today's modern world many children, young people, and adults engage in online activities enjoying the convenience offered when communicating via social media. We know that engaging in social media can be an area of challenge for many of our learners and are able to support parents in accessing information around appropriate use for children and young people. We encourage our school community to participate positively when using any form of social media. Parents/Carers should not use social media - either public or private messaging - to contact members of staff or raise an enquiry. Communicating with staff in this way breaches guidance issued to teachers by the General Teaching Council for Scotland.

Parental Complaints - Should a parent/carers wish to make a formal complaint about any aspect of the school, this should be addressed to the Head Teacher. The school follows the East Dunbartonshire Council Complaints Procedure. Such complaints can be made by email, letter, telephone or in person. Please contact the school office for further information.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN GOOD HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

3.0 Communication between school and home is most effective when all parties are clear of the expectation upon them. On occasion, our school nurses, youth worker, educational psychologists or inclusion officers can support effective communication and working between school and home specifically in managing issues relating to e.g., attendance, relationships and other aspects which impact on a young person's learning. The following are keyways in which parents/carers can support the work of the school in terms of communication:

Pupil Absence - The school's over-riding obligation is to ensure the safety of the children and young people entrusted to it. Therefore it is of the highest importance that reasons for any pupil absences are established as a priority each morning. It is essential that parents notify the school at their earliest possible opportunity where circumstances are likely to result in their child being absent from school. Office staff are available to take these calls from 8am each morning.

Where no such notification has been received, parents will be contacted asking for such information. Parents are requested to respond to such messages as a matter of urgency, as the school will continue to pursue absences until such time as it has established a reason for an absence. It is also very important that parents provide the school with absence notes, when appropriate, following medical absences. If contact with a parent or carer is not possible then this may be raised as a concern with the Home Link Officer for the local authority, or the police if a welfare check is thought necessary.

Information Returns - Throughout the session parents will be asked to make returns to the school by a stated deadline. These could be for a number of reasons, such as information data updates, confirmation of attendance of a pupil on a school trip or activity, feedback on reports etc. Please note that it considerably eases the administrative burden to the school when parents are able to observe the deadlines provided and we appreciate your help and cooperation in this regard. If permission slips etc are not received, children and young people will not be able to attend the trips to which they relate.

Updating the School on Personal Matters - All our pupils can be affected by things going on at home or in their personal lives and these in turn can have an impact on their learning. It is very helpful for the school to be made aware of anything that a young person may be experiencing away from school that could be having an impact on how they are feeling in school. This could be something such as a family bereavement or friendship difficulties. In such circumstances this information can be passed to the Class Teacher / Principal Teacher / Core Teacher through an email to the office, or a phone call.

Updating the School in the Event of Change of Contact Details - It is very important that the school has current contact details for parents/carers and other relatives. Parents/carers are requested to notify the school of such changes, both to their own contact details and those of relatives. This can be a particular problem for the school when it comes to mobile phone numbers. Changes to contact details should be communicated to the school office.

Use of Social Media - Consideration should be given regarding the nature of comments made about the school or members of staff on social media platforms. We respectfully ask that social media, whether public or private, is not used to voice complaints about the school, staff, parents/carers or pupils or identify/post images/video/comments regarding staff and/or children or young people. When used in this way social media has the potential to cause offence and discredit members of our school community. This can be damaging for both the individuals concerned and our school's reputation within the community.

Where a parent/carers has a concern or complaint this should be raised with the school directly in order that they can be effectively addressed in a timely manner through the appropriate channels. Complaints should be raised with the school directly in order for any concerns to be effectively addressed in a timely manner through the appropriate channels as stated above. If the school or East Dunbartonshire Council are included (tagged) in any social media comments relating to parent/carers concerns, this will be passed to the Head Teacher to address directly through the appropriate channels as per our complaints procedure

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND PARENTS/CARERS

4.0 The School Handbook - A school handbook is made available to all parents/carers through the school website and is updated annually. This handbook meets the requirements of the Education (School and Placing Information) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 and its purposes include:

- providing a welcome for new parents/carers to the school.
- helping parents/carers to choose a school; and
- helping parents/carers to prepare their child for school.

The handbook should serve as a practical guide to parents/carers about school, authority, and national policies and how these will impact on their child's experience at the school. It should also give them a good 'feel' for the sort of school that we are. The school handbook is also available in hard copy upon request.

Standards and Qualities Report - The school is required under the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc (Scotland) Act (2000) to publish an annual report including key performance measures such as those relating to attainment and attendance. This report is published on the school website in September.

