

Dundela Infants' School and Nursery Unit



Communication Policy

Parents/carers are welcome to visit our school to discuss their child's progress, ask questions, and gain support or to have the opportunity to talk about their child/home issues with their child's class teacher.

How we will communicate with Parents/Carers

The Seesaw App

Our main means of communication is through the Seesaw App. Parents are asked to sign up to this at the beginning of each academic year and should check the App every day. Information sheets, newsletters, class and school notes and diary dates are communicated to parents through the App, along with copies of school policies and procedures.

If a parent/carer has difficulty signing into the App, they should phone the school office as soon as possible and the class teacher will be in touch.

Unless the school is otherwise advised, all parents with parental responsibility are able to sign up to the Seesaw App. Parents/carers should contact the school to request an additional QR code if needed. Please see **Appendix 1** for further information on the Seesaw App.

The School Website

The school website www.dundelainfants.co.uk provides an opportunity to share information about the school and is updated regularly with copies of policies, newsletters, menus and other important information.

Email

Parents can email the school at any time info@dundela.belfast.ni.sch.uk

Newsletters

Our newsletters are sent out via the Seesaw App at the beginning of every half term and contain important reminders, dates and messages for the weeks ahead. Families are strongly encouraged to read these.

Telephone calls

All telephone calls will be answered by staff in the main office. It is our policy that office staff do not interrupt teaching for staff to answer a telephone call unless it is an emergency.

Messages are taken and forwarded to the relevant person. If the call requires a response from a member of staff, we aim to do this by the end of the school day. However, as teachers have additional responsibilities in the afternoons, this may not always be possible.

Please note: The return call may display "NO Caller ID" on a mobile phone.

Telephone calls will be made where immediate contact with a family member is required i.e. for injuries, accidents and late pick-ups. 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 named contact and so forth. Please see our Collection Policy for further information.

Parent/Teacher Meetings

Opportunities are provided for parents to meet teachers at induction sessions and parent/teacher consultations held in October and March each school year.

Written Reports

Once a year, we provide a full written report to each child's parents/carers on his/her progress.

Parents holding Parental Responsibility who do not live with the child will be offered the opportunity to attend a parent/teacher interview and also to receive a copy of the child's annual report. There is a legal requirement for the school to make these facilities available to those holding Parental Responsibility.

If there is a school closure, this will be communicated to parents/carers through the Seesaw App, and School Website.

If a Parent/Carer has a Concern

In Dundela Infants' School and Nursery Unit, we have the best interests of all our pupils and their families at the centre of all we do. For this reason, we encourage anyone with a concern to speak to us as soon as possible. If concerns are dealt with at an early stage, then they are more likely to be resolved and there is no unnecessary dissatisfaction.

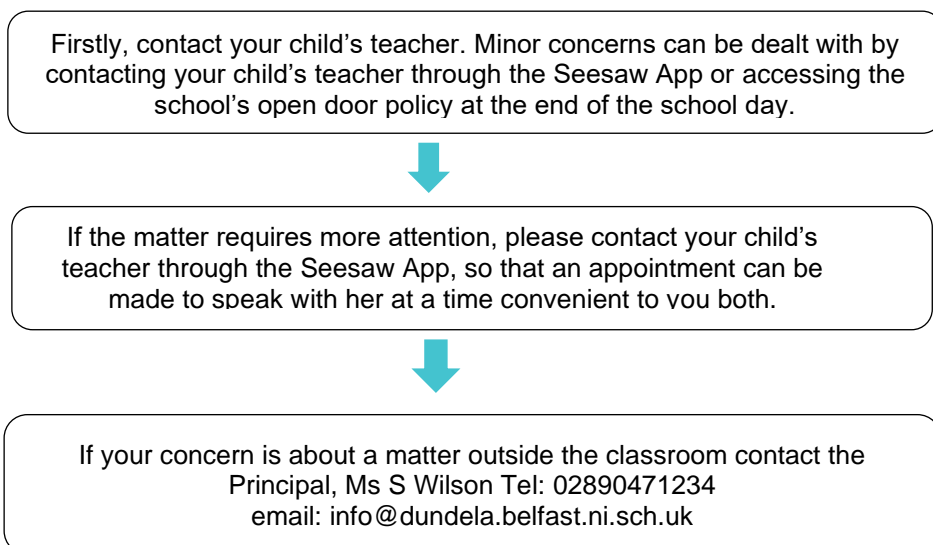
Many issues can be addressed simply by talking to the relevant staff who will be happy to help. Open communication and regular engagement between the school, parents/carers and other stakeholders is vital to the effective management of the school.

We welcome open communication with our staff; parents/carers can speak to staff by: -

- accessing the school's Open Door policy –Staff will be available to deal with minor concerns **at the end of the school day** when children are being collected. Parents/carers should wait until all children are safely dismissed before approaching the teacher. Staff are unable to discuss concerns when children are being welcomed in the morning.
- contacting the teacher via the Seesaw App. Please note staff can only reply to Seesaw messages during school hours.
- organising an appointment time for matters of greater importance requiring more time and attention, by contacting the teacher through the Seesaw App or the Principal through school office (office Telephone Number: 02890 471234, email: info@dundela.belfast.ni.sch.uk)
- Phoning the school office (Telephone Number: 02890 471234) with any immediate issues or important concerns.

