

GATLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL



HOME SCHOOL COMMUNICATION POLICY

This policy is intended as a framework for staff, parents and governors of the school. In outlining a policy for channels of communication between home and school. The aim is to work towards uniformity in approach and a cohesive vision across the school.

October 2024

VERSION HISTORY

Date	Document Version	Document Revision History	Document Author / Reviser
May 2022	1		R Clair & C Coleman
May 2024	1.1	No Changes	S Carroll
October 2024	1.2	Additions for separated families	J Marchi
February 2025	1.3	Additions for reasonable adjustments	J Marchi



Gatley Primary School | Hawthorn Road | Cheadle | Gatley | SK8 4NB

Introduction

- At Gatley Primary School, we recognise the important of clear and effective communications with all stakeholders (pupils, parents, carers, staff, trustees, the local and wider communicate outside agencies, etc.) and we are committed to being open and accessible for all who have an interest in the school.
- The key stakeholder for a school are parents, carers and pupils and this policy addresses the main ways in which the school will ensure there is effective two-way communication between home and school.
- We believe that effective communication between a schools and families is about developing an open and inclusive policy for reaching out to families that helps to build a stronger link between the school, its teachers and home and which will result in having 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

Aims

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

- Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers
- 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.

This policy has been put together in consultation with parents and staff.

Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

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

- Training and supporting staff to deliver effective, professional communications

Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Communicating in a positive and proactive manner to share, celebrate and showcase learning in the school
- Using the appropriate channel for communication in order for the right information to be received in a timely manner
- Storing and accessing communications in line with the Trusts GDPR processes and procedures.
- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's ICT and internet acceptable use policy
- Responding to communications and communicating in a clear, professional manner maintaining confidentiality, dignity and respect at all times.
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)
- Maintaining a good work/life balance by responding to communications within the timescales set in this policy (ie: not at weekends or beyond work hours of 8am and 6pm.)

Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Checking all communications from the school
- Keeping the school up to date with contact information and providing at least 3 emergency contacts
- Communicating with school using the appropriate channels signposted in this policy.
- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times
- Being an advocate for the school and communicating with the wider community positively.
- Engaging with social media forums positivity whilst retaining the dignity and respect for the children and staff in the school
- If concerns or issues arise, bring these to the attention of the school in a timely manner, 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

- **Link Policies**

The Communications Policy embraces the principles of the school's Equality Statement and Online Safety Policy, home learning policy and complaints policies (copies available on the policy page of the school website).

The table below sets out the key channels of communication and how and when they will be used.

	Daily	Weekly	Half Termly	Termly	Yearly
Dojo Class Story		✓			
Dojo School Story		✓			
Dojo Portfolio			✓		
Dojo Messages	As and when required				
School Office	As and when required				
Parent Mail	Key dates and information shared when necessary – no more than 1 per day. Coded: RED- class level information, AMBER- school level information and GREEN- wider school/ external information				
Telephone Calls	As and when required in accordance with the medical policy, attendance policy and behaviour policy.				
Website			✓		
Newsletter				✓	
Informal contact – at the door	✓				
Homework		✓			
End of Year Reports					✓
Parents Evenings	Twice Yearly (Autumn and Spring)				
IPM review meetings				✓	
Text Message	In the event of an emergency or where contact can not be made.				

Contact Details

The school holds emergency contact details for all children on the School Information Management System (SIMs) and families are contacted on an annual basis to ensure that these

are up to date. Families are expected to inform the school immediately in the event that contact information needs to be revised. Depending on the nature of the communication, the school will use the most practicable means to contact families.

Class Dojo

Class Dojo connects the school and families through building virtual classroom communities. It enables staff to share photos, videos, announcements and celebrations as well as messaging between school and home. As with emails, staff are not expected to, and are discouraged from, checking and responding to Dojo messages outside of their working day (before 8am and past 6pm). Staff are however encouraged to work flexibly and respond to Dojo messages in a way that suits them to balance their working hours and you can expect a response to a message within **24 hours in a working week**. Staff do not expect families to read, respond or action Dojo messages outside hours that suit them. Dojo messaging does not replace face to face meetings where some discussion is required. All staff should seek face to face communications, when Dojo is not the most effective form of communication. Staff and families are discouraged from entering into in-depth discussions about a child's progress or well-being via Class Dojo. The purpose of communication through Class Dojo is:

- A minimum of a weekly post to share class level information about learning that has taken place an upcoming learning.
- A celebration of class achievements
- Reminders about class information eg: trips/ visits etc.
- Individual achievements are shared through Dojo message or pupils own portfolios
- At least fortnightly, school level information shared in written or video post from senior or curriculum leaders via school story

Parent Mail

Parent mails are used by any member of staff in the school to communicate information to families. We aim to send no more than 1 parentmail a day to families and use a RED/ AMBER and GREEN system to highlight which information is most pressing.

