



# Communication Policy

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Approved By:	Full Governing Body
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## **1. Introduction**

Parents/carers can help more if they know what Grimsdyke School (“the school”) is trying to achieve. We believe that it is important to have clear and effective communication with all parents/carers.

Keeping parents well informed about school life reinforces the important role that parents play in supporting the school and their child’s education.

## **2. Our Aims**

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

- Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers (please note this policy has an appendix with more detailed information about how we communicate when parents/carers are separated or divorced);
- Setting clear standards for responding to communications from parents/carers; and
- Helping parents/carers reach the member of school staff who is best placed to address their specific query or concern so that they can get a response as quickly as possible.

## **3. Responsibilities**

### **3.1 The Headteacher is responsible for:**

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate; and
- Ensuring this policy is regularly reviewed.

### **3.2 All staff are responsible for:**

- Responding to communications from parents/carers in line with this policy and the school’s ICT and Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy;
- Working with other members of staff to make sure that parents get timely information, including if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves; • Ensuring that all communications are treated as confidential within the school context; and
- Ensuring that all communications are dealt with respectfully and with courtesy. Staff **will not** be expected to respond to communications outside of school hours, or their working

hours if they work part-time, or during school holidays. Staff working in extended day provision such as breakfast club or after school club may process emails during their working hours.

- School will endeavour to share communications between the hours of 8.45am-4pm during the term time where possible although automated or pre-scheduled messages from the school management system (Arbor) may be sent out of hours.

### **3.3 Parents/Carers are expected to:**

- Ensure that communication with the school is respectful at all times;
- Read the key communications issued by the school, including the school newsletter, the newsletter is published on the school website alternate Fridays during term-time;
- Make every reasonable effort to address their 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; and
- Check all communications from the school.

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive, or threatening will be treated in line with our Parent/Carer Code of Conduct.

The School will not tolerate any unacceptable behaviour by parents, all members of the School have the right to work without being abused or feeling afraid. Violence on the School property will not be tolerated.

This policy outlines the manner in which all parents of this School is expected to behaving in. the school will not tolerate or accept, abuse, aggression, harassing, violent or verbal aggression. This list is not exhaustive but highlights what the school deems unacceptable behaviour form parents and carers.

The school reserve the right to ask parents or carers displaying this behaviour to leave the property and/or take legal action against them.

## **4. How we will communicate with you, and how we would like you to communicate with us?**

### **4.1. Email**

For the purposes of administration we require all general emails to go to a central year group email address. All emails will be treated with appropriate confidentiality. Please note

all emails should specify the member of staff to whom the query is addressed. In the first instance, this is usually your child's class teacher.

If a response is required we will endeavour to respond to parents' emails within 1 working days during term time.

Parents are asked to inform the school via the attendance email if their child will be absent from school, including the reason for the absence. We ask that you communicate this information by 9.30am on each day of absence. If a child is absent from school, and we have had no indication of the reason, we will attempt to contact you/your second/third nominated emergency contact by telephone to find out the reason for the absence.

Use the email addresses below: -

[reception@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk](mailto:reception@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk) – reception

[year1@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk](mailto:year1@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk) – year 1

[year2@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk](mailto:year2@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk) – year 2

[year3@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk](mailto:year3@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk) – year 3

[year4@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk](mailto:year4@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk) – year 4

[year5@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk](mailto:year5@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk) – year 5

[year6@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk](mailto:year6@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk) – year 6

[attendance@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk) – absences/ attendance

#### **4.2. Arbor (School Management Information System)**

We encourage all parents to inform the school of their current e-mail address, to allow them access to Arbor. The school will use Arbor for communicating messages quickly 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. In addition, Arbor is the schools only method to make payments for activities and school lunches.

On joining the school parents receive information about how to access Arbor and use the app to make this an efficient process.

Parent with queries about matters involving payment such as music lessons, trips, school lunches etc. may send a message to the school business manager at [sbm@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk](mailto:sbm@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk)

### **4.3 Telephone**

Whilst email is preferable, telephone calls are appropriate to notify us that your child will be absent from school. 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.

The School asks parents to telephone the school on 020 8428 1324 selecting the option for absence notification. The school office is open between 8.45am and 4.00pm, Monday - Friday during term-time. 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 1 working days during term-time.

### **4.4 School Calendar**

Our school website and our fortnightly newsletter includes the school calendar. Where possible we try to give parents at least two weeks' notice of any events or special occasions, e.g. non-uniform days, visits or visitors, or requests for pupils to bring in special items.

### **4.5 Messages, Appointments and Meetings**

Parents can visit the school to ask questions; gain support or to have the opportunity to talk about issues affecting your child with either his/her class teacher or a member of the school Leadership Team. If you wish to share information or discuss an issue affecting your child please telephone the school office on 020 8428 1324 or email [office@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk](mailto:office@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk) to make an appointment.

