

Staff responsible	Headteacher
Date of policy/last review	02/10/2023
Governing body ratified	10/10/2023
Review cycle	3 years
Next review	02/10/2026

1. Aims of the Policy

- 1.1 To support pupils to progress and by working in tandem with families to support them to 'be the best that they can be'
- 1.2 To ensure that the school community understands how the development of children and young people is supported through effective communication
- 1.3 To actively involve families in and inform them about the education and progress of their child.
- 1.4 To inform communication expectations across the school age ranges and phases

2. Introduction

- 2.1 At Brent Knoll School, we recognise and value the importance of family involvement in the life of the school. We believe that education relies on collaboration to realise the best prospect of holistic progress for our pupils. As a school we are therefore committed to establishing and maintaining an effective and purposeful working relationship between the school and home.
- 2.2 Parents and carers are the most important influence in a child or young person's life, and effective communication between home and school will help pupils achieve their best.
- 2.3 This policy seeks set out the scope of home/school links and communication and identifies our rationale and approaches we use to promote and support the development of communication between pupils, their families and staff
- 2.4 The school has three 'phases' which are detailed in appendix 1

3. Scope

- 3.1 Brent Knoll School is an all aged special school that caters for pupils with complex social, communication and interaction difficulties. Communication and developing independence underpin all learning in the school and we are committed to providing a total communication environment which encompasses:
 1. How we support communication development in our pupils,
 2. How we communicate information to parents and carers about the school and their child's progress,
 3. How staff communicate.
- 3.2 This policy covers how the school promotes and maintains a positive and constructive relationship with families through strong communication between school and home.

4. How we communicate with families

- 4.1 In our school, we aim to have clear and effective communications with families. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values and keep families informed about school life. Similarly, effective communication from families helps build relationships which support pupil progress.
- 4.2 Class teams are the first point of communication with parents and carers and the general methods of communication to families are set out below.
- 4.3 The school encourages parents and carers to share any issues about their child or young person at the earliest opportunity with the pastoral class team.
- 4.4 An appointment can be made to see the Class teacher if there are issues which have not been resolved through telephone or email communication
- 4.5 Senior Leadership Team with responsibility for the pupil's phase can be contacted if there are any unresolved issues.
- 4.6 The school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead/Pastoral Support Manager and School Home Support worker who play a pivotal role in supporting families to ensure that any barriers to learning can be addressed and lessen impact on pupil progress.
- 4.7 All new starters to the school will be contacted by this team and where appropriate a home visit may be carried out

5. Home/School contact

- 5.1 Dialogue between class teacher and home is important to ensure that relevant information is relayed to families who can respond or provide information about their child or young person to help support their progress
- 5.2 The development of independence is central to our ambition for our young people and home school/communication reflects the growing independence of pupils
- 5.3 In the Early Years and foundation Stage (EYFS) contact with families will initially be by email daily. As they settle into the routines and become familiar with staff this level of contact will diminish, dependent on the needs of individual pupils, working towards the model adopted through the school where routine contact is made via the weekly class email.
- 5.4 Parents of younger pupils may find it useful to use the class timetable to help prepare children for the coming day and to communicate with their child or young person about their activities and feelings on how their day went.
- 5.5 Parents and carers will be routinely communicated with by email weekly via Class email.
- 5.6 Staff may 'phone up (or speak to families who collect pupils) about any issues during the school day.
- 5.7 Parents and carers can contact class teachers or form tutors about issues using email or by 'phoning the school office and requesting a call back which will be provided as soon as is practical.

6. Telephone

- 6.1 Parents and carers are welcome to telephone the school with urgent messages that need to be delivered to staff. Urgent calls may be put through to the most appropriate or available person. It may not be possible to speak to class staff immediately but a message will be taken and delivered to class teams. Non-urgent calls to class staff should be kept to a minimum at times of the day where teaching and learning may be disrupted. This includes before school when lessons are being prepared.

7. Email

- 7.1 Email is a really effective method of communication as it can be composed at a convenient time for families and sent via the class team email for attention by the class team. The team will respond in a timely fashion but it is not reasonable to expect staff to respond out of term time, in the evening or at weekends.
- 7.2 Class email accounts or the account of the class lead will be used as the main method of communicating with families and will be the primary source of information relating to Teaching and Learning and Pastoral issues

8. Home School Agreement

- 8.1 Since March 2015, a Home School Agreement is no longer a statutory requirement for schools. However, the school still values the use of a [Home School Agreement](#), which sets out the school's values and responsibilities between home and school. The Home School Agreement is issued to families with admissions documentation and a copy sent out annually

9. Newsletters

- 9.1 The school newsletter is sent to parents and carers at the end of each school week and added to the school website. The newsletter is designed for the school community and contains general information about school events, activities, safeguarding and school improvement. It is also used to showcase achievement, celebrate our school values and signpost community events and activities of interest to families. We send other letters of a general nature when necessary.
- 9.2 The school newsletter is sent out by class teams along with an email summary of the week from the perspective of the Class Team. This will provide information about learning that has taken place, achievement, events and activities and reminders of events scheduled in the coming week.

10. Parent/Carer Surveys

- 10.1 The schools Governing Body distributes a parent and carer survey annually to establish the views and opinions of parents and carers on the school performance. This is analysed by senior management and governors and this data is used to provide a focus for wellbeing initiatives and school improvement.