General Communications to all Parents/Carers - Our school uses a variety of methods to communicate with parents/carers on matters which are of interest to them. These include:

Groupcall – this facility allows the school to send short text and email messages to parents/carers. Text messages are usually used only for matters that require to be drawn to parents' attention urgently such as unexplained absences, school bus or club cancellations or severe weather closures. Email is our preferred means of communication and we hold parental email addresses for almost all children and young people. Where an individual is unable to receive email communication from the school, we will provide paper copies. The school office and headteacher should be made aware of anyone for whom this is applicable.

The School Website – the school website is a very useful resource for parents/carers. As well as providing news updates, the website is the place where parents/carers are most likely to find information they need about the school. This includes the school's calendar of events, the school handbook and other key documents. The school website also provides clear details for parents/carers on how they can contact the school.

BSquared, Evisense & Social Media – these electronic tools are particularly useful for providing updates on pupils' achievements both within the school and in relation to extra-curricular activities and wider achievement.

Communication regarding the curriculum/learning and teaching - There are two parents evenings, a minimum of one review, curriculum updates and an annual report issued each year. Staff may be available for brief, informal discussion at the end of the school day for matters which have arisen but this is dependent upon the planning and preparation which will be happening for the next day of learning. Formal appointments can also be arranged if more in depth discussion is required. Parents/carers are also provided with a curriculum overview at the beginning of each session. There are events where parents and carers are invited into the school to discuss aspects of learning or

support which can be offered. These include the post school showcase, information sharing on guardianship, 'preparing for Christmas' etc. Should parents/carers wish to discuss their child's/young person's progress, contact should be made in the first instance with the office who would pass to the relevant principal teacher.

SEEKING PARENTS'/CARER'S VIEWS

7.0 The Parent Council - The Parent Council, which meets termly and is attended by the Head Teacher, is a key vehicle for parents/carers to share their views with the school leadership. These meetings are also used by the school leadership to provide parents/carers with updates on a wide range of issues, from small changes to procedures to very significant government policy changes. The school is committed to harnessing the potential of the Parent Council as a key forum for interaction with parents/carers and will always seek to support initiatives raised through this body.

Parental Involvement in School Self-Evaluation and Annual Planning - The school is also keen to involve parents/carers, as well as other stakeholders, in its annual processes of self-evaluation and planning. Parents' representatives are invited to take part in the annual strategic planning session, which takes place towards the end of each academic session.

Consultation on Proposed Change - The school is committed to consulting parents/carers wherever possible, particularly in cases where significant changes in policy or procedures are under consideration. As well as pupils, parents/carers are key stakeholders within the school community and their views are valued and will be taken into consideration in the making of decisions.

On-going Evaluation of Events - The school is also committed to seeking regular feedback from parents/carers on activities and we may issue evaluation forms to seek parents' views on how events might be improved at appropriate times of the session.

Annual Parental Survey - In addition to these methods of seeking parental views, the school may also conduct a formal parental survey, covering a wide range of the school's functions, towards the end of an academic session. These questions largely remain the same each year which allows the school to note trends – either positive or negative – in terms of parental responses. A summary of this survey is shared annually with the Parent Council and, where appropriate, their views on next steps sought.

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT

8.0 Should you wish to discuss any aspect of your child's experience at Woodland View School please contact the relevant member of staff. An up-to-date list of staff names can be found on the school website. We have summarised some common reasons parents/carers need to contact us below and have indicated who the most relevant contact would be in each case.

Nature of enquiry	Main contact
General e.g. attendance/absence, medical, early collection, transport, extra-curricular activities	Office staff

Class related e.g. progress, homework, reporting, relationships/behaviour	Class teacher via office <u>Principal Teacher</u> Nursery & Primary – Claire Beattie & Stewart McRae BGE – Lucy Roy & Jenny Kenny Senior Phase – Kariann Steele
Additional Support Needs, Child Protection concerns	Depute Head Teachers Nursery – P6 – Louise Lauder P7-S3 – Thomas Leahy S4-S6 – Lynsey O'Donnell
Special family circumstances, formal complaints	Head Teacher Kay Hunter

Should you have any concern that remains unresolved, please do not hesitate to contact the Head Teacher.

Please note that we are committed to providing an excellent level of service. You will be treated with courtesy and respect by our staff. Please treat our staff with respect in return.

East Dunbartonshire Council has a zero-tolerance approach to violence and aggression towards its staff. Unacceptable behaviour is not always aggressive or verbally abusive, but can also be defined, for example, by unreasonable persistence, online abuse, constant contact, or refusal to accept explanations or decisions.

SCHOOL CONTACT DETAILS

Woodland View School
Bankhead Road
Kirkintilloch
G66 3FU

Tel: 0141 9552338

Email: office@woodlandview.e-dunbarton.sch.uk

Twitter: @woodlandview_ed

Website: www.woodlandview.e-dunbarton.sch.uk