Pupils That Matter

Communications Policy 2025-2026

Pear Tree Mead Academy

Part of the Passmores Co-operative Learning Community

Communications Policy

1 Introduction

1.1 Schools have many lines of communication to maintain: with parents and carers, with other schools, with the community, with outside agencies, and within the school. Good communication between the school and the home is essential, and children achieve more when schools and parents work together. Parents can naturally help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve.

1.2 In our 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 well informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents play in supporting the school and their children's education.

1.3 We have various strategies for communicating with parents. Some of our communications are in accordance with a statutory requirement; while others simply reflect what we believe is important for our school.

1.4 We try to make our written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We use an easy-to-read font and add pictures wherever appropriate. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of racial discrimination. We wish to recognise and celebrate the contributions made to our society by all the cultural groups represented in our school. We make emailed electronic versions of documents available through Arbor emails. Parents have access to the Arbor App and the website to support communications and email to the school.   Copies of all letters can be requested from the main office as well.

2 Home-school agreement.

2.1   Our home-school agreement has been in place for many years. It is a requirement of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. It explains the school's aims and values, the school's responsibilities towards the children, the responsibilities of parents, and what the school expects of the children. We ask parents (and children) if necessary, to sign this agreement when their child starts at our school. A copy of this can be found on our website.

2.2   The agreement covers the standard of education in our school, the ethos of the school, and our expectations regarding attendance, behaviour, and homework. Our governors review the agreement annually.

3 Annual written report to parents: children's achievements

3.1 Every year we provide a written report to each child's parents on the child's progress in the various National Curriculum subjects. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development. It reports how children are performing against national expectations. Reports also contain an attendance summary.

3.2 Our annual written report goes to parents of children in years 1 to 6 parents in the Spring term and this has a parent consultation appointment with it so that the report can be discussed. The EYFS parents get a written report at the end of the year in line with government guidance.

3.3 At the end of the year all children are given their end of year results and an attendance summary. Teachers are asked to report their 'Teacher Assessed Levels of Attainment' in Reading Writing & Maths, and we also give children the details of their performance national tests / standards , and details of national comparisons, where available.

3.4 As well as receiving the annual written report, parents are provided with the opportunity to meet their child's teacher twice a year for a private parent-teacher consultation. This gives them the opportunity to celebrate their child's successes, and to support their child in areas where there is a particular need for improvement. Parents are also given current assessment level and targets for the end of the year. We encourage parents to contact the school if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being at any time throughout the academic year.

3.5 We hold an annual open event for parents to attend. Parents are able to see their child's work (with their child) during this event. We hold a year group talk where teachers let parents know about the expectations of moving up a year group.   Parents can meet their child's new teacher and ask any questions they wish to in an informal setting.

3.6 When children have special educational needs, or if they are making less than the expected progress, we find it helpful to meet with parents more regularly. A child, whose progress is causing concern, or a child who has identified Special Educational Needs (SEN) will be reviewed and supported in line with the 'Code of Practice' and within school policy, protocol and procedures. Parents/carers will be kept informed of all monitoring outcomes and educational provision made. (Ref. SEN Policy). Individual learning plans are reviewed termly with parents through one plan meetings. Parents have secure access to these plans through our online platform. Parents can communicate with school via this platform.

3.7 We welcome the presence of any other adult the parent wishes to invite to a school meeting such as an interpreter, support or liaison e.g., Parent Support Services. We will also make any reasonable adjustments to our arrangements if this will enable a parent with a disability to participate fully in a meeting at our school, or to receive and understand communication.

3.8 In the early years we use an online learning journal system called Tapestry. Parents are asked to provide an email address and sign a Tapestry agreement. Parents are able to regularly view their child's observations and photographs. Parents can make comments in Tapestry and support judgements by reporting on home achievements.

4 School Prospectus

4.1 The school prospectus contains a range of specified information to give parents a full picture of provision at our school and outlines some of the main points in our school policies.

5 Public access documents

5.1 The school makes a range of documentation available to parents. We keep a main set in the school office, and we make a copy of this available on request. It contains minutes of governors' meetings, and all school policies, including those that the governing body are required to draw up in relation to the following matters: Charging and Remissions, Sex Education, Health and Safety, Curriculum Policies, Performance Management, Admissions, and Action Planning following an inspection. It also contains a range of national and Local Authority documentation. Many policies are

now available on the website for parent access. Some trust policies can be found on the trust website.

6 Home-school communication.

6.1 We are a paperless school and therefore endeavour to communicate electronically or virtually rather than provide a hard copy of information where possible.