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

- general information sharing related to the class (RED) including class teacher requests, class activities.
- general information sharing related to the school (AMBER) including surveys, consultations, key dates, policy information
- general information from wider stakeholders (GREEN) PTA, marketing for clubs etc.

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 on the website.

Website

The school website <http://www.gatleyprimary.com> provides an opportunity to share key information about the school, including:

- school times and term dates;
- extra-curricular information;
- 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.

As changes are made to the content of the website this will be sent to you in a link through Parentmail.

Informal contact

At the door for informal messages to staff regarding pick up/ collection arrangements or feedback that parents feel staff may need to be aware of.

Text Messages

In the event of an emergency, or where quick and direct communication is required, the school may contact you via text message. This will usually be where the school may have to close or if we are unable to contact yourself and need urgent contact.

Phone Calls

Inbound

All telephone calls will be answered by staff in the main office. It is our policy that office staff do not interrupt teaching for staff to answer a telephone call unless it is an emergency. Messages are taken and forwarded to the relevant person. If the call requires a response from a member of staff, we aim to do this **within 2 working days**.

Outbound

Telephone calls will be made where immediate contact with a family member is required i.e. for injuries or accidents. A member of staff will call the first named emergency contact as listed. Where no contact is made, a call will then be made to the second named contact and so forth. In the event that no live contact can be made, the member of staff will either leave an answer phone message or ensure that repeat calls and where needed contact others on the emergency contact list.

Newsletter

A school newsletter is sent out termly and this contains information on key information and a curriculum celebration for each year group outlining their key successes for the term. This is an opportunity for parents to gain an overview of whole school curriculum information and celebration with an update from the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors.

Homework

Homework will be sent out on **THURSDAYS** and this is due for return by the following **WEDNESDAY at the latest**. Homework will be set on Class Dojo and should, in most circumstances, be responded to on Class Dojo, by up-loading completed work to children's portfolios.

IPM/EHCP Review

Each term, individual provision maps for children on the Special Educational Needs Register, are updated. Parents are invited in to school to contribute to these plans and to discuss their child's progress against their personalised targets. Each personalised plan offers practical advice to families on how they can work with school staff to support their child in achieving targets to assist the child's progress.

All children with an Education, Health and Care Plan will have an Annual Review each academic year to discuss their progress in relations to the aims and objectives of their plan. The targets identified within the EHCP will then be used to inform the targets within the pupil's individual provision map.

End of Year reports

Once a year, parents will receive a full written report from the school about their child's learning, including:

- An overview of the pupil's achievements and personal development
- An overview of the pupil's attainment data, in line with the school's assessment system
- An overview of the pupil's attendance for the year
- The outcomes of any statutory assessments

Parent Evenings

All parents are invited to a twice yearly Parents Evening meeting. The meetings give parents and class teachers the opportunity to talk through each child's progress, and time to look at work completed by the child during the term. Parents are allocated a 10 minute time slot; if more time is necessary, staff will be happy to arrange another meeting.

Complaints

All formal letters of complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the school's separate Complaints Policy. All formal letters to families must be approved by the Headteacher before they are sent.

The school does **not** accept or act upon anonymous communication unless in relation to matters of serious Child Protection.

Separated Families

In instances where those with parental responsibility (PR) for a child do not reside at the same address, the school asks that, in the first instance, families work together to coordinate communication.

To support this communication and to ensure important information is shared to all with PR, the school will ensure any communication regarding the following is shared, via parent mail, to all with PR:

- School requests for meetings with parents
- Attendance
- SEND and/or EHCP review meetings
- Key dates for the year
- Opportunities for families to be involved with school events (e.g. Bring Your Parent to School morning, book drop-ins).
- Parents' Evenings

Where possible, we ask that all with PR attend the same parents evening slot and that parents work together to book a mutually convenient time. Where this cannot be facilitated, we ask that families contact the school office to allow an additional and separate parents' meeting to be booked. It may be necessary, to support the efficient running of parents' evening, for this meeting to take place outside of the arranged timeframes for parents evening, for example during the school day or before or after school.

Requests for Information

Please refer to our Data Protection and GDPR Policy for copies of children's records, freedom of information and Subject Access Requests. This will detail procedures and protocols, including timings.

When communication becomes inappropriate, aggressive, vexatious, persistent or disproportionate and the school deems it is unacceptable, then actions will be put in place in accordance with our Anti-Violence and Aggression Policy.

