



CONTEMPORARY MODES OF SCHOOL HOME COMMUNICATION

P. Divya

Research Scholar, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore.

A. G.Sudha

Associate Professor, Velalar College of Engineering and Technology, Erode.

ABSTRACT Communication between school and home is highly important to a child's success in school. It's clear that parents want a more personalised approach in communication and it seems that simply providing marks, levels or grades is not enough. Above all, parents want to know whether their child is happy and confident in class. When school leaders, teachers, and other school staff share information with parents openly and frequently, parents are more likely to trust and work with the school to support their child's learning. Good communication is the basis for effective home-school collaboration, and when parents and schools work together, children receive the support they need to thrive and grow at school. This article deals with the range of communication opportunities available to schools including the emerging use of technology to communicate with their parents for building a positive relationship with them.

KEYWORDS : Communication, Parents, School and Teachers

Communication in schools

Communication is neither the transmission of a message nor the message itself. It is the mutual exchange of understanding, originating with the receiver. Communication plays a vital role in schools. School communication involves constant flow of information. Parents need to be communicated about each and every aspect of their children. Teacher-parent communication fosters better understanding and collaboration between the classroom and home to make education a wholesome experience for the child.

It is really a partnership providing two-way information flow from the teacher to the parents about the child's classroom achievements and other aspects and from the parent to the teacher about the complementary elements in the home environment. It provides the mechanism for the teacher to invite, and support, the parents' active participation in the child's education in the home environment. And it can provide the link between classroom learning activities and at-home learning activities.

Schools, these days are adopting modern communication modes for transmitting information to parents. Communication plays a very important role in intimating homework, leave, competition etc... and the related queries raised on the above aspects. The rules, regulations and policies of a school have to be communicated to parents so that they can be able to understand well about the school. Communication gaps should not occur in any situation which may leads to unnecessary problems.

Greater the number of students, the more difficult is the job of communicating. Since it is a daunting task, there are organisations that are outsourcing the communication process alone for schools. This itself depicts the importance of communication in schools. Schools started to seek help of these organisations in order to reduce their time and effort. With a help of these institutions they can able to disseminate their information to parents within less or no time, with which they can be able to use it for some other productive activities.

In early times, school communication was limited to paper-work and telephone calls alone. But today technology has transformed the way people communicate and share messages. Email, WhatsApp, Chat, SMS and Social networking sites are preferred over sending messages on paper. Effective communication helps in building goodwill of schools.

Modes of communication

Use of technology makes communication effective and easy. With the invent of technology schools have various options to reach out like phone calls, emails, newsletters, chat applications as well as social media tools. But organizing all this is not easy either. Schools, according to their policies and procedures adopt various modes of communication.

Diaries

School diaries have undoubtedly been a great way to keep parent-teacher communication alive since years. It has been one of the most successful ways to carry an important message from the School to the parent and vice versa and is still being used by schools for the same purpose. School diary has been a successful way to communicate since years and hence there is no doubt on its effectiveness.

Newsletters

Newsletter provides the means to convey important messages about school's strategies and plans Newsletters have always been a great form of communication and nothing has changed there. What may changed is the avenue through which newsletter is shared. Previously it will be posted to home and now they are emailed or posted in website. It reminds parents of upcoming events, sharing parenting tips and includes any special occasion at school. Newsletters can be monthly, half yearly or annually depends on the school's policies and procedures. This will give parents a sense of the teacher's expectations of the children and of their endeavours with the children.

School Website

In the 21st century, the first place to search for information is electronic devices. Having basic information available online is a great way to communicate with parents. The school websites provides a separate login for each and every parent which is protected by a password. They can enter in by giving their user id where they can be provided with entire information about their children. They can even register their feedback and also can give their complaints and suggestions about schools.

Emails

Emails are handy for tech-savvy parents and used as a mode of communication between school and home. They can be used for the announcements of parent teachers meeting, competition, submission of homework, etc. Many schools have already moved on to the digital classroom, to free the teacher of time, effort and paper work which makes it even better. The use of email communication between the teacher and parent can help ease the strain during parent teacher meets because any issue, problem or announcement can be communicated at the required time without waiting for a later scheduled meeting so that the issue can be addressed immediately. This also frees the teacher from remembering and correlating information and messages over the year to be conveyed to the parent. The parent also benefits from being in email touch with the teacher because they can monitor the progress of their child, and know about problems that the child may be facing academically and otherwise.

Social Media

Now a day it's difficult to find a family without an involvement in social media. Most of the parents are having an account in atleast one of the social media like twitter, facebook, whatsapp etc.. Schools started taking advantage of such media's where they can be able to share the information to parents instantly. Compared with letters, notice and diaries, information can be disseminated quickly through

this way. As a means for disseminating information and exhibiting and sharing the skills and talents of the students, social networking (eg; whatsapp) can undoubtedly support the teacher-parent communication.

Phone Calls

Normally schools won't make phone calls to parent often. In case of any emergency or any extra ordinary situation they will ring up to home. It can be for a positive reason or a negative one. Positive ones include appreciating child for his/her achievements in academics or sports and to inform a child's strength. Negative ones may be for child's disciplinary aspects, leave complaints and even sick information. Research shows that school-home communication is greatly increased through personalized positive telephone contact between teachers and parents. Parents can also ring up to schools for clarifying their doubts and queries.

Parent Teacher Meeting

A parent-teacher meeting or parents meeting, is a short meeting or conference between the parents and teachers of students to discuss a child's progress at school and find solutions to academic or behavioural problems. Parent-teacher meetings discuss about the information conveyed by report cards, diaries and letters by focusing on students' personality, habits, strengths and weaknesses in individual subjects and generalizing the level of extra-curricular skills and competences. It can be one-to-one, many-to-one, one-to-many and many-to-many meeting depend on the content of the meeting. Frequency of these meetings depends on the policies and procedures of school or on the matters concerned. Mostly face-to-face meeting works best especially when sensitive matters are concerned. The written word can often be mistaken or misunderstood. Parents and teacher communication is very effective when they meet each another face to face. Teachers can get a good feel for what is happening with the child at home and gain insight into how parents feel about what is going on at school.

CONCLUSION

These are just a few of the many avenues for teachers to connect with parents. Teachers should strive to use a variety of effective strategies to make communication with parents as informative and interactive as possible, incorporating new communication methods and yet retaining the human touch. Every communication exchange, regardless of format, should reflect a thoughtful, planned approach and should be viewed as an opportunity for teachers to promote parent partnerships and, ultimately, to support student learning. Schools must keep in mind that they are serving the student, and focus on what is best for him/her. A good working partnership between school and parent is essential for a student's growth. Teachers should strive to use a variety of effective strategies to make communication with parents as informative and interactive as possible, incorporating new communication methods and yet retaining the human touch. Every communication exchange, regardless of format, should reflect a thoughtful, planned approach and should be viewed as an opportunity for teachers to promote parent partnerships and, ultimately, to support student learning.

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