

# Home School Communication Policy

<b>Policy status</b>	Non-statutory school derived policy
<b>Date Reviewed:</b>	September 2022
<b>Next Review:</b>	September 2024
<b>Review Cycle:</b>	2 years
<b>Reviewing committee:</b>	Senior Leadership Team
<b>Linked Policies:</b>	IT and internet acceptable use Parent code of conduct Staff code of conduct Complaints policy Equality policy Home Learning Policy Remote Learning Policy Home School Partnership agreement

## 1. Introduction and aims

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/carers has a positive impact on pupils' learning because it:

- Gives parents/carers the information they need to support their child's education
- Helps the school improve, through feedback and consultation with parents/carers
- Builds trust between home and school, which helps the school better support each child's educational and pastoral needs

The aim of this policy is to promote clear and open communication by:

- Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers and how the school expects parents/carers to communicate with us
- Setting clear standards for responding to communication from parents/carers
- Helping parents/carers reach the member of school staff who is best placed to address their specific query or concern so they can get a response as quickly as possible
- Setting out the methods of communication available to parents for contacting the school and our expectations from parents when visiting our school or communicating with staff at our school

## 2. References

We believe it is important to create a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for pupils, staff and parents in our school. We encourage clear, open communication links with parents as we believe it has a positive impact on pupils' learning. It provides parents with the information they need to support their child's education and helps to build a partnership between home and school. Such communication can be entirely positive and practical for example to seek information, ask a question, clear up a misunderstanding or to draw attention to a matter. Sometimes there is a need to resolve an issue or misunderstanding.

We use the term 'parents' in this policy to refer to:

- Anyone with parental responsibility for a pupil
- Anyone caring for a child or who is in loco-parentis

The term member of staff as referred to in this policy includes:

- Anyone employed by the school
- Anyone training in a professional capacity at the school
- Governors (when acting in this capacity)
- Volunteers at the school (when acting in this capacity)
- Anyone employed through an external agency, who are acting in a professional capacity on the school site

We acknowledge that sometimes there can be situations that can be emotional and challenging for parents and staff to work through. Nonetheless, we expect all our community to show mutual respect. We have clear expectations and guidelines on behaviour for all members of our community. This includes staff (through the staff code of conduct) and pupils (through our behaviour policy). We also expect parents to engage constructively with school staff and to work together with them in the best interests of our children.

We will only communicate with parents in respect of their own child at the school. Requests to raise a concern on behalf of another parent will be declined, as will be requests for information on another child. Should any correspondence be received from legal advisers then this will be shared with the school's legal advisers.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

**Headteacher** is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- Regularly reviewing this policy

**Staff** are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's ICT and internet acceptable use policy
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)

Communication will be in line with our internet acceptable use policy.

**Parents** are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance
- Respond to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive, or threatening will be treated in line with our [parent code of conduct within the Home School Partnership Agreement](#), or we may seek legal advice to resolve the matter.

## 4. How we communicate with parents and carers

The sections below explain how we keep parents up-to-date with their child's education and what is happening in school.

Parents should monitor all of the following regularly to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child.

This is not an exhaustive list.

**Email** - We use email to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- Unscheduled school closures (for example, closure due to extreme weather)
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests
- Changes to school operations and timings
- Contact parents or respond to parents formally regarding school activities or individual children

**Text messages** - We will text parents about:

- Payments
- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to extreme weather)

### School calendar

Our school website and weekly newsletter includes a full school calendar for the term and may include events beyond the current term.

Where possible, we aim to give parents at least ten school term days' notice of any events or special occasions (including non-uniform days, learning events or visitors, or requests for pupils to bring in special items or materials). There will be occasions when we will ask your child to bring their PE kit on a different day than planned for additional activities or where weather conditions require that we make a change to our plans.

Any such event will be included in the school calendar, [found on our website and in our newsletter](#).

### Phone calls

Staff will call parents when appropriate to discuss a pupils' performance, behaviour, pastoral issues, attendance or to deal directly with any queries.

Staff will use school landline phones or a school mobile to contact parents/carers via their phone numbers provided to the school.

Only in an emergency will staff call parents directly from personal mobile phones with their numbers withheld.

## **Letters**

We send letters home regularly, via email or hard copy, whichever is most appropriate.

## **Home learning, school key dates, home school communication**

Staff will contact parents via phone, Seesaw, parent text message service, email or letter.

The school will communicate with parents via parent text message, email, the school website or hard copy letter.

Parents can communicate in person, via phone, email via the school admin address, via Seesaw (learning platform) or through a written letter.

We provide Reading Record books to children to record reading in school and daily reading at home, in line with our home learning policy. The children are responsible for carrying reading records to and from school on a daily basis.

