Cannon Lane Primary School

Positive Communications Policy

Date approved by Senior Leadership Team: September 2024

Date for Review: September 2026

1. Introduction

At Cannon Lane Primary School, we strive to build strong relationships with parents, carers and visitors. This helps create a stimulating, happy and safe learning environment which continues from school to home and the wider community, providing all our pupils with the opportunity to achieve their personal best. The trust, support and co-operation of parents is fundamental to the continued success of our school.

All members of Cannon Lane Primary School community have the right to work without fear of abuse or violence at all times.

This Positive Communications Policy outlines the manner in which everyone is expected to act whilst on school premises or virtually, as well as further detailing the type of behaviour which will not be tolerated.

All employees of Cannon Lane Primary School:

- Are required to demonstrate the highest possible professional standards at all times
- Deal with all pupils, fairly and consistently
- Communicate with all parents and visitors with professional courtesy
- Be aware of and conform to all safeguarding routines in the school
- Uphold the professional integrity of the school and teaching profession at all times

Our staff come to work to educate and support our pupils and we believe it is important for everyone involved with school life to communicate in a respectful and productive manner, whether in person, on the phone, or online. In this way, staff, pupils, parents, carers and members of the public always behave respectfully to each other, which helps to promote the most constructive working and learning environment.

Cannon Lane Primary School therefore asks parents, carers and visitors to:

a) Positively support the ethos of the school by setting a good example in their speech and behaviour (including online) towards all pupils, staff members and other adults.
b) Work constructively with staff members to resolve any issues of concern, including clarifying specific events in order to bring about a positive resolution.
c) Always communicate (by telephone, email, or in meetings) in a constructive and respectful manner.
d) Refrain from communicating in a manner which could be perceived as threatening or unreasonable.
e) Work alongside the school to support their child's behaviour where necessary, understanding and accepting that a behaviour policy is fundamental and necessary to a safe and purposeful learning environment – this policy (and consequences outlined within) apply to ALL pupils; it is not democratic or open to negotiation.
f) Make reasonable requests for meeting times, and not expect to see any member of staff without a prior appointment. (We will always try to accommodate a meeting or phone call as soon as possible, but do have many commitments, including teaching, throughout the day and we would ask that you understand and respect this).
g) Agree to meet with the member of staff who is identified or delegated by the Headteacher, in the event of a dispute or disagreement. (N.B. The member of staff will be commensurate with the stage and scale of the concern and we will not accept demands to communicate with a particular individual).
h) Make every effort to positively promote the school to the wider community and not publicly undermine the school or the implementation of school policies or publicly manifest complaints or criticisms online, on social media platforms (e.g. WhatsApp / Facebook) or in public forums.

Whilst we welcome feedback and regularly consult with a range of stakeholders in making key decisions, ultimately the school has to make decisions in good faith, which we deem to be in the best interests of our pupils. Whilst it is

never our intention to disappoint, it is not always possible to secure agreement or consensus (and schools are not duty bound to do so).

Decisions around behaviour expectations, uniform, teaching and learning strategies or strategic direction are at the discretion of the Headteacher and do not require consensus or parental approval.

2. Expected Behaviour

Simply put, we expect that all parents, visitors and members of the public will treat each other, staff members, pupils and external agencies with dignity and respect

Parents should be aware of school policies, and know that copies are available via the school's website or from the school directly. When raising a concern, we would ask parents to ensure that they act in accordance with school policies and maintain a positive approach at all times whilst on the school premises and in their communications with school.

3. Emailing the school

Email is a quick, effective way of communicating necessary information and is the school's preferred method of communication. Emails received will be acknowledged within 2 working days and responded to within 10 working days.

Parents and carers should contact the school via email for a general enquiry as an alternative to telephone or letter. The school email address is: office@cannonlane.harrow.sch.uk

4. Telephone calls

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school, where teachers may be teaching full-time and running clubs or working with pupils at lunchtime or after school. Parents and carers may be frustrated if they feel that a message elicits no immediate reply, when in fact there has been no available opportunity for the member of staff to reach a telephone to return a call.

In a non-emergency a return call will be aimed to be made within 3 working days, with any follow up action from the request /query/problem being dealt with within 10 working days.

5. Excessive Parental Contact / Demanding Behaviour

We are committed to working positively with home to effectively deal with any issues or concerns. However, we would ask parents / carers to understand that we will simply do not have the capacity to engage in excessive communications or lengthy and repetitive meetings.

Once the school has given a reasonable amount of time to address an individual issue or concern, we will not engage in further communication regarding those issues to which we have already responded.

Any emergency situations will be dealt with separately.

Please remember that any time dealing with complaints, excessive communications or questioning of school procedures is time away from our primary aim of supporting our pupils.

Please note the following:

- If parents / carers are rude, abusive or speak in an inappropriate tone over the telephone, our staff will politely end the call.
- If any email is rude or inappropriate in tone, we reserve the right not to reply, or we may choose to take the action outlined within this policy.
- If parents / carers are rude, abusive or speak in an inappropriate tone during a face-to-face meeting or a virtual meeting, our staff will terminate the meeting immediately.
- In either case, the school will forward a copy of this policy to reiterate our expectations and rights with regard to appropriate communication.
- In circumstances where school has listened to the request of a stakeholder (i.e. parent or pupil), considered the request and shared the outcome of this with the stakeholder, should the stakeholder continue to repeat or labour the same request, school reserves the right to cease communication or to limit the reply with a repeat of key messages already shared.
- When the school judges email correspondence to be excessive, the school reserves the right to cease communication or only offer a reply with a repeat of key messages already shared.
    - In such circumstances, a face-to-face or virtual meeting will be offered to attempt to deal with any issues or concerns.
- Following reasonable attempts by the school to arrange a meeting at a mutually convenient time, or if a meeting is refused, then communication on this issue will cease.
- This policy does not impact on the right of parents and carers to make formal complaints via the school's complaints policy which can be found on the school website.
- Once the school has received notice of a formal complaint, the issues around the complaint can no longer be discussed outside of the Complaints Procedure unless it is in a way to find an informal or early resolution that the school is in agreement with.

If any parent / carer behaves in a manner that this policy outlines as unacceptable (such as abusive, aggressive, inappropriate or excessive contact, etc) the school may choose to take appropriate action in line with our legal position or forward a copy of this policy to appropriate individuals. This is to ensure that parents / carers are aware of expectations for future behaviour, the position of the school, our legal rights and protection, and any action that we might choose to take.