Creating deliberate, intentional communication channels to inform our stakeholders and share our story.

Communication • Guidelines

Zion Elementary District 6

District and School Communication Tools

In order to provide important information to our families and community stakeholders, listed below are the primary external communications tools utilized throughout Zion Elementary District 6.

Most school information shared falls into the categories below.

Promotion of school happenings and news *(e.g., achievements, events, etc.)*

Time-critical school information *(e.g., school closings, policies, etc.)*

PTO events and other important issues

Leadership and education improvement ideas *(e.g., parent resources)*

Community outreach including fundraising and volunteers

Stories and imagery of the school's impact on the community

District Website

The Zion Elementary District 6 website is the primary source for information about the district and schools therein. Parents, guardians, employees, and community members should have confidence that important and up-to-date information can be located on the district's website.

Calendar

The district utilizes Google Calendars for event management. A district calendar and individual school calendars are available. These calendars are displayed on the district website and are easily accessible and shared with the community. Important dates for district-wide and individual school events are posted.

SchoolMessenger

SchoolMessenger is our district's notification system used to deliver the highest priority announcements and emergency messages. Multi-channels are used to reach parents/guardians including phone, email, and text messages as well as push notification to our mobile app.

Mobile App

Have easy access to pertinent information by downloading our mobile app! Features include push notifications, calendar events, recent news, announcements, locate contact information, digital backpack, food service menus, online payments, after school programming, bullying reporting and more!

Download from the Apple Store or the Google play store on your iOS or android device today! [Zion Elementary SD 6}

Type of Information	Website	Mobile App (Push notifications)	Notification & Alerts	Email	Social Media	Print
Emergency alerts	●	●	●	●	●	
Public relations	●				●	●
Event promotion	●	●		●	●	●
Special announcement	●	●		●	●	●
Important reminders	●	●	●	●	●	●
Forms/documents	●			●		●
Campaigns	●			●	●	●

Recent News

The recent news feed includes celebrations of students, staff, or events that have occurred within the school(s). High quality pictures or graphics accompany every news story. All postings are accessible from the district/school website(s) and mobile app.

Announcements

The announcements feed is utilized to highlight upcoming events or to educate the community about important district/school information. All announcement postings are accessible from the district/school website(s) and mobile app.

E-News

Electronic communications that are sent by building administrators or the district superintendent. Content includes short entries of upcoming events, reminders, or special stories to keep families informed. Recipients will be able to reply to messages for increased communication between home and school.

Remind

Electronic communication portal used by teachers to communicate classroom messages to families via email and text message. Recipients will be able to reply to messages for increased communication between home and school.

Social Media

To easily connect and share with the Zion community, the social media platforms utilized within the district include Facebook and Twitter .

Facebook
The following Facebook pages are available for community members to follow.

Zion District 6	Lakeview Preschool
Beulah Park Elementary	Shiloh Park Elementary
East Elementary	West Elementary
Elmwood Elementary	Zion Central Middle School

Twitter
@ZionDistrict6 is the official Twitter feed of the district.

Hashtags To Follow

#zionD6	#eastZD6	#shilohZD6
#ZD6BeTheChange	#elmwoodZD6	#westZD6
#beulahZD6	#lakeviewZD6	#zcmsZD6

Printed Materials

At times, printed materials are still a necessity and can be used to communicate important information home to parents and guardians.

Zion Connection
Zion Connection, a biannual print publication, is provided to all school families in print and posted electronically on the district website. Content includes district initiatives and overview to keep stakeholders informed of programs and services aligned with the 2017-2022 strategic plan.

Letters from Administration
Letters are periodically sent home with students when pertinent information is needed to be provided to families. Letters are also posted on district/school websites and sent electronically via email.

Flyers, Brochures
Flyers are sent home with students highlighting upcoming events/activities taking place within the district or school(s). Informational guides or brochures are provided to increase understanding of curriculum, protocols, etc.

Digital Backpack

Our digital backpack is an electronic repository for non-district, community flyers and events, not directly affiliated with the school district. The digital backpack can be accessed on the district and school websites as well as the mobile app.

Interested in submitting a digital flyer?
Visit www.zion6.org. Navigate to the Communications Department webpage, under "About Our District" to submit a request. *English and Spanish version are required.*

Communication Protocol

Communication refers to both the sending and receiving of information, electronically and in print, and verbal communications such as telephone conversations and face-to-face meetings.