- We send a newsletter to parents (electronic) every half term. It contains general details of school events and activities.   This can be found on the school website and through Arbor emails and the app. Paper copies can be requested from the school office if required. Parents expect the newsletter and appreciate the regularity of the contact.
- We send other letters of a general nature when necessary, such as:
    - SEN Progress Meetings o Letters re. out-of-school visits – payments, confirmation and approval o Invitations to SEN Meetings, School Performances, Sporting Events…
    - Letters regarding curriculum enrichment activities – music, sport, Modern Foreign
    Languages etc o Information about assemblies. These will all be emailed
  and will be sent out
    Parentmail. They can be found on the school website and in the main office.

6.2   At the beginning of each half term all teachers write to the parents of the children in their classes with details of the work to be covered during the forthcoming half term via the curriculum newsletters. We invite parents to support their child's work through discussion and shared interest. We also invite parents to take part in any educational visit that is linked to the work, recognising their valuable contribution to our curriculum enrichment activities. Key dates and class reminders can also be found here.

6.3   Children have homework set half termly and are completed weekly. Class email addresses can be used to send in evidence to the teacher.

6.4   The school encourages parents and carers to share any issues about their child at the earliest opportunity. Teachers see parents immediately, if at all possible. Where this is not possible, the parent makes an appointment. We provide the opportunity for many parents to have a word with the teacher when they bring their children to school, or when they collect them after school; we find that this 'immediacy' and 'availability' enhances the home/school communication.

6.5   There are some legal communications that we must have with parents in written form. These include letters about exclusions, unauthorised attendance, SARs etc.

6.7   We hold a meeting for Year 6 parents each January, or communicate by letter, regarding the national statutory tests.

6.8   If a child is absent from school, and we have had no indication of the reason, we contact a parent to find out the reason for the absence. (ref. Attendance Policy) Home visits may take place if needed.

6.9 Letters are sent to parents in response to a child not following the school's uniform guidelines. Eg not wearing the correct PE kits, wearing nail varish or not having the correct school shoes.

6.10 Consultation and Communication Questionnaires will be issued each year. These may take the form of an online electronic response, or a hard copy form.

6.11 Our "Friends of Pear Tree Mead" team have a Facebook page to communicate about friends of events. All posts must be approved by admin. Not all posts will be approved if they are deemed unsuitable or will spark argument or negative feelings about the school or any school stakeholder. Some parents ask school related questions on this site. These will not be answered by staff. Some parents may answer the question although they may not always have the correct answer. The site is not monitored by school staff. Non-related FOPTM questions will be deleted after they have been answered or after 24 hours.

6.12 The school promotes a paperless communication with parents. Parents can receive communication by email, Arbor and the website. If parents choose not to provide the school with their email address or download the app it is their responsibility to check the website or school office for letters. If parents cannot access emails or the app then the school will provide them with paper copies. They must speak to the school to arrange this.

6.13 Some children need an individual home communication book. These should be completed daily by the designated person and signed by parents and staff when communication is recorded.

6.14 Parents are expected to record reading in their child's reading record. Staff should read and sign these weekly. Staff should act upon any messages from parents in these.

6.15 Parents in the EYFS have wow leaves to complete. These are to celebrate achievements at home. These are displayed in the classrooms.

6.16 Children receive rewards for their achievements. Certificates are sent home for achievements in class. Children can work towards achieving Headteacher's Awards. If children receive 5 of these there will be communication home. There is a special prize for getting 10.

6.17 Children who demonstrated above and beyond behaviour during the week or have been demonstrating our expectations, Be ready, Be Kind, Be safe will be sent home with a positive note. When a child receives 3 positive notes, they can choose a member of staff to make a positive phone call home. The pupil will be invited to a hot chocolate event with the Headteacher when they have reached 6 notes.

6.18 We have a thank you box in the front office for all stakeholders to thank each other. Parents, staff and pupils can thank each other for any kind acts.

6.19 We have a communication flow chart at school which shows our Family Support Team and our Senior Leadership Support Team. This helps parents to know who to talk to and in which order if they have a question or concern about getting support.

6.20 We also have a Management Structure Flow Chart which shows parents who to communicate with if they have other concerns. It shows the order in which parents should follow. Advice can be sort regarding this via our school office.

6.21 We have leaflets at school which explain our complaints policy and the process which parents must follow if they wish to complain to the school.

6.22 Key dates for the whole year are sent out to parents at the beginning of the year. The school calendar is on the website and is updated with the school events. The Arbor app has an events section on each day of the daily calendar with parents events that they are invited to or their child is involved in.

