



# Home School Communication Policy

<b>Approved by: Chair of Governors, Stephen Prudence</b>		<b>Date:</b> 28th January 2026
<b>Headteacher: Sarah Kitching</b>		
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	28th January 2026	
<b>Next review due by:</b>	January 2027	

## Introduction

Article 3 of the United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child states that the best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions affect children. At Hollywater School, this means that clear, open communication between the school and parents is a priority, to ensure that communication has a positive impact on the young person.

Effective home communication ensures that:

- parents and carers have the information they need to support their young person's education
- the school is able to continuously improve through feedback and consultation with parents/carers
- trust is built between home and school, which helps the school better support each young person'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

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

## Roles and Responsibilities

### The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- Regularly reviewing this policy (every 2 years or sooner if the need arises)

### School Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and other appropriate school policies
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)
- Demonstrating an understanding that due to the complex needs of our students, our parents are often under high levels of pressure and may require a level of sensitivity and compassion during communications

## 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
- Demonstrating an understanding that the school has adopted the 'right to switch off' for our staff. This means that staff may not always respond promptly to communication outside of their individual working hours and/or the school day.
- Providing the school with current contact details, specifically addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses through Arbor parent portal or via email to school Admin Office.

## How we communicate with Parents and Carers

Parents should monitor all of the following avenues of communication regularly to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their young person.

Staff should follow safeguarding policy in only communicating with parents via school email addresses and only using school devices for texts and phone calls.

### Email

Hollywater School uses email to communicate with parents about the following things:

- General information sharing
- Upcoming school events
- Short-notice changes to the school day or normal routine
- Sharing reports and/or updates on matters in school specifically relating to their young person
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests
- In response to emails from individual parents
- Absence follow-ups
- Sharing of our school Newsletter
- Sharing other relevant information
- Finance related communications

### Text Messages/SMS

We will use SMS to contact parents about:

- Short-notice changes to the school day or normal routine
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)

- General information sharing
- Absence follow-ups
- To notify about changes in school timetable or routines
- Finance related communications

### **Phone Calls**

Phone conversations with parents are part of the culture in school and occur regularly. Phone calls can be initiated by both school and parents.

We will phone parents to inform about:

- Short-notice changes to the school day or normal routine
- General information sharing
- Sharing reports and/or updates on matters in school specifically relating to their young person
- Discussing any issues or concerns

### **Letters**

We will send letters home regularly around:

- Significant updates related to the school
- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms
- Any event related to a young person where there is a statutory requirement to inform a parent in writing

### **Earwig**

Earwig is set up through the parent portal and it is used as a system for sharing reports and/or evidence specifically relating to their young person.

### **Home School Communication Books**

Home school communication books are used on an individual basis, where the needs of a young person require one. For example, when a student struggles to communicate their needs due to communication difficulties. Staff are not obliged to complete both an email and a home communication book as this adds to staff workload and may contribute to an unhealthy work-life balance.

### **Annual Reports**

Annual Reports are produced on an annual basis which provides information on achievement across the curriculum, provides an annual progress update on their social, emotional and academic development and on a young person's attendance and engagement.

Additionally, teacher reports are completed for statutory Education Health Care Plan Annual review meetings.

## **Parents Evenings and Meetings**

Parents Evening takes place in the Autumn and Spring Term, where parents are able to book in with individual teachers who work with their young people. During these meetings, parents can talk with staff about their young person's achievement and progress, the curriculum or their child's wellbeing, or any other area of success or concern.

With every student in school possessing an EHCP, annual review meetings are held once per year when the provision and outcomes can be evaluated and updated. Where required, interim reviews may also take place within the academic year. Interim reviews may be arranged should serious concerns emerge regarding a young person and/or should their placement at Hollywater School be at risk of breaking down.

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

## **Hollywater School Website**

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

- Information about school day and key dates
- Important events and announcements
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information
- Newsletters and class Monthly Updates
- Families area

## **How Parents and Carers can Communicate with School**

Parents should always aim to contact the school or appropriate member of staff about non-urgent issues via home school communication book or email in the first instance.

It is important to understand that teachers at teach Hollywater School for 90% of the week and will not access their emails during this time.

Should your query be urgent and you require response on a short timescale, please call the school office on 01420 474396.

If you need to speak to a specific member of staff about a non-urgent matter, please email the school office and/or member of staff concerned directly and the relevant member of staff will contact you as promptly as possible.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will get in touch with you to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure you have spoken to the appropriate member of staff as swiftly as possible. If your issue is urgent, please call the school office on 01420 474396.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare concerns

At times of high volume or outside of office hours (8:00am – 4:30pm) it may not be possible to answer a call. Parents are able to leave a voicemail which will be passed on to the relevant member of staff to follow up on.

In the case of non-urgent/emergency contact which requires a response, a return call will be made within 3 working days, with any follow up action from the request /query/problem being dealt with within an agreed timeframe. In exceptional cases where further information or a thorough investigation is required a 15 working day limit is applicable. If this is the case then a holding communication will be made.

A record is made of communications by telephone and email on CPOMS which will include the date, time, content of the call and a record of those involved in any conversations.

If you would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, please email the staff member directly or the main contact email [adminoffice@hollywater.hants.sch.uk](mailto:adminoffice@hollywater.hants.sch.uk) Alternatively, you can call the school to book an appointment.

Annual review meetings are scheduled by following the SEN code of practice to provide the statutory period of time for professionals and parents to submit reports and views.

## Managing Expectations

As a school that supports young people with the most complex needs, we recognise the importance for timely communication, particularly for those young people who are not able to advocate or communicate for themselves. Staff will provide information as and when appropriate for the needs of the young person. For some, this may be daily via a communication book or email whilst for others this may be weekly updates.

Where a parent has made contact via email with school regarding a nonurgent matter we will aim to adhere to the following timescales:

- Acknowledge the contact within 24 hours
- An appropriate reply will be made by email, telephone call or letter within 2 working days.
- Depending on the content of the communication, a further agreed timeframe will be used so that appropriate information can be gathered and collated for feedback to the parent.

Any letters of complaint should be dealt with in accordance with Hollywater School complaints procedure.

## Inclusive Practice

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school. As such, we work with each family in establishing a preferred method of communication, be this home school communication book, email, text, phone calls or arranging face- to-face communication.

## Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher every two years, unless there are changes to school practice or statutory guidance is implemented by the Department for Education.