The day-to-day care, welfare and safety of your child is managed by the person who is placed closest to them. In the first instance, you should contact the members of staff who are responsible for your child in the following order:

1. Class teacher/s.

2. Deputy Headteacher.
3. Headteacher.

Your first point of contact in the school is always your child's class teacher. For all other queries, the school office will direct you to the appropriate member of staff, to deal with your query and arrange any appointments for you.

Meetings should always be pre-arranged with members of staff. We would advise you not to arrive at the school with the expectation that you can be seen without an appointment as this is unlikely to be possible.

If you urgently need to see someone, for instance if there is a serious family emergency or a child protection issue, please phone ahead and the office staff will do their best to find a senior member of staff to see you.

For non-urgent meetings we will aim to meet with you within 5 working days. The school will determine the level of emergency at its discretion, to enable us to manage multiple demands.

If you have not received a response from the school within 5 working days please contact the school by emailing [office@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk](mailto:office@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk) we will chase up your enquiry.

### **Parents Evening Consultations**

The School will hold two Pupil Progress Consultations across the year. These are held in the Autumn and Spring Term. During these meetings you can talk with teachers about your child's achievements and progress, their well-being and any areas of concern. You will need to book your consultation meeting using the school's online booking system (Arbor), following the instructions that will be made available to you.

The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings between these times if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or well-being.

Parents of children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), or who have other additional needs, will also be invited to attend further meetings to address these additional

needs.

## **5. How you can find out more about school events and activities**

### **5.1. School website**

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

- The fortnightly school newsletter;
- School times and term dates;
- Events and announcements;
- Curriculum information;
- Information about your child's class (class portal);
- Policies and procedures;
- Contact information; and
- Information about before and after school provision.

Parents/carers should check the website and the latest newsletter before contacting the school.

### **5.2 School Newsletter**

The School Newsletter contains general details of school events and activities. It is published on alternate Fridays during term-time and the link is emailed to you via Arbor. A calendar of school events is at the end of each newsletter. This is updated regularly, so we would advise you to check regularly for any updates. Newsletters are archived on the school web-site.

### **5.2. Curriculum information on school website**

At the beginning of each term teachers notify the parents or carers of the children in their classes with details of the work to be covered during the forthcoming term. This information is also posted on the website. We invite parents and carers to support their child's work through a range of suggested activities to be shared with the child at home.

### **5.3. New Class Induction Information**

Information about your child's class is shared on their year group page on our website. This

will include important information such as: what your child will be learning, PE days, homework expectations, expectation of behaviour, planned activities and events etc.

## **6. How you can find out about your child's progress and achievement?**

### **6.1. Parents Evening Consultations**

Parents are invited to meet with their child's class teacher twice during the year, in the Autumn and Spring Terms for parent-teacher consultations. The meetings will be held via video call in the autumn term and face to face in the spring term.

You will be invited to book an appointment for your video call using our school's on-line booking system.

### **6.2. Annual Pupil Report**

In the Summer Term parents/carers receive a written report to inform you of your child's achievement, progress and effort in all national curriculum subjects. The report will be sent home as a printed copy and emailed to you.

## **7. How you can share your views about the school**

### **7.1. Parent Surveys**

The School welcomes and values feedback from parents/carers about our school's policies and practices. We will invite parents/carers to contribute to a regular surveys and report back on the outcomes.

### **7.2 Parents Forum**

We hold a termly parent forum. Parents can submit topics for discussion in advance and the minutes of these meetings are emailed to parents attending the sessions following the meeting. Copies of previous meeting minutes may be requested from the school office.

## **8. What should you do if you want to make a complaint or pass on a compliment?**

### **8.1 Complaints Policy**



There are times when we feel that we would like to say something about the service or treatment that we receive. If you feel you need to complain, then in the first instance you should speak to your child's class teacher. If you are still dissatisfied, please contact the Headteacher as soon as you can to make an appointment.

If the complaint cannot be resolved, you should follow the school's Complaints Procedure, which is set out in the school Complaints Policy, which is available on the School's website.

## **8.2 Direct communication with School Governors or the Local Authority**

Parents/carers should be advised that directly contacting individual school governors or the local authority is not a short cut to having an issue or concern resolved. The governors' and local authority's role is strategic and any complaints received by them will be directed back to the school to be resolved through the school's Complaints Procedure.

## **8.3 Compliments**

We also like to know what you are happy with, so please tell us, we are always very pleased to hear compliments.

## **9. Inclusion**

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

- School communications translated into additional languages; and
- Interpreters for meetings or phone calls.

The School can make additional arrangements if necessary. Please contact the office for any additional support.

## **10. Monitoring and Review**

The head teacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will ensure the review of this policy every two years.

