



# Our Communication Charter



Written by: C. Barrington - September 2023

## Introduction

Corby Primary Academy believes emphatically in the importance of the Home-Academy partnership. The stronger that partnership is, the better a pupil's chances are of fulfilling their potential. Effective communication is a keystone for that partnership, both to and from academy, so that staff and parents are able to properly co-ordinate the support for the child.

There is considerable evidence that increased parental engagement leads to improving motivation for a child to do well at academy. We are grateful for the level of support that already exists for parents and families enabling their child to attend Corby Primary Academy but know that the additional home input and interest makes a key difference for outcomes.

Corby Primary Academy recognises that:

- Parents and families are a crucial influence on the education and development of their children and that effective partnerships between home and academy have a positive impact on pupils' learning
- It is essential that parents have access to relevant information and that they receive our support, guidance and help in a timely and effective way
- It is vital that parents are consulted and given opportunities to provide feedback to the academy
- Parents, siblings, family members and peers all play an important role in supporting learning

### The Corby Primary Academy Communication Charter

Academies have many lines of communication to maintain. The complexity of the inter-relationships can sometimes result in challenges to keep communication as effective as possible. We appreciate feedback to ensure that we keep developing and improving our standards of communication, where there is something that can be done better without negatively impacting on the core role of educating the children.

Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications. They must appreciate that the quality of their communications reflects on the academy's reputation and impacts on the trust placed in us by parents or carers.

Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents, it is important that this remains professional. As such, parents should always be addressed in an appropriate manner, a courtesy that staff can also expect in return.

Parents will be provided with various opportunities for contact and means of communicating with academy during the course of a year.

Our Communication Charter is designed to provide open dialogue between parents and academy, and for academy to provide multiple communication points with parents. This will enable the latter to access useful information during the academy week. By following the protocol above, we will try to ensure that any matters are resolved as quickly and effectively as possible.

At whichever stage a concern has been resolved, the appropriate member of staff will communicate the outcomes with the parent (or child).

Our charter was produced to help forge this strong link between Home and Academy. It has drawn on points raised by parents through surveys and other feedback provided informally, as well as the views of the Senior Leadership Team.

It considers key aspects of communication, whether day-to-day information, calendar events or wider aspects of academy development. Implementing the various elements within this Charter will help to strengthen the communication between Home and Academy, allowing us to work together to support your child's development.

The Charter will give clear indications of what can be expected in realistic communications. We will look to review the success of the elements within and strengthen according to feedback. I hope that you find our Charter helpful in your dealings with the academy.

## The A-Z of Academy Communication, with top tips for success

### Academy Development Plan

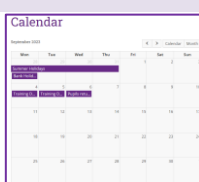


The Academy Development Plan sets out the key areas of the academy that we are aiming to improve, what we are doing and why.

Helpful  
Tips

Read the development plan and understand that this is a positive document as education is always developing and that we are always striving to improve the academy's practice.

### Calendar



The calendar on our website and Class Dojo will be updated at the start of every term, thus allowing for planning in the coming three months. Parents can access the website calendar by following this link to [Corby Primary Academy – Calendar](#).

Helpful  
Tips

Regularly access the website and Class Dojo to see what events and activities are coming up.

### Class Dojo



Class Dojo is our parent app which will keep you updated with news of the academy and class achievements, activities and upcoming events.

It is not possible for the academy staff to respond to individual instant messages from parents due to the potential sheer number and frequency of messages. However, parents can email individual teachers (and expect a response) in line with the email protocols outlined in this document. Staff email address can be found on the Contact Us page of the academy website. [Corby Primary Academy - Contact Us](#)

In **EYFS only**, staff do post pictures of children's learning in their individual portfolios and parents can add pictures here too.

Helpful  
Tips

Make sure you download Class Dojo so you can access all of the news and announcements.

