

Spring 2010

Messages from the evidence:
Engaging with families

Using a range of technologies to engage families

Email and social software

Encourage more productive relationships between your school and parents with two-way communication between parents and teachers. Make clear where parents should direct their emails or comment upon blogs.

Text messaging

If text messaging is going to be solely one-way, from school to parent, use it for simple, timely and generic information.

SMS systems can be set up to work through the learning platform, so consider using this method to develop parent-teacher communication efficiently.

School websites

Divide the website into a clear public-facing area for prospective families and a secure area for current families linked to or contained within the learning platform.

Learning platforms

Create an interactive space and give parents access to communicate with staff or other parents (using email, instant messaging or blog tools).

Planning communication with the family

Message?

What is the purpose of your communication with parents?

Is it complex or simple?

Directionality: does it require a response?

Is the information personal to the child's parent or is it generic?

Should the information be communicated immediately?

Who is it for?

Who is the target for this information? Is it:

- the child or young person
- the home
- individual parents or carers?

What is the family set-up? Are there non-resident parents or non-parent carers?

Needs?

Is English the recipient's first language?

Do they have literacy difficulties?

Do they have home access to technology?

Are they computer literate?

Do they have other time commitments like work or childcare?

Do they seem confident in the school environment?

Work together to improve communication using technology

Invite parents into school to experience what their child has been learning and how this can be supported at home using technology. Run informal sessions around particular topics that promote the simple and effective use of technology, for example at open days, after-school clubs, cyber cafés, etc.