6.23 Parents can contact the school via phone, email or replying to parentmail forms.

For general enquiries please email info@peartreemead.com kate.townsend@peartreemead.com school office and they will pass you to Mrs Robinson. info@peartreemead.com and she will pass your email on to them.

Phone lines are open between 8.30am and 3.30pm . Absences can be reported via the absence line answerphone or by Arbor.

7 Communication with other schools and outside agencies

7.1 Toward the end of their final term in Year 6, we pass on information about the children to their intended secondary schools. We try to give a view of the whole child, and we include their expected national test results, their strengths and weaknesses, any behaviour, attendance or child protection concerns, their interests and responsibilities (e.g. library monitor, sports team captain, school council representative, playleaders, mentors etc). There is also an electronic transfer of further information about the child, organised by the government. We may also send on several items of work. We also arrange visits for named children to attend 'welcome sessions' in addition to those arranged for Y6 as a whole. All pupil's files are sent to their new school following government guidance.

7.2 This information above is also shared if pupils leave our school to move to another school.

7.3 We recognise that children have diverse needs, and we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed on 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 child development centres, from local and LA doctors and specialists, and from school nurses. It also comes from various welfare-focused services, such as Education Welfare, Social Services and Behaviour Intervention units. We will gather parent consent for this if needed.

7.4 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. We are the people most in contact with our children, and we are therefore in a unique position to identify and help abused children. So when any member of staff has concerns about a child, these will be passed on to the safeguarding lead person, who may share this information with the Social Services.(ref. Child Protection Policy) We do not always need parent consent to do this.

7.5 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. Details have been sent to parents about the types of data we hold, why we hold that data, and who we may pass it on to. This is a requirement under the Data Protection Act 1998 and GDPR (May 2018)   Parents have a right to view the information we hold, and we have contact details of the agencies to which our information is passed.

7.6 All communication with external companies must be kept confidential and if includes personal data emails must be password protected.

8 Communication within our school

8.1 So that all staff know what is going on daily, the school staffroom has a noticeboard for messages. All staff have access to read and write messages.

A " WEEK TO VIEW" board shows the events and activities and staff absences displayed in the staff room.

8.2 A 'Week To View' is sent to staff in the Thursday email from the Head teacher. All day to day information are shared and deadlines and assemblies reminded on this email communication too. Future reminders are shared too.

8.3 Staff and parents are issued with 'Key Dates for the Diary ' for the year and 'Term Dates' at the beginning of the academic year, and at the beginning of each term.   These are always subject to change. Termly overview shows staff all key dates, deadlines and events. Dates are put in the half termly newsletter and curriculum letters to parents

8.4 The school and the SLT all use google calendar to keep track of their activities and meetings. All other staff are issued with a paper diary at the beginning of each academic year. The calender on the website is updated regularly.

8.5 Staff receive timetables at the beginning of each term, or when significant alterations have been made, for:

> o Staff Meeting agendas o Key Stage Meeting agendas
> o Collective Worship rota (i/c themes/content) o
> meetings minute takers o Playground Duty rota o Hall
> use ,shared areas, IT use, Use of Library/Studio o
> Display rota

8.6 Written communications are delivered through Arbor, pigeonholes or by email.

8.7 Supply teachers are provided with a 'Supply Teachers Handbook'. This contains information about the school organisation, management and expectations. Supply Teachers are expected to complete a 'daily report form' for the class teacher (ref. Supply Teacher Handbook)

8.8 Work Placement Students and Initial Teacher Training / Graduate Teacher Training Students are issued with 'Work Placement guidance' which they collect as part of their 'Work Placement' Interview' scheduled at least a week before placement with the Work Placement Coordinator.

8.9 Staff members' personal details will not be shared with other members of staff, unless permission has been sought and granted

8.10 Handouts/Information/Guidance relating to SEND is to be kept in an agreed SEND File. These must be kept in classrooms securely

8.11 Policies are reviewed in accordance with the 'Policy Review Schedule' (or earlier if required).

8.12 Course feedback is provided by those attending training at the next scheduled Staff Meeting if relevant.

8.13 Lesson Objectives/Lesson Outcomes: The use of Learning Objectives –and Success Criteria supports communication of teaching intentions and expected learning outcomes with the pupils – ref. Teaching and Learning Policy

8.14 Minutes are kept for many school meetings, and unless agreed as being 'confidential', are open to all:

- Staff Meetings
- Key Stage Meetings
- Curriculum Group Meetings
- Senior Management Team Meetings
- Governor Meetings and sub-committee meetings
- LSA meetings,
- MDA meetings and
- FST meetings.   (recorded on CPOMS)

8.15   Outcomes of Monitoring and Evaluation: All feedback from lesson observations will be made within 24 hours to the named observer, and general outcomes will be reported to staff and governors as a pre-determined/agreed date. (re. Monitoring and Evaluation Policy)

8.16 All face to face or phone meetings with parents will be recorded on a CPOMS. These will be shared with SLT and any necessary staff. Information should be shared in a timely manner and time stamped.

