Appendix 1

Education & Children's Services

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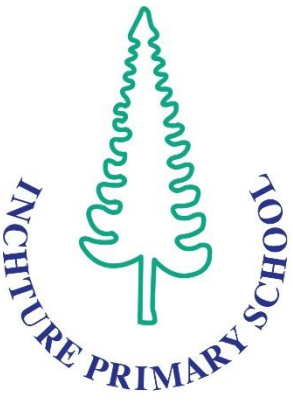
Parental Communications Policy



Inchture Primary School

Parental Communications Policy

1.1 This policy seeks to define the means by which the school maintains good communications with parents and other stakeholders. It should provide an overview of what parents can expect of the school and, in turn, what the school will expect of parents.

1.2 This policy complies with relevant Perth and Kinross Council policy documents, including the **Customer Service Standards** (July 2010).

2. PARENTAL COMMUNICATION WITH THE SCHOOL

2.1 Enquiries

2.1.1 Parents are welcome to raise matters with the school by visiting reception or by telephone **(01738 454466).** In many cases, including where a message has to be passed to a pupil, such enquiries can be dealt with directly by the school office. Where another member of staff is required to respond, the following will apply:

- **Non-urgent enquiries -** In such cases, a message can be left with the school office who will forward it to the relevant member(s) of staff. In line with the **Council's Customer Service Standards**, general correspondence (letters, emails and enquiries) will be responded to within **15 working days**. In many cases, however, particularly where there is a time factor, responses will be quicker.

- **Matters requiring an immediate response (i.e Child Protection concerns) -** 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. In most cases, the member of staff will be available to deal with such enquiries at the time of contact. If not, they will advise you when you will be contacted; usually the same day or within 24 hours.

- **Enquiries by email -** All enquiries by email should be directed to the school's generic account: **inchture@pkc.gov.uk**

  This will allow enquiries to be logged for the purpose of quality assurance and for them to be forwarded to the appropriate member of staff, with line managers copied in as appropriate.

2.2 **Letters to the school -** Parents will occasionally use letters to communicate relevant information, such as reason for absence, to a primary class teacher. In general, any letters requiring a response should, in the first instance, be addressed to one of the following: the Headteacher or Depute Headteacher.

2.3 **Social Media** – parents should not use social media personal/private messaging to contact members of staff.

2.4 **Parental complaints -** Should a parent wish to make a formal complaint about any aspect of the school, this should be addressed to the Headteacher. The school follows the **Perth and Kinross Complaints Procedure**. Such complaints can be made by email, letter, telephone or in person.

2.5 **Subject Access Requests (SAR)** – the Data Protection Act 2018 protects individuals from possible misuse of their information, while giving them legal rights to gain access to the information held about them by an organisation or individual within it. If a parent wishes to access information about themselves or their child(ren) this should be submitted in writing to the Council's Data Protection Team at: **DataProtection@pkc.gov.uk**

2.6 **Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests** – Members of the public have a legal right under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 to access information held by the Council. If you wish to request information from the Council, please contact the Council's Freedom of Information Team at: **FOI@pkc.gov.uk**

3. THE ROLE OF PARENTS/CARERS IN GOOD HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

3.1 Communication between the school and home is at its most effective where Parents/Carers are clear of what is expected of them. The following are key ways in which parents can support the work of the school in terms of communication:

3.2 Pupil absence

3.2.1 The school's over-riding obligation is to ensure the safety of the young people entrusted to it, and it is of the highest importance that reasons for any pupil absences are established as a priority each morning. It is therefore essential that parents notify the school as early as possible by telephone or via the school app where circumstances are likely to result in their child being absent from school.

3.2.2 Where no such notification has been received, parents will be sent a **Groupcall** (see 4.3.1 below) message 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. In the past, this has led to home visits by school staff or the unnecessary involvement of the police.

3.2.3 It is also very important that parents provide the school with absence notes, when appropriate, following medical absences. This can also be via email.

3.3 Information Returns

3.3.1 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. Whatever the reason, it considerably eases the administrative burden to the school when parents adhere to the deadlines provided.

3.4 Updating the school on personal matters

3.4.1 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. Please contact your child's class teacher, Depute Head Teacher or the Headteacher in confidence either by email or by calling the school.