Reasonable Adjustments

Where reasonable adjustments are required to ensure equal access to communication from school these will be made. If you feel you would benefit from an adjustment to communication being made, please contact the school office to discuss this further.

Examples of reasonable adjustments may include but are not limited to:

- Translation of Parent Mail to a chosen language
- Use of an interpreter to support face to face meetings

- Written rather than verbal communication
- Use of virtual meetings/video messaging

Appendix –

Home school agreement

At Gatley Primary School we are committed to working with parents and their children to provide the highest quality of education.

This education is based on a partnership of shared values and beliefs.

Why do we need a Home School Agreement?

It acts as a reminder of our commitments.

It underpins the school's ethos and stated values.

It acts as a clear starting point for new pupils, their parents and the school staff.

This agreement will be reviewed annually



School	Parents/Carers	Pupils
<p>As a school we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - start and finish the school day punctually; - make available all relevant school policies for information; - be welcoming and provide opportunities for parental involvement in school life; - share information with parents in a respectful, honest and solution focused way; - provide a safe, secure and caring learning environment; - implement and monitor policies of the school which support the children to keep safe and engage in their education; - set homework weekly and provide feedback if appropriate; - help pupils to recognise and protect themselves from online abuse or bullying and misuse of social media; - provide high quality teaching and a balanced and innovative curriculum, which takes account and meets the individual needs of every child; - teach and encourage the children to do their best and achieve their full potential as a valued member of the school community; 	<p>As a parent/carer I will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensure that my child comes to school every day, is punctual and properly equipped and prepared for learning; - collect my child punctually, and advise the school office if they are going to be late or if there is a change to the pick-up arrangements at the end of the day; - Engage with staff and school stakeholders in a respectful way in line with the schools communication policy; - ensure careful and considerate parking around the school entrances and respect safety regulations on school premises; - read and support the school in implementing all school policies particularly those related to support from the home (Homework, uniform, behaviour, attendance policies) 	<p>As a pupil, I will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - try my best to be ready for school every day and arrive on time, - be ready and willing to learn and do my best; - Engage with my teachers and children in the school with care and respect; - Meet the expectations for behaviour and aspire to develop great learning behaviours - wear the school uniform and take care of my own appearance; - be responsible for my school and home learning, including making every effort to complete and return my homework on time and to the very best of my ability; - be aware of the risks attached to using

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - have a clear and consistent approach to rewards and sanctions for children as set out in the Behaviour Policy; - achieve high standards of behaviour by providing opportunities for children to develop positive social relationships, self-esteem and a sense of responsibility; - communicate between home and school through notices, newsletters, website and general meetings (in line with the Communication Policy); - show children how to develop a sense of responsibility, independence and self-esteem by emphasising that they are each unique and valued; - encourage children to understand their role in the wider community; - support school staff in their efforts to create a caring community which values children and their rights; - support children to understand how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve their learning; - listen openly to children's/parents' problems and concerns connected with school work or relationships; - Support pupils to have good mental health and well-being and provide support where this is needed. <p>Signed _____ Headteacher</p> <p>Date _____</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - encourage my child's learning in all areas of life and support them with their homework; - help my child to recognise and protect themselves from online abuse or bullying and misuse of social media; - follow the school policy and procedures relating to the use of mobile devices and media (including social media) - support school ethos, values and ways of working; - encourage good behaviour, politeness, self-respect and respect for others and their property - support the school to make sure my child maintains good behaviour; - attend parent meetings with the teacher to discuss my child's achievements and progress; - read all parent mails/Dojo messages/emails that are sent home; engage with the schools social media forums positively - Use Dojo as a means to celebrate my child's learning (as per the communication policy) - support the school in their efforts to create a caring community which values children and their rights; - be available to have a meeting with adults in school about any concerns with learning or behaviour; - raise any concerns or problems that might affect my child's ability to learn or behave appropriately, including concerns related to mental health and well-being. <p>Signed _____ Parent/Carer</p> <p>Date _____</p>	<p>technology and in particular social media and I doing so I will not bring my phone or other devices to school;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - follow and embrace our school values: Independence Choice - Life Skills - Social Responsibility - Achieve - accept responsibility for the things that I do; - show kindness, consideration and respect to all, - speak politely to others and to be honest, - listen to others and to follow instructions - look after my own belongings and the property of others, - take good care of the building, equipment and school grounds, - Understand that I have rights and a voice within our community; - ask if I need help with my learning; - tell a member of staff if I am worried or unhappy; - ask if I need help with my relationships at school or at home. <p>Signed _____ Pupil</p> <p>_____ on</p> <p>behalf of pupil</p> <p>Date _____</p>
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