8.17 All behaviour incidents will be recorded on CPOMS. This will be shared with SLT and class teachers. Information should be shared in a timely manner and time stamped.

8.18 All safeguarding concerns should be recorded on CPOMS. These should be passed on personally to the safeguarding lead and on CPOMS as timely as possible and time stamped.

8.19 All pupils have an individual record file which is kept centrally and in a locked cupboard. All information that is held about a child is held on CPOMS, edukey (send), insite (data) and the MIS system.

8.20 All staff have a drawer either in the staff room or outside the Headteacher's office. These should be used for any paper communication that is needed. Please use these to help support our clear desk policy.

8.21 Communication with SLT - Each persons drawer should be used to place any papers needed. If the information is of an urgent matter please speak to the person face to face. If a part time member of staff is not at work please speak to someone from the Family Support Team who deals with that concern.

8.22 If parents request to speak to members of staff please support them through following the Communication flow chart or the School Management flow chart. So that they speak to the correct person who can help them and so they have followed the procedure correctly.

8.23 The Family Support Team meet regularly with the Senior Management Support Team to discuss their concerns and actions with children. During these meetings file notes will be put on to CPOMS.

8.24 The Senior Management Support Team meet regularly to discuss children and any concerns or actions. During this meeting they put on to CPOMS.

8.25 All staff have a learning log that they are expected to record self reflections, meeting notes, course notes and any other general information. These should not hold personal data in them. Any assessment book or book with pupils data in should be kept locked away at all times when not in use.

8.26 Governor meetings are held termly , communication is continuous and mainly via Governor Hub or email.

This can include circulation of information, updates and meeting documents (agenda and minutes). Policies are also shared via this method. All information is held on Governor Hub.

The chair and vice chair have regular face to face meetings with the Head Teacher, so that any issues can be addressed in between meetings.

Complaints may also be communicated to the Governors if they have been sent via email.

Email expectation for governor to governor email and best practice on responding in a timely manner is set out below

9 Electronic communication

9.1 We use e-mails to communicate (name@peartreemead.com). There are many benefits, but also a number of possible dangers. Rules for the use of the Internet are contained in our 'Internet Policy'. (Safeguards in our school include constant adult supervision, sites being filtered by our service provider, controlled links, and the use of child-friendly search engines.)

9.2 Our school website. (www.peartreemead.essex.sch.uk) provides information about the school, and an opportunity to celebrate the 'life of our school' with the worldwide learning community. It also holds all of the Government key documents that legally have to be on the school website. This is regularly checked by staff and Governors.

9.3 Parents are required to sign a use of internet slip for their child to use the Internet in school. This is not consent. This is the expectations of using the internet at school. The school feels that a child would not receive an appropriate education without using the internet.

9.4 The school has Arbor which they communicate to parents through, this is either via email or through the app.

9.5 Staff email each other all the time. During the school day the expectation is that emails should be replied to in a timely and in appropriate fashion within 24 hours. Emails will be sent in the evening, weekends and in the holidays. The expectation is that staff do not need to reply to these until they are next at work. If anyone needs an urgent response, they should text the member of staff. Although they do not need to reply (as officially they are not at work) it may be helpful if they were able to. Emails can be sent with a timer to reduce the amount of out of hours being received.

9.6 Governors will sometimes email members of the teaching staff when carrying out monitoring duties. Due to the voluntary nature of their role and their work and personal commitments. These emails may be sent outside of " school" working hours or maybe in school holidays. The expectation is that staff do not need to reply to these until they are next at work. Timed emails should be used where possible.

9.7 There is a private staff Facebook page which is used to social events and some school reminders. This is not an official school communication as not all staff are members. No school information will only be posted on the page.

9.8 Staff should not communicate with pupils (current or past) or parents via any technology. Please see the social networking contact. If staff have friends as parents, they should not communicate about school related matters. Staff should not access the social media sites of pupils. Staff should be cautious when accepting friend requests from people that they do not know.

9.9 Staff should not be using their mobile phones in school apart from during their breaks in designated rooms. (Unless agreed by the Headteacher). Use of iPhone watches (or similar) are as a communication method also prohibited within school (staff and pupils). All phones that have school emails on should be passcode. Emails must not be forwarded to non-school email accounts.