## Class Newsletters



At the start of each term, each class will publish a newsletter on Class Dojo and the website, which will contain information about what the children will be studying during the term, key dates and other information such as PE days etc. [Click here](#) to access the newsletters via our website.

### Helpful Tips

**Read the newsletter so that you can support your child's learning and you could complete a homework project together.**

## E-mail



E-mails are the best way of communicating quickly between home and academy. They are a good way to inform the academy of any issues that may arise. They are also a great way for parents to share photos and events from home too.

### Helpful Tips

**Some dos and don'ts of e-mail usage for staff (and parents) include:**

- **Aim to respond to an e-mail within 48 working hours of receipt during term time**, even if just a holding reply. This allows the original sender to know that you are dealing with the enquiry. Where possible, try to make telephone call to resolve issues as it is often easier to talk about an issue.
- **Be concise and to the point**. Reading an e-mail is harder than reading printed communications, and a long e-mail can be discouraging to read.
- **Answer all questions and pre-empt further questions**. This helps prevent long trains of e-mails, as further questions need to be asked to follow up on missing points. If an e-mail is not going to be sufficient, a response to arrange a time to talk can be more profitable and economical on time.
- **Do not use CAPITALS for significant amounts of the e-mail**: it appears that you are shouting, which you would be unlikely to do in normal conversation.
- **Read the e-mail before you press 'send'**. Many typos and related errors are found on proof-reading an e-mail, and in some cases, it becomes evident that the meaning of a statement has been lost. Similarly, it gives the chance to read it as if you were the recipient, thus avoiding the chance of a misunderstanding or offence being caused.

## End of Year Reports



The academy will provide every parent with an **end of year report** which includes information about their child's strengths and areas for development and targets for the next academic year.

### Helpful Tips

**Make sure read your child's report and share it with them.**

## Open Door Policy

Our senior leaders operate an 'open door' policy wherever possible and will endeavour to meet with parents and carers if they drop into the school office. Where a leader is not available, the office staff will arrange for a convenient time for a meeting or telephone call.



Helpful  
Tips

If a leader is unavailable, please do ask the office to book a meeting or telephone call.

## Parents' Evenings



PARENTS  
EVENING

Parents' Evenings are the important times in the year when there is a specific opportunity to discuss your child's progress with the class teacher. Time is at a premium in these sessions, so it is helpful to be clear about the information that is required. Teachers will often provide you with the following aspects about your child's progress:

1. How your child is faring in the various subject areas, and the progress that has been made since the last reporting stage.
2. What are your child's key strengths and areas for development.
3. Most importantly, **what can be done together to help your child with the next stages of their improvement.**

It is valuable to look on the "areas for development" as a positive matter, rather than a reason to be defensive: children come to academy to learn and improve, so great academies look to create pathways for children to achieve their full potential. Parents' Evenings can be a focal point for achieving this, by promoting the dialogue so Home and Academy are aligned in how the next stage will progress.



Helpful  
Tips

The following 7 tips are from John Coe, a former Headteacher and chair of the National Association for Primary Education. These can help you make the most of Parents' Evenings in order to support your child:

1. **Arrange childcare for younger children:** this is a rare opportunity to have a frank discussion about your child's progress and those conversations are easier without a little eavesdropper hovering nearby. Having your child with you can be distracting and get in the way of an honest dialogue between you and the teacher, so avoid taking them if possible.
2. **Talk to your child:** before the event, ask your child if there is anything they want to mention. It's important that academy and home work together, so if your child has concerns about something that's happening at academy, their teacher should know about it.
3. **Make notes in advance:** having questions jotted down in advance prevents a difficulty of your mind going blank. It is best to stick to two or three main points that are really essential to discuss.
4. **Get up to date with their work:** look through their books during homework, or revisit the last report. Make a note of anything that you feel needs to be raised, or that you are particularly pleased about. This will provide a foundation for a two-way conversation, rather than just being about what the teacher wants to pass on.
5. **Focus on your child:** this is not the time to talk about policies. If you have issues regarding the academy's approach to homework or other matters, direct them to the Principal or Deputy Principal. The time with the teacher should be about discussing your child's progress.
6. **Don't store up big issues:** if your child is struggling with maths or having friendship difficulties, raise it with the teacher when it occurs rather than waiting for Parents' Evening. Teachers prefer to know about problems sooner rather than later, and no one wants a child to struggle along for longer than they need to. Likewise, teachers should inform parents about issues as they happen, so there are no nasty surprises at Parents' Evening.
7. **Remember it's a partnership:** you and the teacher are both after the same goal – the improvement in your child. Regular contact with the teacher is beneficial, as is any act that strengthens the sense that you are working together at home and academy to help the child's development.

