



# **BARHAM CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **HOME SCHOOL COMMUNICATION POLICY**

### **Our Vision Statement**

Barham is a vibrant, inclusive and high-achieving primary school with a family feel at the heart of the local and church community. We are committed to supporting everyone to be confident, kind and curious. Our curriculum is broad, engaging and supports everyone to flourish as God intends.

**Policy adopted by the Governing Body on 9/7/25**

**Policy to be reviewed every 3 years.**

**Next review date: September 2028**

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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
- 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 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- 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)
- Ensuring that all communications are treated as confidential within the school context.
- Ensuring that all communications are dealt with respectfully and with courtesy.

Staff will **aim** to respond to communication within 48 hours of receiving communications 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.

## 2.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times
- Refer to the communication flowchart included in this policy to ensure communications are sent to the right person/people.
- Read the key communication issued by the school through Arbor, the weekly overviews on Seesaw, the weekly newsletter, emails sent and letters. All communications for Barham School are sent via email or Seesaw. This is managed by the school admin team.
- 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

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with our parent code of conduct.

Parents should allow up to 48 hours for staff members to respond. They should not expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours, or their working hours if they are part time, 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 Arbor

We use Arbor 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
- Consent forms/permissions

If parents are unable to connect to the parent app, email can be used as the next form of communication.

### **3.2 Email**

We use emails 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
- Consent forms/permissions

### **3.3 Text messages**

Arbor is the main form of communication at Barham, however if this system is not working we will also use text messages to contact parents.

We will text parents about:

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

### **3.4 School calendar**

Our weekly newsletter includes a school calendar and it is available on the [school website](#) too.

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.

### **3.5 Phone calls**

Whilst email is preferable, telephone calls are one appropriate way to notify us that your child will be absent from school. This can also be done through the reporting absence tile on Arbor. Please telephone us to communicate brief information about your child that the school needs to know in an emergency, e.g. to let us know that you will be late collecting your child. We ask parents to telephone the school on 01227 831312. The school office is open between 8.15am and 4.15pm, Monday – Thursday and 8.15-2.15pm on a Friday during term-time only. At all other times there is an answering service available to take your message. If the call requires a response, we aim to do this within 48 hours during term-time.

### **3.6 Letters**

We send the following letters via email regularly (and copies are on the website):

- Letters about trips and visits
- Our weekly newsletter

If a parent requires a letter to be printed this can be done by request through the main office.

### **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
- Information about any statutory tests

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 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
- Class information (under the Class Pages)
- 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.

## **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, or the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance. Please see communication flowchart (appendix 1) included in this policy to know which email address to use.

We aim to respond (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 48 hours.

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 aim to contact them within 48 hours.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), we can schedule a phone call at a convenient time.

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 48 hours of the request.

We recommend parents 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 Home-school communications app

We encourage all parents to engage with the use of Arbor, as this is the main form of communication provided by the school.

Arbor is used to send out a variety of information, either to a targeted class or group, e.g. specific communications regarding class trips and special events, or to all parents, e.g. urgent messages such as an unplanned school closure.

For further information about how Arbor works please click on the following link:

[Arbor Parent FAQs](#)

## 5. INCLUSION

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

We currently make whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) available in the following languages:

- English

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 three years.

The policy will be approved by the governing board.

## 7. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- Acceptable use Policy
- Parent code of conduct
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints
- Home-school agreement
- Staff wellbeing

## 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:

- Consult the communication flow chart
- Email the most appropriate address from the list below


We try to respond to all emails within 48 hours.

### Parent Communication Flow Chart

- If parents have a concern that relates to their child at school, whether it's pastoral, curriculum or staffing in nature, their concerns can often be most quickly resolved by talking first to the most appropriate person. The flow chart below outlines who this will be.

Learning Concerns	Pastoral Concerns	Concern relating to particular learning or physical needs	Issues relating to staff	Concerns & Queries relating to school administration
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Please raise your concern with your child's class teacher in the first instance.	(Pastoral care covers our support of your child's individual needs, their emotional wellbeing and helping them with any personal problems they may be experiencing at school.)	Where a concern is related to a special need and you feel an adjustment may be required to support successful learning e.g. issues related to autism, dyslexia or dyspraxia or physical disabilities	Please contact the school office who will forward your concern to the most appropriate person.	Please speak to  <b>Mrs Taylor</b>  School Secretary    <b>Or Mrs King</b>  School Finance
	↓	↓		
	Please raise your concern with your child's class teacher.	Please raise your concern with your child's class teacher in the first instance.		
	↓	↓		
	If you feel that the class teacher is unable to help for pastoral concerns please contact our Pupil and Family Liaison Officer <b>Mrs Anderson</b> .  <b>Mrs Anderson</b> works with all of the children for	Please arrange an appointment with our Assistant Headteacher and Special Educational Needs Coordinator <b>Mrs Anderson</b> .		



	behavioural and pastoral support.			
Please make an appointment to see one of our Co-headteachers: <b>Mrs Higgins or Mrs Duhig</b> if you remain concerned after following the steps above.				
<b>Teachers are often available after school for informal conversations and appointments can be made with all of the above by contacting the school office on 01227 831312 or emailing: <a href="mailto:office@barham.kent.sch.uk">office@barham.kent.sch.uk</a></b>				
If you are writing to the school it is really helpful if you give us as much information about the background of your concern or complaint as possible, including who it involves, and what you would like the outcome to be.				

### Useful email addresses

Parents should consult this list to use the correct email address for staff members. If this email address is not listed please use the main school office email and include staff members name in the email subject. This will then be forwarded to the right person.

STAFF MEMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS
School Office	<a href="mailto:office@barham.kent.sch.uk">office@barham.kent.sch.uk</a>
Mrs Alison Higgins (works 3 days a week) Co-headteacher	<a href="mailto:headteacher@barham.kent.sch.uk">headteacher@barham.kent.sch.uk</a>
Mrs Jo Duhig -Co-headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Officer	<a href="mailto:headteacher@barham.kent.sch.uk">headteacher@barham.kent.sch.uk</a>
Mrs Michelle Anderson (Assistant Head, Special Educational Needs Coordinator and Family Liaison)	<a href="mailto:michelle.anderson@barham.kent.sch.uk">michelle.anderson@barham.kent.sch.uk</a>
Mrs Bridget King (Bursar) (works Mon-Thurs)	<a href="mailto:finance@barham.kent.sch.uk">finance@barham.kent.sch.uk</a>

### Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy which can be found on the school website [here](#).