9.10 When staff are sending emails about pupils, they must remember that these could form part of a subject access request from parents. All emails sent could be required to be printed and put in a pupils file. Staff may be asked to search for emails if a SAR is requested at any point.

9.11 When sending emails staff should follow the guidance set out in the table below.

9.12 All Classes have a class email address. These are only for work to be communicated during class closures, or for parents to send in homework evidence. Staff do not reply to other emails. There is a bounce back that states this.

Email Good Practice Guide

Good Practice

Read receipt	When it is important to know that a recipient has opened a message, it is recommended that the sender invoke the 'read receipt' option.
Attachment formats	When attaching a file, it will have a specific format. Be aware of the possibility that a recipient may not have the software necessary to read the attachment. Format incompatibility can occur even between successive versions of the same software, e.g., different version of Microsoft Word.
E-mail address groups	If messages are regularly sent to the same group of people, the addressing process can be speeded up by the creation of a personal group in the personal address book.
Message header, or	Convey as much information as possible within the size limitation. This will help those who get a lot of e-mails to decide which are most important, or to spot one they are

subject	waiting for.
Subject	Avoid sending messages dealing with more than one subject. These are difficult to give a meaningful subject heading to, difficult for the recipient to forward on to others for action, and difficult to archive.
Recipients	Beware of sending messages to too many recipients at once. When sending messages for more than one-person's use be sure to indicate people for whom there is some expectation of action or who have central interest. cc to indicate those who have peripheral interest and who are not expected to take action or respond unless they wish to do so.
Replying	When replying to a message sent to more than one person, do not routinely reply to all recipients of the original message. Consider who needs to read your reply, e.g., if the sender is organising a meeting and asking you for availability dates, you need only reply to the sender.
Absent	If you have your own e-mail address, it is possible, for users of MS Exchange or have local enhancements to MS-mail, to set the 'out of office' message when you are going to be away for some time, e.g., on annual leave. You won't lose your messages, they will await your return, but the sender will know that you're not there and can take alternative action if necessary.
Evidential record	Never forget that electronic conversations can produce an evidential record which is absent in a telephone conversation. Comments made by an employee during the course of an exchange of e-mails could be used in support, or in defence, of the school's legal position in the event of a dispute.
Legal records	Computer generated information can now be used in evidence in the courts. Conversations conducted over the e-mail can result in legally binding contracts being put into place.

Distribution lists	Keep personal distribution lists up-to-date and ensure you remove individuals from lists that no longer apply to them
E-Mail threads	Include the previous message when making a reply. This is called a thread. Threads are a series of responses to an original message. It is best that a response to a message is continued by using reply accessed on the quick menu bar, rather than start an entirely new message for a response. Keep the thread information together. It is easier for the participants to follow the chain of information already exchanged. If the message gets too long the previous parts can be edited while still leaving the essence of the message.
Context	E-mail in the right context, care should be taken to use e-mail where appropriate. There may be occasions when a telephone call would be more appropriate especially on delicate matters. Beware of the use of excessive use of capitals. It can be interpreted as shouting so consider how the style of your email may be interpreted by its recipient.
Forwarding e-mails	Consideration should be given when forwarding e-mails that it may contain information that you should consult with the originator before passing to someone else.
Large e-mails	For larger e-mails, particularly Internet e-mails, where possible send at the end of the
	day as they may cause queues to form and slow other people's e-mail.

10 Use of photographs and names

Ref. Code of Practice No.22: 'Images of Children and Young People' (See photography policy for more information)

10.1 Photographs are used in and around the school for many purposes, including displays of pupils work and achievements, and records of important school events.

10.2 We may use photographs of children or their work when communicating with parents and the wider community, in newsletters, in the school prospectus, on the school website, or in the governors' report to parents. The local or national press may on occasion publish photographs of children participating in events at school. Consent is gathered for their purpose.

10.3 Parental permission must be obtained before using photographs of children of their work as detailed in 10.2 above. Parents will want to know the policy to be used. Lists of those children for whom permission has NOT been given will be held by each class teacher, and by the school office. Children are stickered if they do not have permission so that it is obvious at whole school events if photographs are being taken.

10.4 Photographs will be checked to ensure that they are suitable (photos of children in swimwear would be unsuitable, as would individual and close-up shots).

10.5 It is not appropriate for staff to take photos of pupils for personal use.

10.6 Staff photos – Staff sign a consent form regarding the use of their image via photograph and video. Staff accept that the image will be used within the school environment for displays and team identification.