Educating our youth is a collaborative effort, with parents being the first foremost teacher of their child(ren). We recognize that educating children is a process that involves partnership between parents, class teachers and the school community. As a partnership, our parents/carers will understand the importance of a good working relationship to equip children with the necessary skills for adulthood. For these reasons we continue to welcome and encourage parents/carers to participate fully in the life of our school.

Zion Elementary School District 6 administration, faculty, and staff are eager to accommodate your needs, questions, and concerns in the most efficient manner.

Use the guide below to help decide the appropriate point of contact.

Parents are asked to have a conversation or meeting with their child's teacher as a first step in answering any questions or concerns that they have about their child. In the event that these conversations do not resolve their questions or concerns, parents are then encouraged to contact their child's principal or assistant principal to ask for assistance in seeking answers.

After taking this step, if parents are still not able to get the answers to questions or concerns they have, they are then encouraged to reach out to the appropriate department at the district office to seek support.

School and department contact information can be located on district website at www.zion6.org.

1 TEACHER

The first contact regarding…

Student issues

A conference

Questions about student grades or behavior

Questions about specific classes or activities related to the classroom

Curriculum specific to the classroom

2 PRINCIPAL

For information and assistance regarding…

School programs, policies, and procedures

Unresolved issues after teacher contact

Security or safety related to school or student

Feedback and/or suggestions about school-wide issues

4 DISTRICT OFFICE

For information and assistance regarding

Unresolved site issues

District-wide programs, policies, and procedures

Curriculum

Facilities

Budgets

3 SCHOOL OFFICE

For information regarding…

School-side events

Attendance

Calendar

Guidelines have been established to support effective communication between community members, parents, teachers, staff, and administrators. In order to ensure a successful exchange of information, it is important that all parties follow a universal and consistent protocol.

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a reminder to all parents, carers and visitors to our school about the expected conduct. This is so we can continue to flourish, progress and achieve in an atmosphere of mutual understanding. Any concerns you may have about the school must be made through the appropriate channels so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

Maintain Respectful and Open Communication

- Always use a respectful and polite tone
- Request, don't demand
- Be ready not just to provide information, but to listen to teacher/staff observations and perspectives
- Enter the exchange with an open mind and assume a shared best interest for your child
- Be prepared to work collaboratively to solve problems

Confidentiality

Recognize that confidentiality may limit information that can be shared from school to parents, including consequences for other students' behaviors

Time to Respond to Communications

- Teachers will make every effort to respond as soon as possible to parent communications, with the understanding that the teaching day sometimes precludes immediate responses.
- Teachers and staff may need some time to collect needed information before responding.

Whom to Contact

- Communications of classroom concerns about academics or in-class behaviors should be directed at first to your child's teacher. The Building administrators should receive communications regarding non-academic concerns or scheduling.
- If you have an issue with a particular staff member, first try to address those concerns with that staff member directly.
- If you have discussed with your child's teacher and the issue has not been addressed to your satisfaction then contact the school principal.

In order to ensure a successful exchange of information, it is important that all parties follow a few key principles.

Please recognize that it is both the policy and the value of our district that we operate with openness, collaboration and the shared best interest for every student.

We ask parents, carers and visitors to:

- Respect the caring ethos and values of our school
- Understand that both teachers and parents need to work together for the benefit of their children.
- Demonstrate that all members of the school community should be treated with respect and therefore set a good example in their own speech and behavior.
- Seek to clarify a child's version of events with the school's view in order to bring about a peaceful solution to any issue.
- Approach the school to help resolve any issues of concern.

Should any of the following behaviors occur on school premises the school may deem it is necessary to contact the appropriate authorities and if necessary, even ban the offending adult from entering the school grounds.

- Disruptive behavior which interferes or threatens to interfere with the operation of a classroom, an employee's office, office area or any other area of the school grounds including team matches.
- Using loud/or offensive language, swearing, cursing, using profane language or displaying temper.

- Threatening to do actual bodily harm to a member of school staff, principal, superintendent, visitor, fellow parent/carer or student regardless of whether or not the behavior constitutes a criminal offence.
- Damaging or destroying school property.
- Abusive or threatening e-mails or text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communication
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the students/parent/staff, at the school on Facebook or other social sites.
- The use of physical aggression towards another adult or child.
- Approaching someone else's child in order to discuss or chastise them because of the actions of this child towards their own child. (Such an approach to a child may be seen to be an assault on that child and may have legal consequences).
- Smoking and consumption of alcohol or other drugs whilst on school property.
- Dogs being brought on to school premises.