## **Reports**

Parents receive an annual end-of-year written report covering their child's achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, behaviour and social development, next steps in learning and their attendance.

We may write additional reports for parents to support a child's particular need or provision.

## **Meetings**

We hold Learning Consultation evenings for parents and their child in the autumn and the spring terms; we offer the opportunity for parents to discuss end of year reports in the summer term. During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, learning across the curriculum, their child's wellbeing, or any other area to celebrate or to address of concern.

The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings between parents' evenings if there are concerns or things to celebrate about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing.

Parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these additional needs.

## **School website**

Key information about the school is posted on our website, including and not limited to:

- Transition and key school information
- School times and term dates
- Important events and announcements
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information
- Information about before and after-school provision

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

## 5. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

In the case of communications with the school, that are not raising a formal complaint the following guidance will apply. Please use the list in appendix 1 to identify the most appropriate person to contact about a query or issue, including the school office number and email address.

### Communication during school hours/ working days

- i. Office staff will **aim** to respond to communication during core school hours during term time 8.00am-5.00pm, or their working hours (if they work part-time).
- ii. Teaching staff will respond to communication after the school day has concluded, subject to other commitments. (timeframe needs to be communicated)
- iii. Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours 8.00am – 5.00pm, or during weekends or school holidays.
- iv. Staff may choose to work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond outside of these hours, but they are **not expected** to do so.
- v. Staff **will not** usually respond to communications outside of school hours Monday to Friday 8.00 – 5.00, or their working hours (if they work part-time), at weekends or during school holidays.

### Email

- i. Parents are welcome to email the school, **adminoffice@hook-jun.hants.sch.uk** about non-urgent issues in the first instance. Please always use the adminoffice@ mailbox in preference to using an individual staff email address.
- ii. Emails will be most helpful if they are concise, explaining concerns in a clear way. Lengthy and overly detailed accounts can make it more difficult to understand what is being explained and to respond in a timely or clear way.
- iii. The school will aim to respond within 2 working days, unless this is a safeguarding issue in which case we will respond as quickly as possible. If a response is unable to be provided within this timeline, which can be to ensure a full and considered response, then a revised timeline will be provided and communicated. We ask that parents await a response from the school and that further emails are not sent pending that response, unless the new deadline has passed.

### Phone calls

- i. If you need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter or a general query, please email the school office and the relevant member of staff will contact you within 2 working days.
- ii. If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will get in touch with you to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure you have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within 2 days of your request. In

most circumstances, teaching and leadership staff are unlikely to be available to receive calls due to teaching and other school based commitments.

- iii. If your issue is **urgent**, please call the school office, who will liaise with the appropriate staff member available at the time. Urgent issues might include things like:
  - Family emergencies
  - Safeguarding or welfare issues
  - Sudden change of collection or drop off arrangements for your child

### **Meetings**

- i. If you would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, please email the school office, call the school or message via Seesaw directly to the teacher to book an appointment.
- ii. We try to schedule all meetings within 2 working days of the request, to take place as soon as possible at a mutually agreeable time for all parties.
- iii. While teachers are available at the end of the school day if you need to speak to them urgently, we recommend you book appointments to discuss:
  - a. Any concerns you may have about your child's learning
  - b. Updates related to pastoral support, your child's home environment, or their wellbeing
- iv. When a member of staff is not able to speak to you immediately face-to-face due to school commitments, or a longer conversation is deemed necessary or appropriate, then a request for an appointment can be made to discuss the matter either in person or by telephone, at a later date.
- v. Outside of teaching hours, all staff have additional duties which they perform either before school, during break/lunch or after school so availability of staff outside of teaching hours should not be assumed.
- vi. Should a meeting be requested the decision of which staff member will attend will rest with the Headteacher.

### **Social Media**

- i. The school will not respond to concerns raised via social media.
- ii. Where the social media presence is run by the school, comments will be removed if they do not meet the criteria of the social media platform or home partnership agreement.
- iii. Should the school be made aware of any physical threats or abusive behaviour towards staff members on social media then the school will consider reporting this to the Police and seeking the removal of this content from the site.

### **Seesaw – Learning platform**

Parents are able to communicate directly with teachers via our remote learning platform, Seesaw. This can be accessed using your child's login.

The timeframes described above apply to Seesaw.

## 6. Complaints

If parents are considering making a formal complaint, [the complaints policy must be followed](#). Stage 1 of our policy suggests that other forms of communication can often help in resolving issues and we encourage parents to use this route. However, this is not compulsory and does not prevent the use of the complaints policy either straight away or after other forms of communication have been tried.

## 7. Inclusion

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school. We make whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) in English.

Parents who need help communicating with the school can request the following support:

- School announcements and communications translated into additional languages
- Interpreters for meetings or phone calls

We can make additional arrangements if necessary. Please contact the school office to discuss these.

