



Communication Policy

Responsible Staff member: Headteacher

Governor Lead: N/A

Reviewed: October 2024

Board approval date: N/A

Policy Type: Non Statutory

Implementation date: Immediate

Publication: Guildford Grove Primary School

Review cycle: Every 2 years

Next Review date: October 2026



Contents

| | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 1. | Introduction | 3 |
| 2. | Principles..... | 3 |
| 3. | Responsibilities | 3 |
| 3.1 | Headteacher..... | 3 |
| 3.2 | Staff..... | 3 |
| 3.3 | Parents/carers..... | 4 |
| 4. | How we communicate with parents/carers | 4 |
| 5. | How parents/carers can communicate with the school..... | 5 |
| 6. | Internal staff communications..... | 6 |
| 7. | Inclusion..... | 6 |

1. Introduction

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

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

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

- Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers, staff and other professionals
- Setting clear standards and expectations

2. Principles

Good communication is much more than the exchange of information: it involves the management of relationships and the need to involve people. Communication is as much about attitude and behaviour as it is about message. We should also remember the importance of listening, being respectful of people's differing viewpoints, and always being mindful of how our communications might impact the recipient.

Any communication, whether internal or external, should always be in line with our school's Code of Conduct: **Everyone will be polite, respectful and kind to others at all times.**

It is always easier to resolve potential conflicts with a conversation rather than an email in order to avoid the possibility of causing upset or offence. In particular any sensitive, confidential or contentious issues should be raised face to face in the first instance.

Information about other students should never be shared between school staff and parents/carers, except where a parent wishes to raise specific safeguarding concerns. These will be dealt with by school staff in accordance with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (available on the school website or from the school office).

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Headteacher

- To ensure that communications with parents/carers, staff and other professionals are effective, timely, respectful and appropriate
- To monitor the implementation of this policy
- To regularly review this policy

3.2 Staff

- All staff should check emails daily to ensure they are up to date with any important school information
- Staff will aim to respond to written communications within 2 working days of receipt
- Staff will respond to communication during core school hours, 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

- Staff will not accept social media friendship requests from parents/carers where the only relationship is a professional one which exists solely through the school. Staff will never accept social media requests from students or ex-students under the age of 18

3.3 Parents/carers

- Parents/carers have a right to expect the best for their children and to express any concerns they may have. However, our staff must be allowed to work and learn in a safe and secure environment. Staff will therefore not respond to offensive or abusive communications, whether verbal or written, and in extreme cases such behaviour may result in individuals being removed and even banned from the school premises
- Parents/carers should make every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance – if in doubt, they should contact the school office
- Parents/carers should check regularly for any communications from the school (Parentmail or phone calls)
- We ask parents/carers to respond to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Parents/carers should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours or during school holidays
- We ask that parents/carers avoid discussing personal school matters on social media. All issues and concerns should be raised in the first instance with the class teacher or via the school office

4. How we communicate with parents/carers

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

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

4.1 Parentmail

This is our main method of keeping parents/carers up to date with what is going on in school.

Parents/carers will benefit most from this technology if they download the Parentmail app and set up their own account to include all of their relevant contact details.

Hard copies of all Parentmail communications are available on request from the school office.

4.2 Text messages

We will send a text message about:

- Short-notice changes to the school day (for example, for a cancellation to an after-school club)
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)

4.3 Newsletter

A regular newsletter from the Headteacher is sent out via Parentmail.

4.4 School website

School information (including important dates and policies) is available on our school website (www.guildfordgrove.surrey.sch.uk).

4.5 Phone calls

Staff will call parents/carers to discuss their child if there is a need for a conversation. Staff may also make arrangements with parents/carers to call regularly because school and home are working together to support an aspect of a child's education or welfare.

4.6 Email

Emails may be sent from a general school email account (for example in the Lighthouse). Teachers will not send emails to parents/carers from their own direct email address.

4.7 Letters

Letters relating to trips and visits may be sent home as a hard copy if we need a signed consent form to be returned to school. Otherwise they will be sent via Parentmail.

An end-of-year report is sent home covering the children's achievement and progress.

4.8 Meetings

We hold a parents' afternoon/evening in the Autumn and Spring terms. During these meetings, parents/carers 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/carers to arrange meetings between parents' evenings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing.

5. How parents/carers can communicate with the school

5.1 Studybugs

Parents/carers wishing to report a child's absence should do so via the Studybugs app.

5.2 Email

Parents/carers should email the school (info@guildfordgrove.surrey.sch.uk) about non-urgent issues in the first instance. All emails sent to the school will be treated with full confidentiality and any responses will be made by an appropriate member of staff.

Parents/carers should not use a teacher's direct email address.

We will aim to respond to emails within 2 working days of receipt (during term time). If a query or concern is urgent, and parents/carers need a response sooner than this, they should call the school office.

5.3 Phone calls

If parents/carers need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should email the school office.

Staff members will return calls to parents/carers who have asked to speak with them, where they are the appropriate point of contact. The appropriate point of contact will usually be the class teacher, a member of the school office team or a member of the School Leadership Team.

If the issue is **urgent**, parents/carers should call the school office. Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

Parents/carers who have regular support and advice from our Home School Link Worker may have been provided with direct contact details, and may use these contact details in line with any agreements that have been put in place.

5.4 Meetings

If parents/carers would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email or call the school office to book an appointment.

While teachers may be available at the end of the school day on the telephone if parents/carers 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

5.5 Letters

Letters can be handed into, or posted to, the school office, specifying the member of staff to whom the query is addressed. As with emails, all letters will be treated with full confidentiality and responses will be made by the appropriate member of staff.

If a query or concern is urgent, parents/carers should call the school office.

6. Internal staff communications

We have a range of methods for communicating internally within our school staff team. The choice of communication method will be determined by the circumstances, taking into consideration who needs to be included, level of urgency and importance.

Communication methods include:

- Daily bulletins (sent via email)
- Direct emails
- MS Teams
- Scheduled meetings (for example weekly teacher and TA meetings, or 1:1 appraisals)
- Notice boards

Staff should check their school email account on each school day when they are in school and contracted to work.

7. Inclusion

We have a vibrant and diverse school community and it is important to us that everyone can communicate easily with the school.

We currently make whole-school announcements and communications (such as Parentmail alerts and newsletters) available in English.

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

- School announcements and communications translated into additional languages
- Interpreters for important meetings