11. School Closure Communication

- 11.1 Any communication on school closure will be posted on the school website. Parents and carers are asked to check the school website as we will post information here, via an Open Check notification, when available. If parents and carers do not have access to the Internet, they are asked to try to obtain contact details of someone who can check this for them.

12. Parent Pay App and AutoText Service

- 12.1 Any notification will be automatically sent to everyone who has a free smartphone app called Parent Pay installed on their mobile phone. Any changes will then appear on mobile phones, as soon they are uploaded to the school website.
- 12.2 The school will use a service from Parent Pay to send text messages to parent or carer contact numbers that have been supplied to the school. This service will ensure that a text is sent to the first main contact to advise them that the school is closed. If this person has the Parent Pay App installed on their phone and has assigned their mobile number to the app, this message will appear as a

notification via the app at no cost to the school. See Appendix 2 for instructions on installing the app and assigning a mobile number to the Parent Pay App.

13. School Website

- 13.1 Our school has a website with up to date information on the school and links to various policies and admissions criteria for parents and carers and also includes statutory documents such as how we are spending Pupil Premium, Year 7 Catch-Up and Primary PE Funding. There are also historic copies of newsletters, a virtual tour along with information relevant for families and community links are signposted.

14. Social Media

- 14.1 The school has a Twitter account which publishes tweets about events at school and signposts relevant information for those who subscribe and a link on how to access the feed or set up an account can be found [here](#)

15. Annual Reviews

- 15.1 All pupils have an annual review meeting which are scheduled across the year to coincide with the date of Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) issue. The review process is an opportunity to review objectives contained within the EHCP and generate new short-term outcomes where appropriate. Consideration will be made as to whether any change needs to be made to the EHCP. Where amendments are required a draft amended EHCP will be forwarded to parents and carers by the LA for approval before being finalised

16. Parents/carers Evenings

- 16.1 Staff meet with parents and carers as soon as it is possible in each new school year. Parents and carers will be invited to a 'Meet the Teacher' session in the Autumn Term of each academic year. In the Autumn Term a parents and carers evening will be scheduled which will focus on how pupils have settled and academic progress and attainment. In the Spring Term there will be a parent and carer evening which will focus on personal development and Personal Development Plans will be discussed. In the Summer Term the parents and carers evening will focus on celebration of the year, be an opportunity to see work completed over the year and discuss progress detailed in the Annual Summary of Achievement.

17. Summary of Achievement

- 17.1 In the Summer Term, the school will provide an annual written report (Summary of Achievement) to parents and carers on their child or young person's progress. This will include information on pupils' Learning Pathways (if applicable), individual skills achieved as well as any other additional assessments.

18. Absences

- 18.1 If a child or young person is going to be absent from school, parents and carers should telephone the school office before 8.30am to advise with regard to the reason for this absence. If the school does not receive any notification it will therefore have no indication of the reason for a child or young

person being absent from school, the school and will contact a parent or carer (by telephone, if possible), to find out the reason for the absence. Please see the Attendance Policy on the school website for further information regarding student absence procedures.

18.2 The School Home Support Team are available to provide support to parents and carers where necessary and can act as a link to other members of staff and external professionals or support services. The team are responsible for organising training opportunities for parents and carers throughout the year, which will be promoted and communicated by letter and school newsletter, or by personal invitation in the case of training opportunities relating to a particular student.

18.3 The Safeguarding Team and School Home Support Team offer positive, proactive and flexible support to identified families through a variety of interventions, for example: home visits, advocacy and parent and carer information sessions. Both practitioners act as a natural extension to the pastoral role of each class teacher to foster positive relationships between home and school and promote the safeguarding of children, young people and their families.

Appendix 1

Lower Phase – Assistant Head - Gaynor Peerless

- Acorn Class
- Birch Class
- Chestnut Class
- Willow Class
- Ash Class
- Elm Class

Middle Phase – Assistant Head - Sam Waring

- Sycamore Class
- Hawthorn Class
- Larch Class
- Hazel Class
- Beech Class
- Pine Class

Upper Phase – Deputy Head -Paul Shaw

- Cedar Class
- Rowan Class
- Lime Class
- Plane Class
- Poplar Class
- Elder Class
- Oak Class

Appendix 2

IMPORTANT: This letter contains sensitive information and must be managed carefully. Parent Pay Activation Letter for (Pupil name)

(Pupil name and address)

Dear (parent name) For the safety of children and staff, we prefer not to receive cash payments in school. Payments should instead be made through ParentPay or with cash in PayPoint stores. (Pupil name and Class) Before entering the codes below please check that this letter is correctly addressed to the child you need an account for Username: (parent email address)com Password: Changed by user Already have a ParentPay account? If you already have a ParentPay account, either with our school or another ParentPay school, you can simply login to that account and add your other children via the add a child button on your home page. You will need the activation username and password above to do this. New to ParentPay? Go to parentpay.com, click login and enter the username and password above. You will be prompted to change these when you set up your account. You will require an email address to activate your account. You can add multiple children to the same ParentPay account using the add a child button on your home page. Please do not hesitate to contact the school office if you need assistance.