## Parent and Carer Feedback Forum



We understand the importance of listening to our academy community and working in partnership to improve the experience of all stakeholders. The Parent Feedback Forum is a partnership between parents and the school and is a valuable way to share ideas, views, concerns and make suggestions for improvement. This ensures parent and carers voices are heard and views considered in a non-judgmental, professional, safe, and supportive space.

The academy aims to set up a forum and for this meet three times during the academic year. Further details and protocols will be shared in due course. The aims of the Parent Forum will be to:

- work together to improve the education provided for our children.
- share information, knowledge and skills.
- meet in a mutually supportive environment.
- further improve communications between parents/carers and staff/leaders.

A parent forum does not have any statutory responsibilities, duties or powers in the school.



Helpful  
Tips

Look out for further details of how to participate in our new forum.

## Reading at home



Children in EYFS and KS1 bring home two reading books each week. One is to support learning to read and your child should read this to an adult. The second book is for pleasure and should be read by an adult with your child.

In KS2 children also have a reading book to read at home to an adult. Some older children will be 'free readers' but will still be expected to read at home independently.

All reading should be recorded in a child's reading diary along with a comment about how well your child read, words they found tricky and any other information that may be useful. Children are expected to read a minimum of four times a week at home.



Helpful  
Tips

Build 'reading time' into your evening routines, so it becomes part of a habit rather than an ordeal to face each time.

## Social Media



Class Dojo, Facebook and Twitter are popular one-way communication channels that Corby Primary Academy uses to advise on upcoming events, and to report on things that have been happening in academy. This provides parents with information on their PC, tablet or smartphone, allowing you to stay up-to-date with what is happening at the academy. The academy will not engage in dialogue via social media and any issues should be raised directly with academy leaders.

Follow @CorbyPrimary on Twitter and 'like' the Corby Primary Academy Facebook page to receive current news of academy. Sharing our stories and liking them helps to spread the word of all the good things happening in the academy.



Helpful  
Tips

## Telephone Calls



Telephone calls will be made by academy where immediate contact with a family member is required, i.e., when a pupil injury of significance has occurred. A staff member will call the first named emergency contact as listed. Where no contact is made, a call will then be made to the second named contact. In the event that no live contact can be made, the member of staff will either leave an answer phone message or ensure that repeat calls continue to be made to the contact numbers, where possible.

Any **pupil absence** must be reported to the academy by telephone as this is the quickest and most efficient way to contact us quickly.

A telephone call and/or message is often the quickest way alert the academy to any problems that arise and allow us to attempt to resolve these immediately. The staff will aim to respond to calls within a maximum 48 hours.

Helpful  
Tips

Ensure that we have current phone numbers for you and any other relevant contacts.

## Voice of the Parent Survey



As an academy, we undertake a structured survey annually to capture parent opinion and views on all aspects of our academy. By having parents sharing their views and opinions we can set further improvements in motion.

The survey can be anonymous if so chosen but, in the spirit of the Communication Charter, we prefer people to be candid and open with us about their responses. If there has been a concern, we would rather know immediately and try to help resolve it rather than wait until the survey.

Helpful  
Tips

Ensure that you complete the electronic survey in order to support us to continually improve the academy.

## Whole School Newsletter



Corby Primary Academy sends out a termly electronic newsletter to parents and staff.

