Redbourn Park

Safety | Empathy | Ambition

Home–School Communication Policy

Approved by	Richard McCabe
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Proprietor/chair signature	

Related policies

- Online Safety Policy
- Parental Code of Conduct
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Complaints and Compliments Policy

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1. Introduction and aims

This policy applies to communication between Redbourn Park School and the parents or carers of all registered pupils aged 7–16 at Grovehill and Gaddesden. Safety, Empathy and Ambition guide communication that is clear, respectful, accessible and ambitious for each pupil. As an independent special school, we will make reasonable adjustments and use communication routes that reflect family and pupil needs.

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

2.1 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- Overseeing the approved communication routes at each site, including role-based access, appropriate escalation and implementation of this policy
- Reviewing this policy and maintaining consistent arrangements across Grovehill and Gaddesden

2.2 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's Online Safety Policy and Staff Code of Conduct 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 respond during their working hours and the published operating hours of the relevant site. Staff may sometimes choose to work flexibly, but families should not expect responses outside working hours, at weekends or during school holidays. Urgent safety or safeguarding matters must use the routes set out in section 4.2.

Please see our Online Safety Policy, Staff Code of Conduct Policy and Behaviour Policy.

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
- Regularly monitoring the official, accessible communication routes agreed with the school and telling the school if access, contact details or communication needs change

The school will respond to abusive, threatening or discriminatory communication in line with the Parental Code of Conduct. Respectful disagreement and complaints will be heard through the appropriate communication or complaints route.

Staff are not expected to respond outside their working hours or during school holidays. Urgent safeguarding or safety concerns should use the appropriate emergency or safeguarding route rather than wait for an email response.

The Parental Code of Conduct explains expected conduct while protecting respectful disagreement, complaints, safeguarding reports, SEND or EHC plan requests and requests for reasonable adjustments.

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, Arbor and the school website 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:

- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- A minimal urgent message asking the parent or carer to contact the school about a health or medical matter. Sensitive medical information will be shared by phone or another approved secure route, not included in an ordinary text message unless necessary to protect life or immediate safety

3.3 School calendar

Our school website includes a full school calendar for the year.

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

Parents should call the school office in the first instance. The office will route the call to the appropriate site, team or named role; urgent safeguarding or safety information must be passed on immediately rather than left as a routine message.

3.5 Letters/Emails

We send the following letters or emails home regularly:

- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms
- Our weekly newsletter

3.6 Home learning and Google Classroom

Where home learning is appropriate to the pupil's individual plan, it will be offered through Google Classroom and/or accessible physical resources. The Headteacher owns Google Classroom use and ensures school-managed accounts, role-based access and a non-digital alternative where needed.

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
- Two formal progress review meetings each academic year, each with a written or agreed accessible summary
- Assessment reports (if required)
- 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 two formal progress review meetings each academic year. Families can discuss achievement, progress, curriculum, wellbeing and any concern with the pupil's team. Each meeting will have a written or agreed accessible summary. A written end-of-year report provides the third formal progress update.

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

Parents of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these additional needs. These may include the annual review of the pupil's EHC plan.

Parents may email or phone the school office to request an appointment with their child's teacher, the Headteacher or another appropriate professional to discuss behaviour, wellbeing, progress or achievement during the academic year.

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 may wish to check the website first for published information, but can contact the school whenever they need clarification, an accessible version or support.

3.10 Approved home-school communication systems

Redbourn Park School uses Arbor and official school email accounts for routine communication. The Headteacher oversees operational use at each site. Access must be role based, reviewed when responsibilities change and limited to approved school accounts and devices. Sensitive information must use the minimum necessary detail and an approved secure route. Parents should use published contact details unless given a specific approved route.

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 use official school email addresses, not personal accounts or social media, for non-urgent issues. They should avoid sending more sensitive personal information than necessary and can ask the school to arrange a call or secure route.

We aim to acknowledge emails within 2 working days and provide a full response or a clear next step within 5 working days. Where a matter requires investigation, multi-agency input or a meeting, we will explain who is handling it and when the next update will be provided.

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

4.2 Phone calls

For a non-urgent request to speak to a specific member of staff, parents should email or call the school office. We will acknowledge or schedule the request within 2 working days.

We aim for the parent or carer to speak to the appropriate member of staff, or receive a clear substantive update, within 5 working days. If this is not possible, we will explain the reason and give a revised update date.

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

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues
- Problems getting a child or children to school

If a child is in immediate danger, call 999. For an urgent safeguarding concern that is not an immediate emergency, call the school office and state that it is a safeguarding concern so it can be passed immediately to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or a deputy DSL (the Headteacher, a site lead or a senior teacher). Do not wait for an email response. For general enquiries, call or email 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 aim to acknowledge a meeting request within 2 working days and propose or confirm arrangements within 5 working days. The meeting date will reflect urgency, staff and family availability and any reasonable

adjustments; urgent safety or safeguarding matters will be addressed immediately through the appropriate route.

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

4.4 Using approved communication systems

Parents may use Arbor or official school email where access has been provided. The security, access and privacy arrangements in section 3.10 apply. Do not send school information through staff personal accounts or social media. Telephone the school office for urgent safety or safeguarding concerns.

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:

- Whole-school announcements and communications can be provided in accessible formats where needed
- All communications are written as clearly and concisely as possible
- Accessibility is considered when designing/updating the school website
- Staff will consider accessibility and provide information in an accessible format where reasonably required

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)

Core communications are issued in English. Where a family needs another language, the school will arrange proportionate translation or interpretation so essential information can be understood.

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 implementation at Grovehill and Gaddesden and will review the policy each year.

The proprietor/chair will approve each review.

7. Links with other policies

Related policies

- Online Safety Policy
- Parental Code of Conduct
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Complaints and Compliments Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy

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 admin@redbournpark.co.uk or call the school office on 01442 601 252.

We will forward your request on to the relevant member of staff

The school website contains useful published information, and the school office can provide clarification or accessible alternatives.

We aim to acknowledge emails within 2 working days and provide a full response or next step within the timescales in this policy.

WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO	I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT…
Your child's class teacher	My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework
School office	My child's wellbeing/pastoral support
School office	Payments
School office	School trips
School office	Uniform/lost and found
If you need to report your child's absence, call the school office on 01442 601 252. If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact the school office at admin@redbournpark.co.uk.	Attendance and absence requests
School office	Bullying and behaviour
School office	School events/the school calendar
School office	Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
School office	Before and after-school clubs
School office	Hiring the school premises
School office	PTA
The proprietor/chair, via the school office	Governance or proprietor/chair matters
School office	Catering/meals

Complaints and Compliments Policy

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our Complaints and Compliments Policy.