

Effective Communication with Parents/Carers Policy



*Learning together in a changing
world, creating success for all.*



Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre

Policy for developing effective communication with parents/carers

Trinity Fields is a Rights Respecting School, a Healthy School and an Inclusive School.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our pupil friendly and adult version of our “**Shared Values and Aims**”.

Trinity Fields is a Rights Respecting School

Trinity Fields is a Rights Respecting School and we are committed to the principles and values of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) across all areas of our work.

Trinity Fields is a school where pupils are at the heart of everything we do. As part of our aim to promote a happy and successful school we have successfully been awarded UNICEF’s “**Rights Respecting School Award**” (January 2017).

The ‘Rights Respecting School’ Award (RRSA) helps our pupils become more confident, caring and as independent as possible both in school and within the wider community. By learning about their rights our pupils, your children, also learn about the importance of respecting the rights of others, that is, their responsibilities.

Our pupils are encouraged wherever possible to reflect on how their behaviour and actions affect those around them, which allows us to build and maintain a positive and safe learning environment for all, both in the classroom and around the school site.

Refer to pupil friendly “**Pupil Participation**” policy and our whole school “**Pupil Participation**” policy for further details.

Trinity Fields is a Healthy School

We are also a Healthy School and we take responsibility for maintaining and promoting the health and wellbeing of the Trinity Fields team (pupils, parents/carers, staff, governors etc.). This includes teaching pupils about how to lead healthy lives and enabling both pupils and staff to take control over aspects of the school environment which influence their health.

Refer to “**Health and Well-being for Pupils**” policy and our whole school “**Health and Well-being**” policy for further details.

Trinity Fields is an Inclusive School (IQM Flagship School status)

We have demonstrated through national annual assessment that we have the capacity to play a strong leadership role in developing inclusion best practice across a network of schools; as well as being committed to extending those networks and publish classroom-based research.

Refer to “**Inclusion**” policy and to **IQM assessment reports** for further details.

Education in Wales: Our National Mission

Our work with pupils and their families will be developed building upon Wales' National Mission. This national mission is ambitious, innovative and confident ensuring that we all take responsibility for all of our pupils to have equal opportunities to reach the highest possible standards.

Trinity Fields will continue to develop as a learning organisation to ensure it has the capacity to adapt to and explore a range of new approaches which results in improved outcomes and well-being for all of our pupils.

In order to realise our shared vision and approaches in delivering Wales' transformational curriculum that will enable all of the pupils at Trinity Fields to make the progress commensurate with their individual needs we are committed to the 4 key enabling objectives, detailed in "Education in Wales: Our national mission (2017)". These are:

- Developing a high-quality education profession.
- Inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards.
- Strong and inclusive schools committed to excellent, equity and well-being.
- Robust assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements supporting a self-improving system.

The core purposes and values that are associated with these prestigious national awards are encapsulated in our vision and aims:

"We believe that everyone at Trinity Fields is entitled to have access to the very best learning opportunities. These will be provided within a safe, caring and stimulating environment that will enable all learners to achieve their full potential through learning opportunities that meet their individual needs".

Rationale

This policy has primarily been developed to ensure that all staff communicate effectively with of the parents/carers. As an Investor in Families school we are fully committed to creating and sustaining effective communication links with all parents and carers.

By following the principles within this policy document we will ensure that all communication between us and a pupil's home is clear, professional, timely and relevant.

We always encourage parents/carers to contact the school if there any issues regarding their child's progress or well-being. The sooner we are made aware of any issues or concerns then the sooner we can work with parents/carers to rectify the situation.

Aims of the policy

To provide a welcoming and friendly school environment by:

- Making sure our reception staff are able to respond to the needs of parents/carers;
- Asking parents/carers in what ways were they made to feel welcome;
- Making the school a safe and vibrant environment;
- Providing clear signs around the school to help parents/carers.

To communicate fully with parents/carers by:

- Providing a regular and up-to-date information service through: annual planner, newsletters, Parent Guides, use of “Teachers to Parents” texting service, effective use of social media such as Twitter, the school website etc.;
- Providing parents/carers with advance notice of all school events and dates, with up-dates as appropriate;
- Actively involving parents/carers in the celebration of their child’s success;
- Promoting systems of active communication between home and school.