Parents and carers should inform the teacher about any issues as soon as possible. Concerns about matters other than in the classroom should be raised with the Principal.

Communication Chart



The Principal is the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and any Safeguarding matters should be immediately brought to her attention, or in her absence, Mrs Herron or Miss Wilson (Nursery).

We take all concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve matters as quickly as possible. However, outside of teaching their designated class all staff have additional duties which they perform either before school, during break/lunch or after school. These duties will include care of children, organisation of extra-curricular activities or whole-school coordination of a curriculum subject. Therefore, staff may not be able to facilitate an immediate, unscheduled appointment.

Parental/Carer Access Guidelines

As parental/carers attitudes to school and the teacher directly influence the child, it is important that all exchanges between school and home are based on assumed respect for the other's knowledge of, and concern for, the child's welfare.

All discussions should be carried out in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Courteous, tolerant and non-aggressive behaviour is expected.

Staff will terminate a meeting/conversation if behaviour or attitude is not as above. Staff will inform the Principal if a meeting has been terminated. If considered necessary, another member of staff will also be present at any future meetings between the member of staff and the parent/carers.

It is also important to emphasise that respect must be shown between school staff/volunteers and parents and carers/other adults. **Under no circumstances should parents/carers confront or accost other parents/carers or pupils about a concern they may have.** All issues must be dealt with through the correct channels of communication.

On the advice of the Education Authority, in the very rare event of any of these points not being followed the following procedures will be adopted by the Board of Governors: -

1. The Board of Governors reserves the right to withdraw a parent's/carers licence to enter the school premises. Depending on circumstances a verbal or written warning may or may not be issued in advance of such action.
2. Any proposal to withdraw a parent's/carers licence will be communicated in writing to the parent/carers. This will include an opportunity to respond in writing within one week to the proposed action.
3. After that time any decision to withdraw the licence to enter school premises will be communicated in writing to the parent/carers.
4. Parents/carers will have a right of appeal in person or in writing to an Appeals Committee of the Board of Governors whose decision will be final.
5. Any such decision is open to review by the Board of Governors at a later date.

Further information on visitor code of conduct is available in our Visitors' Policy which can be accessed on the school website.

The Board of Governors hopes that it will not be necessary to invoke the above procedures to withdraw a parent's/carers licence to enter the school premises and would commend the good communications which already exist between home and school. We thank parents and carers for their co-operation and support, and look forward to the continued strengthening of our home/school partnerships.

If a parent/ carer wishes to make a complaint, the School Complaints Procedure should be followed. This can be accessed on the Website and is also available in the school office.

Inappropriate Use of Social Network Sites

Social media websites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against members of the general public including; schools, Principals, school staff, and in some cases other parents/carers and pupils.

The Governors considers the use of social media websites being used in this way as unacceptable and not in the best interests of the children or the whole school community.

Any concerns you may have must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, Vice Principal, Principal or the Chair of the Governors, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

In the event that any pupil or parent/carer of a child being educated in the school is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on social network sites, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the network site. All social network sites have clear rules about the content, which can be posted, on the site and they provide robust mechanisms to report content or activity which breaches this. The school will also expect that any parent/carer or pupil removes such comments immediately.

In serious cases, the school will consider its legal options to deal with any misuse of social networking and other sites regarding its staff and pupils.

We would expect that parents/carers would make all persons responsible for bringing children to school and collecting children on their behalf aware of this policy.

This policy will be reviewed and monitored in line with the school's policy review schedule.

Appendix 1



Seesaw

Thank you for signing up to the Seesaw App. You will receive all your information about school here. We hope you will enjoy getting an insight into your child's school experience as well as being kept up to date with what is happening in school.

Please note the following guidelines when using the Seesaw App: -

- ✓ The Seesaw App should be used to communicate with your child's teacher during school hours only- 8.30am-4.00pm. Please DO NOT message your child's teacher after this time or at the weekends as they will be unable to reply to you.
- ✓ As the teachers will be in class throughout the day, it may only be possible for them to get back to you at lunchtime or once the children finish school.
- ✓ If there is an extremely important message you need to pass on urgently, please phone or email the school as soon as possible.
- ✓ If a message has already gone out from your child's teacher with the information you are asking for, the reply from the teacher will read "please see previous message". As we are sure you can appreciate, the school staff are working extremely hard and do not have time to resend messages that have already been given out and will be stored in the App.
- ✓ Please check your child's Seesaw App daily.
- ✓ If you are having difficulty with the App and need to speak to your child's teacher, please contact the school office and your child's teacher will get back to you. Please note this may come up as a "No caller ID" notification on your phone.
- ✓ Please remember that all communication should be respectful.

Thank you for your support and cooperation.