3.5 Updating the school in the event of change of contact details

3.5.1 It is very important that the school has current contact details for parents and other relatives. Parents/Carers are requested always 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. Please contact the school office as soon as possible to inform them of any changes either in person, by email or by phoning the school.

3.6 Use of Social Media

3.6.1 Consideration should be given regarding the nature of comments made about members of staff on social media platforms. Where a parent has a concern or complaint this should be raised with the school directly so this can be addressed through the complaints procedure (see 2.4 above).

1. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND PARENTS/CARERS

4.1 The School Handbook

4.1.1 A school handbook is made available to all parents through the school website and is updated by December of each year. 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 to the school;
- helping parents to choose a school; and
- helping parents to prepare their child for school.

4.1.2 The handbook should serve as a practical guide to parents about school, Local 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 on the school's website or in hard copy upon request. https://www.incture primaryschool.rog.uk/Documents/

4.2 Standards and Qualities Report

4.2.1 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's website in September.

4.3 General Communications to all parents

4.3.1 The school uses a variety of methods to communicate with all parents on matters which are of interest to them. These include:

- **School App** – this is the main form of communication of information to Parents/Carers about events in school, trips, letters, requests etc. This can be accessed for free from app stores and can be downloaded by all family members. Channels can then be selected for targeted information for your child's class.

- **Seesaw** – this is used primarily as a learning journal to chart your child's progress and achievements in school. Each child has their own Seesaw account and parents/carers can login to see the learning when new posts are uploaded. Teachers may post whole class learning along with personal achievements and learning for each child.

- **Groupcall** – this facility allows the school to send short text messages to parents and is usually used only for matters that require to be drawn to parents' attention urgently such as unexplained absences.

- **Email** – the school holds parental email addresses for almost all pupils and is increasingly moving towards this as the means of communication in preference to paper. Such changes will be subject to consultation with parents in advance.

- **Newsletter** – an electronic newsletter is published regularly and provides Parents/ Carers with an accessible and attractive overview of the school's activities. All newsletters have a 'dates for your diary' section and is distributed via the school app, website and 'X'.

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

- **'X' account** – this is particularly useful for providing updates on pupils' achievements both within the school and in terms of extra-curricular activities. There is also a link to our 'X' account on the school app. Link here

4.4 Communication regarding the curriculum/learning and teaching

- **Nursery -** 'New starts' to the Nursery begin with an informal individual meeting with parents to discuss the child's needs and create a personal plan ('All About Me'. Matters discussed at this meeting are reviewed at parent contact appointments which take place during the session, or sooner of required. A detailed written report is provided towards the end of the session for children progressing to primary. For all other children, a shorter report is provided. Nursery staff are usually available for informal discussion at the beginning and end of nursery sessions, but formal appointments can also be arranged if required. Parents are also provided with regular information on learning and progress via Seesaw.

- **Primary -** There are two parents' nights per year for primary pupils and a detailed written report towards the end of the session. Primary staff can be available for brief discussions at the end of the school day, but in general appointments should be arranged in advance. Parents/ Carers are also provided with a curriculum overview at the beginning of each term on Seesaw.

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5. SEEKING PARENTS' VIEWS

5.1 The Parent Council

5.1 The Parent Council, which meets termly and is attended by the Headteacher, is a key vehicle for parents 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, ranging 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.

5.2 Parental Involvement in school self-evaluation and annual planning

5.2.1 The school is also keen to involve Parents/Carers, as well as other stakeholders, in its annual processes of self-evaluation and planning. Parents/Carers are given the opportunity to contribute to improvement priorities through questionnaires and sometimes focus groups with the Headteacher.

5.3 Consultation on proposed change

5.3.1. 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 themselves, 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.

5.4 On-going evaluation of events

5.4.1 The school is also committed to seeking regular feedback from Parents/Carers on activities such as parents' nights and we will occasionally issue evaluation forms to seek parents' views on how such events might be improved.

5.5. Annual parental survey

5.5.1 In addition to these methods of seeking parental views, the school also conducts a formal parental survey, covering a wide range of the school's functions, towards the end of each 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.

6. SCHOOL CONTACT DETAILS:

- Email Address: inchture@pkc.gov.uk
- Phone No: **01738 454466**
- Website: www.inchtureprimaryschool.org.uk
- X: @InchturePrimary
- Address: Main Street, Inchture, Perth PH14 9RN