

## Alwyn Infant & Nursery School School/Home Communications Document



*As the roots spread so the tree grows*

### Introduction

It is widely recognised that the more involved parents/carers are in their child's education, the better the pupil performs at school. Students respond very well to parents/carers participating in their schooling – whether that's just being aware of their progress and understanding their achievements, or whether it's when parents/carers decide to take a more active role and become involved in the school itself. Either way, greater parental engagement often motivates the child to do well. In order to establish and maintain this interest, there needs to be regular and reliable communication and sharing of information between the school and pupils' families.

A good understanding of a child's interests, ability and progress in school, as well as information about school events and developments, will put parents/carers in a stronger position to help their child's learning, and will help children get the most out of the education system. Good communication between the school and the home is essential. Children achieve more when schools and parents/carers work together. Parents/carers can help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve and how they can help.

Here at Alwyn we aim to have clear and effective communication with parents/carers, as this will enable us to share our aims and values and keep parents/carers well informed about school life. This also reinforces the importance of the role that parents/carers play in supporting the school in educating their children.

We communicate with parents/carers through a range of different strategies. Some of our communications are the result of a statutory requirement, while others reflect what we believe is important to our school.

### Our Communication Strategies:

**Text messaging service.** Brief messages and reminders are sent to parents/carers via their mobile phone as a text message.

**Electronically through our website.** Our soon to be launched website will include our latest newsletters, policies we feel appropriate and relevant to the children's day to day life at Alwyn, links to associated school groups, the school prospectus, curriculum resources, dates, copies of letters to parents/carers, information about special events and updates.

**Dates letter.** As frequently as necessary, a sheet with dates and events is produced to allow parents/carers time to plan for different events and activities.

**Regular newsletters are sent** from the headteacher reporting events and discussing different matters. These letters contain general details of school events and information about activities.

**Additional letters** are sent home when further opportunities become available to the children. Letters for trips and school clubs are sent giving adequate notice and contain any relevant information e.g. clothing requirements. These letters are also sent as consent forms. Individual letters are sent home when the school is responding to incidences of non-attendance or request for payment for school dinners. Individual letters may also be sent to parents/carers as a

response to a letter from home asking a specific question or raising a concern. The importance of this will be judged and responded to by letter, e-mail, phone or meeting within an appropriate time frame. Children may come home with a yellow slip/letter informing the parent/carer of a minor injury and the treatment given.

**Informal meetings with the class teacher, Headteacher and SENCo.** We operate an open door policy. At the end of the day each teacher 'hands' children back to their parent/carer. This is an opportunity for them to discuss matters of the day with parents/carers and they may ask the parent/carer to come inside for this discussion. The parent/carer may also at this time approach the teacher to discuss something. The teacher assesses whether they can deal with it instantly or whether they need to book an appointment at another time. This may be because of the teacher having another school commitment straight after school (e.g. staff meeting, twilight course or clubs). Parents/carers may request by phone, letter or in person, to make an appointment to see the class teacher, or headteacher. Appointments to see class teachers are either before school or after school. The headteacher can see parents/carers during the school day if that is their preference.

**Bi-annual formal meetings at Parents/Carers' Evenings.** There are parents/carers evenings in the Autumn Term and the Spring Term. On these occasions parents/carers have an opportunity to look at their child's work to celebrate their child's successes and support the child with any areas of development, and to talk to the teacher for ten minutes. This is a time for a general discussion. If there is a concern that the parent/carer or teacher has with a child, meetings will have been instigated before this meeting.

Each year teachers provide a **written report** to parents/carers on each child's progress in the various areas of learning of National Curriculum subjects. This report also identifies areas of strength and areas for future development. Teachers also give parents/carers of children in Year 2 details of their performance in the national tests. The parents/carers of Foundation Stage children have an additional meeting in the summer term to discuss their child's Foundation Stage Profile.

Throughout the year parents/carers are invited to **curriculum afternoons** to learn about how we teach reading, writing and maths. These sessions last about an hour and a half. We also provide shorter **bite-size sessions** with a focus on a particular area of the curriculum, e.g. pure sounds, handwriting, addition and subtraction. Both these sessions allow for a dialogue between the presenters and the audience. Questions and feedback are encouraged. Parents/carers are also asked at these sessions to request the focus of future sessions.