This is sent during the last week of each term and contains a round-up of the events of the term, and photos of the trips and visits. In addition, there are details of the clubs, trips and activities for the following term, as well as any key reminders, information and notices for parents.

The newsletters are also uploaded to the academy website, and can be found here: [Corby Primary Academy - Newsletters](#)

Helpful  
Tips

Ensure that you read the whole school newsletter so that you can see all the wonderful things the children have been getting up to and that you know about forthcoming events.

## Workshops and Workshare Events

Each term, we publish a list of dates and times that parents can come into the academy to see what happens in various lessons and the children can share their learning. We also provide session for parents to learn about Phonics, Reading, Maths and SEND strategies.



Make a note of the published dates so that you can make sure you can come in and see what your children have been learning.

\*\*\*\*\*

A one page summary of our Communication Charter is included at the end of this document, which parents may find useful to print out for reference purposes.

We continually strive to ensure that parents and carers receive as much information about the life of the academy as possible. If you have any further ideas, please do not hesitate to contact us via email.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

*Mrs Barrington*

Principal

## The Communication Charter Summary

For communication between home and academy to be as supportive as possible, the following commitments should be made by staff and parents. When both parties are fully engaged in the partnership will be at its best.

Corby Primary Academy will:	Parents should:
Share the <b>Academy Development Plan</b> with parents via the website and Class Dojo so that everyone in the community is aware of the improvement priorities.	Read the development plan and understand that this is a positive document as education is always developing.
Update the <b>Calendar</b> on the website at the start of each term.	Check the calendar regularly and make a note of those events that relate to their child.
Add <b>Class Dojo</b> posts to the school story, individual class and year group stories to assist parents.	Read those Class Dojo posts that relate to their child and whole school to ensure they are keeping up to date.
Add <b>Class Newsletters</b> to Class Dojo and the academy website at the beginning of each term.	Read the newsletter so that they know what their child will be learning to enable them to support and to know about any upcoming key dates.
Respond promptly to <b>e-mails and telephone calls</b> from parents, ideally within 48 hours (during the working week and term time).	Appreciate that it can be difficult to fully explain in an e-mail and that sometimes arranging a meeting is better.
Provide every parent with an <b>end of year report</b> which includes information about their child's strengths and areas for development and targets for the next academic year.	Read the report and share it with their child. Support child at home to achieve the targets.
Leaders will operate an ' <b>open door</b> ' policy and endeavour to meet with parents whenever they come to the school office.	Make an appointment for a meeting or telephone call if a leader is not available.
Inform parents of clear targets for pupils at <b>Parents' Evenings</b> and in formal <b>reports</b> .	Attend parents' evenings where possible and read reports fully and discuss all feedback and targets with their child.
Provide a <b>Parent and Carer Forum</b> for parental views to be shared.	Participate, be honest and open, and reply with key opinions and comments.
Provide a <b>reading book</b> and <b>reading for pleasure book</b> for pupils to take home to support their reading development.	Complete their child's reading record 4 times a week.
Use <b>Social Media (Class Dojo, Facebook and Twitter)</b> as communication channels to advise on upcoming events and share what has been happening in academy.	Follow the academy on social media platforms to stay up to date. Any issues should be raised directly with the academy.
Academy to issue <b>Voice of Parent</b> survey in October each year and use this to support our continued improvement, as well as responding to the concerns raised.	Participate, be honest and open, and reply with key opinions and comments.
Send out a termly <b>Whole School Newsletter</b> with details of important dates and messages.	Read the newsletter to see what the children and the academy have been doing and know about forthcoming events.
Publish a termly list of <b>Workshops and Workshare Events</b> for parents to attend.	Make a note of the relevant dates to attend to enable them to keep up to date with what children have been learning.



**Email:** [admin@corbyprimaryacademy.org](mailto:admin@corbyprimaryacademy.org)

**Website:** [www.corbyprimaryacademy.org](http://www.corbyprimaryacademy.org)

**Twitter:** @CorbyPrimary

**Facebook:** Corby Primary Academy