## **11. Links with other policies**

This policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- ICT and the Acceptable Use of the Internet;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Parent Code of Conduct; and
- Complaints Policy.

Reviewed

Next review

***This policy has been constructed with reference to best practise models and recommended advice from the Department for Education and The Key***

### ***Appendix: Specific arrangements for families with separated/divorced parents***

#### **Aims & Values**

Grimsdyke School (“the School”) attaches great importance to providing a caring, supportive community in which parents, staff and governors can work together in the education of our pupils.

A strong ethos of equality of opportunities for all underpins all of the School’s policies and practises. The School is keen to encourage that our children enjoy the challenge of learning, through a broad and balanced curriculum, enabling them to develop their individual potential in a secure and caring atmosphere.

The School seeks to develop a strong partnership between the children and parents to enable this to take place.

The Schools overriding aim is to provide the highest quality education for all children that attend. The School is committed to ensuring every child reaches their potential, in return we expect a commitment to high standards of efforts and behaviour from all.

It is understood that separation and/or divorce is particular hard on the parents and the children involved. Invariable these personal problems can impact the School and be very traumatic for the children concerned.

The aim of this policy is to clarify the School's position and what is expected from separated and/or divorced parents in order to minimise the impact this has on the child.

### **Legal position**

The School recognises that both parents have a right to be informed of, and be involved in their child's education. The School will want to know who has parental responsibility for a child, in order to ensure that communication is sent to those that the School legally has a right to it .

All mothers automatically have parental responsibility, fathers only have parental responsibility if they were married to the child's mother when the child was born or they are named on the child's birth certificate and the child was born on or after 1 December 2003.

The School will revert to the information provided when the child was enrolled detailing whether both parents have parental responsibility for the child. This will be presumed to be correct unless a court order or original birth certificate providing evidence otherwise is sent to the School or directed by a Court Order.

If no such Court Order exists, the School will not treat one parent's rights superior to the other.

It is the responsibility of both parents to inform the School when there is a change in the family's circumstances. The School needs to be kept up to date with contact details and any other information that may have an impact on the child at school.

### **Communication**

The Schools expects parents to communicate with each other, regardless of the nature of their separation, for the benefit of their child.

The School hopes that the parents are in a position to work with each other and the School to promote and protect the best interests of their child. However, the School appreciates that there will be circumstances when this is impossible as the relationship has irrevocable broken down, in such circumstances the School would appreciate being told of the circumstances, in order to put appropriate provisions in place.

In order to reduce the possibility of errors being made and any upset caused to both parents the School will ensure that any communication is only sent to parents with parental responsibility unless a Court Order stipulates otherwise.

Information on all the main school events, including productions, sports days, parent's evenings, trips, etc. are available on the school website, Arbor and school newsletter.

The School expects parents to share information that is provided in the child's school bag with each other as and when appropriate. The school will not provide duplicates of such information, unless there are extenuating circumstance to do so.

We hope that both parents are able to attend the same appointment on parents' evenings, if this is not feasible we expect parents to notify the school in advance, in the first instance directly with the School office and teacher. The School expect parents to communicate with each other regarding the arrangements for these.

### **Progress reports and children's' records**

Progress reports of the child's records can be accessed through Arbor. Both parents should have their own log in details and the same information will be available to both parents, unless a Court Order stipulates otherwise. Both parents are recommended to use the School website and Arbor regularly, it will contain the Schools communications and have a range of information and links.

### **Requests for Leave of Absence from School**

If there is a leave request from one parent for an extended period of time, the School will contact both parents prior to deciding whether this leave will be granted. The Headteacher will make a decision after considering all relevant information available to him. Permission may be refused if consent cannot be obtained from both parents depending on the circumstances of length of leave requested.

If there is a belief that a possible abduction of the child may occur, advice will be sought from social services and/or the police.

### **The break-down of a relationship**

The School acknowledges that a relationship can break down for a number of reasons. The School is sympathetic of these circumstance and is not here to apportion blame, but to ensure that the child is supported and safe, which is paramount.

The School would request that one parent at least contact the school inform us of any changes to plans or arrangements, for example emergency contact numbers and any formal or informal arrangements. The School may contact you directly to discuss these matters if necessary. Please ensure that any information will be treated with care and sensitivity and should be sent to [office@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk](mailto:office@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk).

If there is an emergency and you have safety concerns for your son/daughter, please contact the Headteacher or a member of the senior leadership team with designated responsibility for safeguarding immediately.

## **Parent Behaviour**

Whilst the School understands that this can be a traumatic and distressing time for the family, the School expects parents to conduct themselves appropriately whilst on school premises, as outlined in the Schools communication policy.

In the event that a dispute arises on the school property, the staff reserve the right to ask both parents to leave and take the child to a place of safety in order to avoid any distress that can be caused to him/her.