

COMMUNICATION WITH THE TEACHERS

The Parent-Class Teacher Partnership

The parents of a child and the class teacher form an important partnership and can be of great help to one another in their shared work of supporting the child. When they see eye-to-eye about what a child needs, the child feels it and progress can come quickly. Parent-teacher conferences are invaluable for sharing reflections and getting on the same page. The social and emotional development is often a big component of those conversations. In between the thrice-yearly parent-teacher conferences, please keep your child's teacher informed of important household developments, such as a change in living situation, a death in the family, or a shift in health or sleeping pattern. For their part, class teachers will be quick to notify you if they feel something is going on that requires more immediate attention.

Parent-Teacher Communication Guidelines & FAQs

Time is precious for every one of us. The guidelines below are intended to ensure parents have information about how their child is doing in a timely way, that information-sharing between parents and teachers happens efficiently, and most importantly, that genuine quiet space is created for the big conversations teachers and parents need to have together if and as issues arise.

How will I know what's going on in my child's classroom?

- Class teachers will email parents about class developments and updates as needed.
- Class teachers will post monthly class updates in the Tuesday Notice.
- Class teachers will email to share special news, such as to describe a field trip or a special class event.
- Parent Evenings throughout the year will offer longer opportunities for sharing about the class.

How will I know how my child is doing? That everything is all right?

Class teachers and/or the office will be prompt to call or email in the following circumstances:

- if your child is hurt at school or feeling sick
- if your child is involved in a significant incident or conflict with another child during the day
- if the teacher thinks something merits a conference prior to the three official Parent-Teacher Conferences (October, February, & May)

In sum, assume that no news is good news; that said, teachers do not see or catch everything that goes on with and between all their students. They count on parents to share with them concerns their child brings home as feels relevant, so they can promptly address those as well.

How to communicate questions and concerns or share information with class teachers

If you have a concern, leave a voicemail. If you have brief information to share, send an email.

When to leave a voicemail

Leave a voicemail for your teacher *if you have a concern that merits a longer conversation*. State your concern in a sentence or two, knowing you will have opportunity to talk in depth when your teacher calls or emails you back. Examples of messages:

- *Juan is complaining he is being bullied. I'd love to talk.*
- *Bryar is feeling he doesn't have enough time to eat his lunch. Can we check in?*

- *Jasmine came home upset about something that happened at recess. Please call.*

When to email

Email to share information or news that requires virtually no response such as “Sam sprained his ankle last night.” “Jenny is missing her dad who is traveling overseas.” Trust that the class teacher will know how to respond to your child in a supportive way as needed.

Email to ask a logistical question that can be answered in a few words. “Can Janie bring her new puppy for Show & Tell?” “Are jeans okay for Joey’s costume?”

When parents can expect a response to a voicemail or email from their class teacher

- Your class teacher will return your call or email within 24 business hours, Monday - Friday between 8:00 and 4:00. (If you leave a voicemail on Friday, you can expect a response on Monday.)
- According to the question or concern, your class teacher may call you back either to talk it through or to suggest a meeting in person.
- If the teacher feels an in-person meeting is best, they will email times they are available.
- Your class teacher will not call in the evenings or on weekends.

Boundaries to Respect When Communicating Concerns

- Always contact the teacher through their school extension or via email; never text or call the teacher’s cellphone unless you have received specific permission to do so.
- Refrain from trying to get the teacher’s attention around concerns in the presence of your child or other children, or at arrival or dismissal times or between classes.
- Refrain from detailing your concern in a lengthy email, tempting as that might be. Your class teachers does not have time to answer in kind and may not even read it through. Class teachers are deluged with information they need to keep up with and cannot both fulfill their obligations to prep for their classes and devote hours to reading and responding to lengthy emails. In short, we respectfully ask parents to follow the communication protocol above; it will ensure best results and ultimately cause the least stress for all parties.

How do parents communicate with specialty teachers?

(Handwork, Woodworking, Games, Music, & Foreign Language)

If parents have a concern regarding one of their child’s specialty classes, contact the class teacher. The class teacher will follow up as needed.

If parents have a practical, logistical question for a specialty teacher or relevant information to share, send the specialty teacher a brief email.

How do parents communicate with subject teachers?

(Math, Language Arts Skills, Literature)

Communicate directly with the subject teacher by sending a brief email or leaving a brief voicemail as per guidelines above. Use the teacher’s school extension or school email. The subject teacher will get back to you within 24 hours.

How do parents communicate in an emergency situation?

On school days, call the office. The office will communicate with the teachers and staff. On weekends, contact the administrator. The administrator will then communicate with teachers and staff.