### **Regular IEP (Individual Education Plans) meetings**

Parents/carers of children on the SEN (Special Educational Needs) register are invited to attend meetings where their child's IEP (Individual Education Plan) is discussed. These meetings take place before or after the school day. Parents/carers of children with statements of Special Educational Needs are also invited to attend annual review meetings.

**Notices** on classroom windows informing parents/carers of current events. These notices include reminders of what is happening in the near future. These events will have already been advertised via newsletters, the website and text message.

**Telephone** calls will be made where immediate contact with a family member/carer is required, i.e. for pupil injury or pupil incident. A member of staff will call the first named emergency contact as listed. Where no contact is made, a call will then be made to the second then third

named contact. In the event that no live contact can be made, the member of staff will either leave an answer phone message (ascending order as before) or ensure that repeat calls continue to be made to the contact numbers, where possible. Parent/carers are asked to contact the school by phone if their child is unwell on the first day the child is absent from school with subsequent calls if the absence is prolonged, followed by a written note on the child's return. Parents/carers are welcome to phone the school and speak to the class teachers before and after the school day. They are welcome to phone and speak to the headteacher at any time she is available. When unavailable there may be another person who can help or the details will be taken and passed to the headteacher at an appropriate time. The class teacher or headteacher may phone the parents/carers to discuss a concern if they have been unable to see the parent at the end of the day.

The school holds emergency contact details for all pupils. Families are encouraged to alert the school immediately in the event that contact information needs to be revised. Depending on the nature of the communication, the school will use the most practicable means to contact a parent/carer.

**Home-School Agreement** Our Home-School Agreement is a requirement of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. It explains the school's aims and values, the school's responsibilities towards the children, the responsibilities of parents/carers, and what the school expects of the children. We ask parents/carers to sign this agreement when their child starts in our school.

Information for **new parents/carers** is provided when they are invited to visit the school in July to meet the staff and other parents/carers of pupils in the reception year. During this meeting parents/carers will receive an intake pack which is updated regularly. Parents/carers of children transferring to us at other times are able to visit the school by appointment and are offered a guided tour and a prospectus. For some pupils there is a need for more extensive transfer arrangements involving parents/carers; these are based on individual needs.

Alwyn communicates with **outside agencies** as children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm and their protection is a shared responsibility. All adults at Alwyn should provide a safe and secure environment for the children. They are also in a position to identify and help abused children. When any member of staff has concerns about a child, these will be passed onto the headteacher, who has the responsibility for child protection in the school. This information may be shared with social services/education welfare.

There are a range of **public access documents** the school makes available for parents/carers. We keep a master set in the school office, and we make this available on request. It contains copies of all school curriculum **policies**, minutes of governing body meetings and copies of policies that the governing body are required to have in relation to charging and remissions, sex education, health and safety, curriculum, performance management, admissions and action planning following inspection.

At the beginning of each term, all KS1 teachers will display a **curriculum booklet** (parents/carers are encouraged to take a copy) of the work to be covered during the forthcoming term. We invite parents/carers to support their child's work through a range of suggested activities to be shared with the child at home.

Foundation Stage teachers give out a **topic web** each half-term with the **Foundation Stage newsletter** informing parents/carers of what their children are doing in the Foundation Stage.

Children in all classes have a **home-school reading diary**. This enables parents/carers to read comments from the adult hearing their child read in school and allow them to record their comments.

Our **Parent Council** provides an excellent forum for parents/carers to come together, share ideas and put forward their views to the headteacher. Our Parent Council allows us to have a greater regard to the views of parents/carers. The Parent Council advises the school on parental views and provides a forum through which school can consult parents/carers, a place for parents/carers to learn more about the school and a place for the school to learn more about parents.

The joint Alwyn and Courthouse **PTA** (Parent Teacher Association) is a parent-led voluntary body whose primary function is to fundraise for both schools. The activities organised and regular meetings of the committee provide an additional opportunity for communication between the school and the parent/carer body.

Parents/carers who are kind enough to be **volunteers** here at Alwyn are in the position of being able to communicate directly with members of staff. We all value their contribution to the children's learning and appreciate their help.