We trust that parents and carers will assist our school with the implementation of this policy and we thank you for your continuing support of the school.

Media Protocols

District Spokesperson and Key Contact for Media

Official Spokesperson

The superintendent is the official spokesperson for the school district. The superintendent appoints the Director of Communication as the key contact for coordinating and sharing of information with the media.

The Director of Communications will work with each school site or program's designated administrator when it is necessary to share information with the media. District employees will receive approval from the Director of Communications prior to sharing school district information with the media. The approval may be given to an employee to maintain direct media connections when appropriate (e.g, sports season, ongoing activity).

Crisis or Emergency Situation

The superintendent will identify one spokesperson to address all media when a crisis or an emergency situation occurs within the district. The district will identify specific times and locations of news conferences and/or briefings when necessary.

Media Communications with Students

The media may not contact or interview students on any of the school campuses or at school-related events without verbal permission of the district, school site, or program's spokesperson. Parent/guardian permission may be required and determined by the spokesperson.

Public Data Requests

Requests for public data should be directed to FOIA@zion6.org.

Social Media Usage Guidelines

At Zion Elementary District, we recognize that many of our staff, students, parents and community members are active social media users. As a school district, we are also incorporating social media as a strategic tool for communication, teaching and learning. Though social media sites are a platform for communication between home and school, unfortunately, they can also be used to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, school staff, and in some cases other parents/students.

The purpose of these guidelines is to help you to participate online in a respectful, relevant way that protects your reputation, and the reputation of Zion District 6, and that respects the relationship between teachers, families and students. For the purposes of this document, social media includes, but is not necessarily limited to, social networking and media sharing sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat, LinkedIn, Google+, Flickr, Tumblr, and YouTube. It also includes blogs, comments on web sites, discussion forums, and any other activity online involving connecting or communicating with other users.

These guidelines complement, but do not replace, any existing policies regarding the use of technology, computers, network accounts, e-mail and the Internet that are in place at Zion Elementary District 6.

We encourage responsible participation in social networking sites, subject to existing policies concerning the use of social media and other applicable policies, including, but not limited to those concerning non-discrimination, anti-harassment, anti-bullying, and copyright/fair use. We ask that you carefully consider the very public forum you are participating in and act in a way that properly represents both your personal and/or professional reputation and relationship within Zion District 6.

- Express your ideas and opinions in a respectful manner.
- Avoid insulting others, including students, staff, parents, our extended school community, or other school districts.
- Do not use racial slurs, innuendos, obscenity or other inappropriate content.
- Avoid posting, sharing, commenting, or otherwise engaging in rumors or unsupported information.
- Your posts and comments should help build and support the school community.

Cyberbullying, Bullying and Harassment

Cyberbullying is defined as the use by one person to publicly humiliate another by inappropriate social network entry. We will take and deal with this as a serious incident of school bullying.

In the event any student or parent/carer of a child/ren being educating in the school in experiences and/or is aware of cyberbullyuig, bullying or harassment, a reporting option is available on all Zion Elementary District 6 websites. The reporting person can remain anonymous if desired.

The school district and school board of education considers the use of social media sites being used in a defamatory or negative manner against students, staff, and/or parents of Zion Elementary District 6 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 identified in the communications protocol outlined on page 4 of this publication so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

All social network sites have clear rules about the content, which can be posted, on the site and they provide robust mechanisms to report contact or activity which breaches this.

In the event that any student or parent/carer of a child/ren being educated in the school is found to be posting libelous or defamatory comments on Facebook or other social network sites, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the network site.

The school will also expect that any parent/carer or student removes such comments immediately. In serious cases the school will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking and other sites.

Emergency Notifications

All district and/or school emergency alerts will utilize the district notification system to inform parents/guardians/carers of an emergency. Alerts will be sent via email, text, mobile app and/or phone to parents/guardians of students identified in the district's student database.

Weather-related School Closings

The decision to close school because of inclement weather is a difficult and serious undertaking. When deciding whether to close schools, we take the following factors into consideration:

- Amount and type of precipitation
- Weather forecasts (start and stop times)
- Ability to clear parking lots and sidewalks around schools;
- Street (highway, thoroughfare and residential), and bus stop conditions;
- Wind and wind chill, and
- Temperature

The superintendent closely monitors local forecasts at first announcement of a storm front and consults with neighboring districts. At all times, the safety of students and staff is the basis for determining the cancellation of school. In most situations, the decision to close schools will be made by 4:30 a.m.