To actively involve parents/carers in the education and progress of their child by:

- Offering parents’ evenings once a term to meet class teams;
- Holding annual review meetings;
- Producing an annual report for their child which fully reflects their progress and achievements;
- Making effective use of our Home-School diaries for daily contact;
- Providing termly information on class themes and contexts for learning.

To involve parents/carers in all aspects of school life by:

- Welcoming parents/carers to school;
- Encouraging parents/carers to be part of our Parent Teachers Association;
- Making relevant school policies available to parents/carers and ensuring appropriate procedures are clear;
- Providing opportunities for prospective parents/carers to find out about the school through the induction process;
- Providing impartial guidance and opportunities for parents/carers to discuss transition and pupils’ futures when they are ready to leave Trinity Fields;
- Offering training opportunities and information as and when required.

How we communicate with our parents/carers

We will make use of a wide range of communication systems to ensure that our communication with parents/carers is as effective as possible. The following list gives some examples of the strategies that we currently use; this list is by no means exhaustive and will change over time.

Parents/carers of pupils new to the school

- The parents/carers of prospective pupils are invited to visit the school.
- The school may also visit the prospective new pupil at his/hers current school, if they are of school age.
- Transition meeting(s) are arranged for parents/carers in the half-term prior to their child starting the school. **See Transition Policy and flowchart for further details.**
- Parents/carers are provided with a school pack that contains relevant forms, information, school prospectus etc.

Parents/carers of existing pupils

- Parents/carers receive at least a termly newsletter from the headteacher.
- Parents/carers can access a copy of the termly Trinity Times.
- Parents/carers meet with their child’s class team 3 times a year for a parental meeting to review and discuss progress.
- All of the school’s key information and documents can be found on the school website.
- Questionnaires are sent to parents/carers on a range of issues and throughout the year.

- Annual reviews are held once a year. Parents/carers are encouraged to attach their views to the review paperwork.
- All parents/carers receive a copy of their child's annual report; again parents/carers are encouraged to complete a "Parents/carers views" page.
- Staff also make telephone calls to parents/carers as and when necessary; staff record the main details of the telephone conversation within each pupil's chronology book.

Special arrangements

We will always make reasonable adjustments to our arrangements if this will enable a parent/carer with a disability to participate fully in a meeting at our school, or to receive and understand any communication from us. An example of this would be providing an interpreter for a parent with hearing impairment to participate fully in school meetings (annual reviews, parents 'evenings etc.) and texting that parent rather than making telephone calls.

Home-school diaries

We use home-school diaries to keep in daily contact with parents/carers. The following principles should be adhered to when writing to parents/carers in a home-school diary:

- Carefully consider what you are going to write in the diary **before** starting to write. If you have any doubts then it is better to speak with one of the senior leaders before writing anything;
- Your entries into the diary should be **legible, clear and concise**;
- Ensure that your entries are **grammatically correct and words spelled correctly**;
- **Do not** include information that is confidential. Remember that the books are transported in pupil's bags rather than handed over directly to parents/carers;
- **Do not** use abbreviations or "text" language;
- If parents/carers write something in the home-school diary that is of a safeguarding or confidential nature then this needs to be checked with a senior leader and then photocopied and attached to the pupil's chronology book;
- With some pupils all entries will need to be photocopied- please speak with a senior leader if you require clarification.

Home support worker

We have a full-time home support worker who is in regular contact with many of our families. She has been issued with a school mobile phone which is solely used for school purposes. In a few cases where there may be difficulties in communicating with parents/carers then class teams will often go through the home support worker if the pupil is open as a current case; this also happens where parents/carers are not so comfortable speaking directly with school staff or with other agencies. This happens in a very small number of cases.

School staff will always work closely with the home support worker to help gain parents/carers' confidence, trust and develop a good working relationship between them, and the school.

Any confidential or sensitive information is immediately passed on to a senior leader and where necessary notes are added to the pupil's chronology book and to the pupil's home support file. Our home support worker has regular contact with the assistant headteacher who provides line management; any less urgent concerns and daily logs are addressed in these meetings.