## 8. Types of unacceptable behaviour and communication

1. There are some types of behaviour / communication that the school consider unacceptable. This list is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour which has no place in our school community; these are as follows:
  - Any physical and / or verbal aggression;
  - Physically and / or verbally intimidating a member of staff, or pupils e.g., standing very close to her/him; using a raised voice
  - The use of aggressive hand gestures including finger pointing towards a member of staff or pupil;
  - Spitting at a member of staff or pupil;
  - Shouting at members of staff or pupils (either in person on school grounds, over the telephone or over video conferencing);
  - Swearing, or using offensive language including derogatory language about a protected group or characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010;
  - Threatening or offensive comments about a member of staff or pupil of the school; this can include verbally, via texts, emails, social media, etc.;
  - Sending abusive messages to a member of staff, including via text, email or social media;
  - A large volume of emails in respect of the same matter over a short period of time;
  - Continuing to raise the same issue despite it having been already addressed by the school;

- Posting defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments about the school, its staff, on social media platforms;
- Disrupting, or threatening to disrupt, school operations (including events on the school grounds and sports team matches);
- Breaching or not conforming to the school's security and safeguarding procedures;
- Covertly recording (audio or visual) phone calls or meetings with members of staff;
- Any other behaviour that is disrespectful, threatening or offensive.

### **Actions that may be taken by the school as a result of unacceptable behaviour and communication**

2. In the first instance, (if the unacceptable behaviour has occurred on site) the school will ask the parent to desist and/or leave the site. If the behaviour is of a serious nature, then the police will be contacted.
3. Thereafter the school (Headteacher / Member of School Leadership team) will gather information on allegations of unacceptable behaviour. This may include talking to the parties concerned or others as witnesses to the behaviour.
4. If unacceptable behaviour is considered to have occurred the following actions may be taken by the school, dependent on the severity/gravity of the behaviour:
  - The parent will be told verbally that his / her behaviour is considered to be unacceptable and, if it is not modified, the school will take further action.
  - The parent will be told in writing that his / her behaviour is considered to be unacceptable and, if it is not modified, the school will take further action.
  - Advising the parent that all future meetings with a member of staff will be conducted with a second person present and will be minuted;
  - Putting in place a contact plan to deal with any communication between the individual and school. For example, except in emergencies, communication to the school must be in writing only to a named individual and the school can set out timescales for school responses
  - A warning letter or an immediate ban from the school site;
  - Contacting the Police where behaviour is criminal in nature.
  - Seek advice from the local authority's legal team regarding further action.
5. The school will always seek to respond to an incident in a proportional way. The final decision for how to respond to the unacceptable behaviour and communication rests with the headteacher and, where necessary, the Governing Body



## Appendix 1: school contact list

### Who should I contact?

If you have questions about any of the topics in the table below, or would like to speak to a member of staff:

➤ Email or call the school office on [adminoffice@hook-jun.hants.sch.uk](mailto:adminoffice@hook-jun.hants.sch.uk), 01256 762 468

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
<p>Child protection or Safeguarding.</p> <p>I am concerned about a child's safety, treatment or welfare.</p>	<p>Any of the following:</p> <p>Mrs Martin (HT &amp; Designated Safeguarding Lead)</p> <p>Mrs Bailey (DHT &amp; Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead)</p> <p>Miss Carne (Attendance, Behaviour and Pastoral Leader, &amp; Designated Safeguarding Lead)</p> <p>Miss Smith (SENDCo &amp; Inclusion Leader and Designated Safeguarding Lead)</p>
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's teacher
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your child's teacher or Miss Carne (Pastoral Leader)
My child's attendance	Miss Carne (Attendance Leader)
Behaviour and bullying	Your child's teacher or Miss Carne (Behaviour Leader)
Payments and free school meals	School office – Mrs Sidhu (Finance Assistant)
School trips and clubs	School office – Mrs Chapman (admin Assistant)
Uniform / lost and found / pre-loved	School office – Mrs Chapman (Admin Assistant)
Admissions	School office – Mrs Shepherd (Admin Officer)
Reporting your child's absence	<p>Follow the Attendance Policy procedures (available from the school website)</p> <p>Telephone school office: 01256 762 468</p>

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
School events/the school calendar	School office – Mrs Shepherd (School Admin Officer)
Special educational needs	Miss Smith (SENDCo)
Before and after-school clubs	School office – Mrs Chapman (Admin Assistant)
Hiring the school premises	School office – Mr Grant (School Business Manager)
The HSCA	Sarah Brown (Chair HSCA)
The Governing Body	Gareth Evans (Chair of Governors)
Catering / meals	School office – Mr Grant (School Business Manager)
Health, safety and security	School office – Mr Grant (School Business Manager)