



Policy for Communication

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Headteacher	

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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, including those in separated families
- Setting clear standards and expectations for responding to communication from parents/carers
- Helps 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

2.1 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- Checking content and tone of communications
- 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 8am – 6pm, or their working 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 and this is not encouraged by leaders.

Staff will never respond to any approach made through their own social media. The school's e-safety and social media policies link to this practice and outline why this is the case. If an approach is made through personal social media, including communication tools such as personal WhatsApp messaging, this should be reported, by the member of staff, to the DSL who will deal with this under safeguarding procedures.

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
- Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school
- Requesting that a meeting be minuted if they feel it is necessary. At no point with the school engage with voice recorded or AI recorded meetings without prior consent from all parties. Any breach of this part of the policy will

result in parents being asked to store their phones in the school office during times when they are in school or on school grounds.

Abusive or aggressive behaviour – in person, by phone or email – will not be tolerated. Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be addressed directly from leaders to parents.

Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours 8am – 6pm, 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

Emails will only ever come from the admin office team, the headteacher or the SENDCO. Direct emails between the classteachers, support staff and parents are not supported.

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)
- Minibus messages

Text message use from school to parents is rare and may happen only in emergencies or, for the minibus, to notify you of where we are and any delays or anticipated arrival times.

3.3 School calendar

Our school website & newsletter includes a full school calendar for the term and new dates are added in bold every fortnight when the newsletter is published. A full school year overview is available on the school website in the 'Our news & dates' section under 'calendar'.

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 may call you during the day for several reasons, not limited to but may include;

- Warning of illness or to check in about head bumps or medication distribution
- Check permissions
- Enquire about a situation we have become aware of
- To discuss your child's behaviour with you

3.5 Letters

We send the following letters home regularly:

- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms
- Our fortnightly newsletter and, on the weeks in between, a shorter bulletin with key messages.

3.6 Homework books/school planners

Every child in the school has a school planner. In Years R-2, this is a simple reading record and both staff and parents should note in here when a child is heard read individually as well as to communicate any messages that may not be handed over at the gate. This will be checked at least once a week by the child's class teacher. It is not possible to check this for every child, daily.

Upper school in Years 3-6 have a more detailed planner which is used to record reading but also key events during the forthcoming week, notes from the teacher about homework, your child's read and respond homework and books read.

3.7 Apps

In addition to the methods above, the school uses a number of apps to keep you up to date. We share minimal data with these app providers, detailed in our privacy notices and GDPR policy.

ClassDojo

Every child in the school and pre-school has a dojo account. Staff may use this platform to share with you key learning moments or photos and news when children are away on residential or trips. The messaging function, direct to a teacher, is unavailable.

Arbor

This app is for our Management Information System (MIS) and is where all of your child's personal data is held. You can log into this through the Arbor App and update your information, look at attendance and their timetable.

Permission for trips and visits can also be done through this app.

Scopay

This is the finance app which manages payments for trips, visits and visitors as well as clubhouse and breakfast club.

CleverChefs

This is a 3rd party app, designed by Kanpla and overseen by our outsourced Catering Company 'CleverChefs'. It is the place to order your child's lunch and communicate with the kitchen team about allergies and other dietary requirements. Payment for lunches is also made through this app.

3.7 Reports

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
- A report on Key Stage (KS) 1 and KS2 SATs tests, year 1 phonics check and Year 4 multiplication tables check
- A report on the results of any public examinations eg. From music boards

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 4 parents' evening(s) 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.

3.10 Home-school communications app

Arbor is our main form of communication. All emails will be sent through Arbor and there is an in-app messaging service which we use so we do not send many text messages. This is the main form of communication with parents.

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; adminoffice@stockbridge.hants.sch.uk, or the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance. The office will ensure the email is forwarded to any relevant member of staff and will record a copy of the email on CPOMS, our online monitoring system so that the relevant member of staff and school leader is aware of it and can ensure it is responded to within the timelines laid out here.

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 2 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 3 working days of the request.

While teachers are available at the beginning or 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

5. Separated parents

We do understand that there is a lot of communication from school to parents and vice versa and we want both parents to feel involved and included in their child's life in school. To this end, we will;

Ensure all emails are sent to (Legal Guardians) on the messaging functions within Arbor – this means that both parents will be copied in to all messages.

Ensure copies of letters, when they are sent paper copy, are sent to both parents. We will send a paper copy home with the child that evening to the parent they are staying with then and an e-copy to the parent who is not picking up.

Where school reports are concerned, we will send a paper copy home to the parent the child is not residing with most of the time. If 50/50 care, we will send paper copies to both, one with the child that evening and the other in the first class post.

Tucasi enables us to create two accounts for payment with both parents seeing their child's account simultaneously.

Where trip monies are divided between parents, we will send payment cards or check in emails to both parties to ensure both parents are clear about who has paid what.

If anything significant has happened, eg. Bumped head, we will inform the parent who is meant to be collecting the child that day. We would then expect the parent receiving the child to notify the other parent however, in situations which are more acrimonious, we would notify the parent who is not collecting. This would be in prior agreement with both adults.

Parents teacher meetings can be held individually for separated families or both together – this is at the parent's request. We will ensure clarity and equality of message between both parents.

5. Accessibility

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

5.1 Parents with additional communication needs

We aim to make communications accessible to all. We have taken the following steps to achieve this:

- All whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) are made available in multiple formats
- All communications are written as clearly and concisely as possible
- Accessibility is considered when designing/updating the school website eg. providing alt text for images, using text colours that show up clearly against the background colour
- Staff are trained on accessibility and will endeavour to provide information in an accessible format

Parents who need help communicating with the school can request reasonable adjustments, such as:

- School announcements and communications in accessible formats
- Sign language interpreters for meetings

Please contact the school office to discuss these.

5.2 Parents with English as an additional language (EAL)

We currently make whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) available in English. Should anybody require communications in another language, please speak to the school office and we will assist further.

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. Monitoring and review

The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every 3 years.

The policy will be approved by the governing board.

Appendix 1: school contact list

Who should I contact?

Option 1:

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 [insert school office email address and phone number]
- Put the subject and the name of the relevant member of staff (from the list below) in the subject line (for emails)
- We will forward your request on to the relevant member of staff

Remember: check our website first, much of the information you need is posted there.

We try to respond to all emails within [timeframe].

Option 2:

If you have questions about any of the topics in the table 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

We try to respond to all emails within 3 working days.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Admin office: adminoffice@stockbridge.hants.sch.uk addressed to the teacher.
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Admin office: adminoffice@stockbridge.hants.sch.uk addressed to the member of staff required
Payments	Admin office: adminoffice@stockbridge.hants.sch.uk
School trips	Admin office: adminoffice@stockbridge.hants.sch.uk
Uniform/lost and found	Admin office: adminoffice@stockbridge.hants.sch.uk
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, call: 01264 810550 If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact the admin office for a holiday form.
Bullying and behaviour	Admin office: adminoffice@stockbridge.hants.sch.uk FAO Headteacher
School events/the school calendar	Admin office: adminoffice@stockbridge.hants.sch.uk
Special educational needs (SEN)	School office/insert staff member
Before and after-school clubs	Admin office: adminoffice@stockbridge.hants.sch.uk
Hiring the school premises	Admin office: adminoffice@stockbridge.hants.sch.uk
PTA	Secretary Gemma Butler friendsofstockbridgeschool@gmail.com

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
Governing board	Barry Stay: clerk@stockbridge.hants.sch.uk
Catering/meals	Samantha.fisher@cleverchefs.co.uk

Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy.