



Communications Policy

This policy has been approved electronically by the governing body on 22/09/2023

Contents

Title	Page
1 Introduction & Aims	1
2 Roles & Responsibilities	2
3 How we communicate with parents/carers	3
4 How parents/carers can communicate with the school	5
5 Inclusion	6
6 Recording communication	6
7 Monitoring & Review	6
8 Links with other policies	6
9 Appendix 1: school contact list	7
10 Appendix 2: School Structures	8
11 Appendix 3: Flowchart of Response to Communication	9

1. Introduction & 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
- Setting clear standards and expectations 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

In the following sections, we will use 'parents' to refer to both parents and carers

2. Roles and responsibilities

Adapt this section as necessary.

For instance, if you give parents log-ins to online communication systems, you may need to include details about who is responsible for managing this system.

2.1 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

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

2.2 Staff

All 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)

Staff will **aim** to respond to communication during core school hours – between 08.30 and 17.00 or their working days/hours (if they work part-time). In line with promoting staff wellbeing and helping our staff find a suitable work-life balance, staff may work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond outside of these hours, but they are **not expected** to do so.

2.3 Parents

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.

Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours 08.30 and 17.00 on working days, or during school holidays.

3. 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.

3.1 Email

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

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests

3.2 Text messages

We will text parents about:

- Payments
- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- Reminders regarding activities
- Any minor first aid activities undertaken

3.3 School calendar

Our website and newsletters include a full ongoing school calendar, which is updated at least numerically termly.

Where possible, we try to give parents at least 2 weeks' notice of any events or special occasions (including non-uniform days, special assemblies or visitors, or requests for pupils to bring in special items or materials).

Any such event will be included in the school calendar.

3.4 Phone calls

We encourage staff to talk to parents/carers, either face-to-face at the end of the school day, or by phone, to:

- discuss pupils' performance (both positive and negative)
- build relationships with families to gain trust and understanding
- any major first aid activities undertaken, which may involve asking parents/carers to come to school
- give feedback regarding activities undertaken because of previous contact

3.5 Letters

We send the following letters home regularly:

- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms – which may be completed through electronic media
- Our weekly newsletter

3.6 Homework books/school planners

If your school uses planners or homework books to send messages home, explain how you use these.

3.7 Reports

Adapt this section as appropriate.

Parents receive reports from the school about their child's learning, including:

- An end-of-year report covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, and their attendance
- Termly progress reports
- A report on Key Stage (KS) 1 and KS2 SATs tests
- A report on the results of public examinations
- Information about vocational qualifications gained (or credits gained towards these)

We also arrange regular meetings where parents can speak to their child's teacher(s) about their achievement and progress (see the section below).

3.8 Meetings

We hold three formal parents' evenings per year. During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum or schemes of work, their child's wellbeing, or any other area of concern.

The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings between parents' evenings if there are concerns 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.

3.9 School website

Key information about the school is posted on our website, including:

- 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, however, please do phone if you find this more reassuring.

3.10 Home-school communications app

The School uses Teachers2Parents to send messages home, and to make payments. We are starting a trial of a first aid app, which will inform parents/carers of minor first aid activities. (For more major first aid requirements, parents/carers will receive a phone call.)

4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

Parents should 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.

4.1 Email

Parents should always email the school, or the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within 3 working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 3 working days.

If a query or concern is urgent, and parents need a response sooner than this, they should call the school.

4.2 Phone calls

If parents need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should email the school office and the relevant member of staff will contact them within 2 working days.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will respond to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure parents have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within 3 days of your request.

If the issue is urgent, parents should call the school office.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

For more general enquiries, please call the school office.

4.3 Meetings

If parents would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the appropriate email address (see appendix 1), or call the school to book an appointment.

We try to schedule all meetings within 5 working days of the request.

While teachers are available at the end of the school day, if parents need to speak to them urgently, we recommend they book appointments to discuss:

- Any concerns they have about their child's learning
- Updates related to pastoral support, their child's home environment, or their wellbeing

At the beginning of the school day, there is always a member of the senior leadership team on the playground - parents/carers should approach them and ask their advice, or ask them to pass on a message to the class teacher.

4.4 Home-school communications app

If your school has an app that parents can use to communicate with the school, explain when parents should use the app and any expectations you have of parents and staff.

5. Inclusion

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school.

We currently make whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) available in English, but will always seek to agree provision for other languages according to the needs of individuals and families.

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.

6. Recording Communication

Records of telephone calls will be written up from notes and placed in the child(ren)'s file - using CPoms – within 2 working days, unless there is a safeguarding element, in which case, the conversation should be reported to the DSL/DDSL immediately and input into CPoms during the same school session (morning or afternoon).

The SLT will receive notification of CPoms reports, and will feedback to those initiating them within 2 working days – stating what has been undertaken, and the next steps. Initiators have responsibility for checking that actions have been undertaken – eg responses made by the end of the fifth working day.

7. Monitoring and review

The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every 2 years.

The policy will be approved by the governing body.

8. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- ICT and internet acceptable use
- Parent code of conduct
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints
- Home-school agreement
- Staff wellbeing

9 Appendix 1: school contact list

Who should I contact?

Because teachers do not have time during the school day to check email, please either phone or email the admin team, in the first instance, using:

office@harnham-jun.wilts.sch.uk or (01722) 327218

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

- Email the most appropriate address
- Include your child's full name in the subject line

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/ lessons/homework	classname@harnham-jun.wilts.sch.uk
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	office@harnham-jun.wilts.sch.uk
Payments	finance@harnham-jun.wilts.sch.uk
School trips	office@harnham-jun.wilts.sch.uk
Uniform/lost and found	office@harnham-jun.wilts.sch.uk
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence: call: (01722) 327218 email: absence@harnham-jun.wilts.sch.uk If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact: office@harnham-jun.wilts.sch.uk
Bullying and behaviour	office@harnham-jun.wilts.sch.uk
School events/the school calendar	office@harnham-jun.wilts.sch.uk
Special educational needs (SEN)	sendep@harnham-jun.wilts.sch.uk
Before and after-school clubs	office@harnham-jun.wilts.sch.uk
Hiring the school premises	office@harnham-jun.wilts.sch.uk
Governing body	office@harnham-jun.wilts.sch.uk
Catering/meals	office@harnham-jun.wilts.sch.uk

We always try to respond to emails within 2 working days – if you don't receive a response, please remind us, without offense.

Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the complaints procedure which can be found on our website, or from the school admin team:

Tel: (01722) 327 218

Email: clerk@harnham-jun.wilts.sch.uk

10 Appendix 2:

In-School Structures

The Admin Team will meet weekly to ensure that all members know about communication that would benefit from being shared, and the progress of responses.

Messages to Teachers received during the school day, will be sent to the SLT for their response and triage; to ensure a good response time, and so that learning is not disturbed.

Messages communicating issues which are more appropriately dealt with by the SLT will be sent to them, with a verbal warning that they are being sent. These messages enter the SLT protocol, below.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will meet three times a week. As a standing agenda item, there will be an opportunity to discuss communication received –

- How the communication was received – and from whom
- Topic
- Triage to individual responsible
- Initial Response – telephone call and email before end of 2nd working day
- Response times as above.

Flowchart of Response to Communication