When schools are closed for the day, all extracurricular activities, interscholastic athletics, practices, and field trips are cancelled. Notification of school closings because of inclement weather will be communicated to the following:

- Email, Text, and Phone Notification
- Mobile App
- Zion Elementary School District Websites and Facebook Pages
- Television Stations (*CBS—Channel 2, NBC— Channel 5, ABC – Channel 7, WGN – Channel 9 , Fox—Channel 32*)

We ask that you do not call your school or the media concerning cancellations. Please listen to the above stations or check our website for information about school closings. If you have any questions or concerns regarding these procedures, please contact the Director of Communications, 847-379-0111. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding when school cancellations occur.

Lockout

A lockout is called when there is a threat or hazard *outside* of the school building. Whether it's due to violence or criminal activity in the immediate neighborhood, or a dangerous animal on the playground, a lockout uses the security of the school building to act as protection.

Classes will continue as usual within the building, however activity that requires the opening of exterior doors is not allowable. No one may enter or exit the building at any point until the local law enforcement determines the site is secure and the lockout can be lifted.

Lockdown

A lockdown is called when there is a threat or hazard *inside or approaching the inside* of the school building. From parental custody disputes, to intruders, to an active shooter, a lockdown uses classroom security to protect students and staff from threat.

In an actual Lockdown situation, doors are locked, lights are turned off, and all persons move away from visible windows. No movement within the school is permitted. The rooms will remained locked until the local law enforcement determines the site is secure and the lockdown can be lifted. Each room will be cleared individually by either law enforcement or building administrator/designee upon directives of local law enforcement.

Student Relocation/Reunification

In an event that requires students to be moved off-site from school grounds, specific guidelines and protocol have been designated within our Emergency Preparedness Guide.

Families will be notified with details for reunification via phone, email, text message, push notification and website posting. Only parents/guardians or emergency contacts will be allowed to pick up a student at a reunification site. **Photo ID is required at time of student pick-up.**

Reunification Process

1. Arrive at reunification site.
2. Complete Reunification Card and present photo identification.
3. Reunification information is validated through our student database.
4. Move to reunification holding area.
   A "runner" will retrieve the student from the student holding area
5. The student will be brought to the adult picking up student.
   Photo ID will be checked again.
6. Adult will sign reunification card prior to student being released.

We ask that you do not call the school or District Office during a lockout/lockdown event. Please check your phone, email, text messages, mobile app and the school website for updates to the situation.

Notifications will be communicated to parents/families of Zion Elementary School District 6 in the event a school issues a lockout or lockdown. Prompt notification will be sent via email, text and push notification upon initiation.

A follow up notification, using the same communication methods will be sent when the lockout/lockdown is lifted.

Final written communication, including details, will be provided by 5 pm via phone, email, text message, push notification and posted on the school website in the announcements section.

Lockouts and Lockdowns may be initiated by one of the following:
- Zion Police Officer
- School principal or designee (Site administrators have authority to lock down their site only.)

Only a police officer or the superintendent's designee can direct other sites to lock down.

District Security Protocol

Zion Elementary District 6 is revitalizing building entries areas to include a secured entry vestibule and visitor check-in process.

Secured Entry

Upon entry at any of our schools, visitors will be required to sign-in to our self-service check-in kiosk. Visitors can sign in and out in any of the following supported languages Chinese (Traditional), Chinese (Simplified), English (US), English (AU), English (UK), French (France), French (Canada), Spanish (Spain), Spanish (Latin America), Hindi, Kannada, Japanese.

Visitors will be required to scan a government-issued photo ID, INS card, military ID etc. during the sign-in process. Your information will automatically be transferred to a visitor badge and printed for your convenience.

Upon retrieval of your visitor badge please approach our school secretary to check-in regarding the purpose of your visit.

Student Acceptable Use Policy

All staff and students are required to sign an Acceptable Use Policy for access to our district's technology infrastructure including, but no limited to, network, devices, Google account access, and email.

Photo Agreement

At the time of registration, parents/guardians are required to give permission for their child to be recorded or photographed for appropriate and legitimate educational purposed including, but not limited to, yearbook, website, video, newsprint, and/or public relations materials.

YOUR FEEDBACK MATTERS: Our goal is to make communication of important school information as easy for parents/families to use as possible. Please let us know what you think of District communication methods . The best way to do this is to submit a feedback form from the district website located in the communications department.