Letters

Staff will endeavour to respond to parents' letters as quickly as possible. Any letter of complaint should be referred to the headteacher.

Letters to parents/carers must be approved by one of the senior leaders before they are sent. Copies of all correspondence with parents will be placed in pupil files.

Copies of all letters that are sent home will be saved on the “O” drive.

“Teachers2Parents” texting service and emails

The school has a text messaging and email system it uses to communicate to parents. If a parent communicates with the school using email, a copy should be printed and included in the pupil’s chronology book. Staff should forward e mails from parents to the senior leaders and should always do so if the content relates to their concerns.

Refer to protocols for using Teachers2Parents texting service for further information.

Telephone calls

Our admin team will check for phone messages each day. When staff speak to a parent/carer on the telephone they must record the key points of the conversation in the pupil’s chronology book and should notify a senior leaders of any significant issues or concerns.

We encourage our admin team not to interrupt teaching for staff to answer a telephone call, unless it is absolutely essential.

If a member of the admin team has a detailed conversation with a parent/carer either on the telephone or if they are visiting school the member of staff should email senior leaders/class teacher with the main points of the conversation. This is absolutely essential, especially if the parent/carer raises any concerns or issues. This information must then be printed out and attached to the pupil’s chronology book.

Social networking/Blogs etc.

No member of staff must communicate with parents/carers or pupils via social networking sites (such as Facebook) or accept them as their “friends”. This also includes being “friends” with past pupils.

We also have parents who are employed in the school. This does present some further challenges with regards to the use of social media etc. **If staff, including those who are parents of our pupils have any concerns about this then they should speak with one of the senior leaders for further information.**

If staff are being requested to be “friends” with a parent/carers then should notify a senior leader as a matter of urgency.

Refer to Caerphilly’s protocols for the responsible use of social media for further information.

School prospectus

The school prospectus contains a range of specified information to give parents/carers a full picture of provision at our school. This is updated every year at the beginning of the autumn term and is available on the school website.

School website

The school website provides a wide range of current information about:

- the school;
- policies, useful documents and procedures;
- news stories;
- video clips about changes and development to education in Wales;
- governors and their work;
- reports on the school;
- how we use grant funding to support pupil and staff development etc.

The website is updated regularly to ensure that the information is accurate and relevant.

Annual reviews

We have excellent parents/carers attendance at annual review meetings. These pupil focused meetings provide valuable opportunities for school staff and other colleagues to have face to face discussions with parents/carers about their child's progress and future learning.

Accurate minutes of these meetings are taken by an experienced member of the admin team and all attendees and those who are involved with that particular pupil receive the notes and any actions that are required.

Pupil centred annual reviews

We are in the process of developing our use of pupil centred annual reviews. These are meetings that have a positive focus that help all those who attend identify and build on things that are going well along with planning to improve things that we would want to make even better. At present these sit alongside the Statutory Annual Review process and we continue to ensure our practice continues to put our pupils at the centre of decision making processes.

Written reports

Once a year we provide a full written report to parents/carers on their child's progress. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development.

Pupils, as well as their parents/carers are also given the opportunity to comment on their own progress and parents are invited to make a similar comment.

In addition, parents/carers meet their child's class team three times during the year for a private 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 additional support and the practising of skills.

Annual planner

A calendar of school events will be produced at the start of each autumn term and sent home to all parents/carers. The annual planner is also available on the school website.

The above strategies for developing and maintaining effective communication between home and school are by no means exhaustive.

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed as detailed in the school's policy review cycle. It may also be necessary to review and amend it sooner to reflect both local and national changes.

Signed		Headteacher
Signed		Chair of Governors
Date of review: Autumn 2020		

As a Rights Respecting School we are committed to embedding the principles and values of the United Nation Conventions for the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

This policy enables our pupils to access and enjoy the following articles of the convention:

Article 12: Every child has the right to be heard.

Article 28: Every child has the right to an education.

Article 29: Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full.

Article 42: Every child has the right to know their rights.