

GRIMSDYKE SCHOOL



Communications and Electronic Information (adapted from the LA model policy)

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1. Introduction

At Grimsdyke School we strive to build strong relationships with parents, guardians, and visitors, in order to help create a stimulating, happy and safe learning environment which continues from school to home and the wider community, providing all our pupils with the opportunity to achieve their personal best. The trust, support and co-operation of parents is fundamental to the continued success of our school.

We expect everyone involved with school life to communicate in a respectful manner, whether in person, on the phone, or online. In this way, staff, pupils, parents, guardians, and members of the public behave respectfully to each other at all times, which helps to promote the most constructive working and learning environment. Please note that our staff do not consent to being recorded during meetings or telephone calls, and if they become aware that the exchange is being recorded, they have the right to end the conversation or meeting immediately.

Grimsdyke School therefore asks parents, guardians, and visitors to:

- We ask that all parents, visitors and members of the public treat each other, staff members, pupils and external agencies with dignity and respect.
- Positively support the ethos of the school by setting a good example in their speech and behaviour (including online) towards all pupils, staff members and other adults.
- Work constructively with staff members to resolve any issues of concern, including clarifying specific events in order to bring about a positive resolution. (Details of the most appropriate person to contact depending on the issue being raised can be found on our website 'Contact' page)
- Only ever send emails to staff that are constructive and respectful.
- Refrain from communicating (by telephone, email or at meetings in person or remotely) in a manner which could be perceived as threatening or demanding.

- Work alongside the school to improve their child’s behaviour where necessary, understanding and accepting that a behaviour policy is fundamental and necessary to a safe and purposeful learning environment – this policy (and consequences outlined within) apply to ALL pupils; it is not democratic or open to negotiation.
- Make reasonable requests for meeting times, and not expect to see any member of staff without a prior appointment. We will always try to accommodate a meeting or phone call as soon as possible, but do have many commitments, including teaching, throughout the day and we would ask that you understand and respect this.
- Agree to communicate or meet with the member of staff which the school deems most appropriate in dealing with the particular situation. (N.B. The member of staff will be commensurate with the stage and scale of the concern and the choice of staff member is not open to negotiation.)
- Make every effort to positively promote the school to the wider community and not publicly undermine the school or the implementation of school policies or publicly manifest complaints or criticisms online, on social media platforms (eg - Facebook) or in any other public forums.
- When making a decision to contact the school, please remember that we are a school of 630 pupils. No school in the country has the capacity to enter into lengthy or regular email or telephone conversations. **We do not have the capacity to meet persistent or immediate demands from parents / guardians.**
- Emails received will be acknowledged within 1 working days and the school aims to respond to emails within 10 working days. However, it is recognised that under some circumstances, it may prove difficult to meet this deadline. In such cases, the school will inform you of the revised timeline.
- Parents should be aware of school policies and know that copies are available via the school’s website or from the school directly. When raising a concern, we would ask parents to ensure that they act in accordance with school policies.

Any abusive, foul, or insulting language, physical attacks, or aggressive or threatening behaviour towards staff members, governors, pupils, parents, or any member of the public — whether within our premises, on the phone, online, at face-to-face meetings, or during remote interactions — will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

This also extends to posting or publishing comments online that risk bringing an individual or the school's reputation into disrepute.

All emails and correspondence sent via the school are confidential and intended solely for the recipient. Please refrain from sharing or forwarding school communications to any third party or external organisation without prior consent.

Anyone exhibiting these behaviours will be formally warned by the school that this will not be tolerated, and any future violation of this policy could then result in all future communications with the school being restricted to writing. The school will consider taking legal action as appropriate.

All members of Grimsdyke School community have the right to work without fear of abuse or violence at all times.

This Policy outlines the manner in which everyone is expected to act whilst on school premises or virtually, as well as further detailing the type of behaviour which will not be tolerated.

All employees of Grimsdyke School:

- Are required to demonstrate the highest possible professional standards at all times.
- Deal with all pupils, fairly and consistently.
- Communicate with all parents and visitors with the highest level of professional courtesy.
- Be aware of and conform to all safeguarding routines in the school.
- Uphold the professional integrity of the school and teaching profession at all times.

2. Excessive Parental Contact/Demanding Behaviour

Grimsdyke is a very busy and successful school, and our priority will always be to teach, supervise and support our pupils. We are committed to working positively to effectively deal with any issues or concerns they may have where appropriate to do so.

Once the school has given a reasonable amount of time to address an individual issue or concern, we will not engage in further communication regarding those issues to which we have already responded.

We are a large school with students who each have individual, and sometimes complex, needs. We have a duty of care to support every pupil while meeting a range of statutory responsibilities.

As a local authority maintained school, our capacity, finances and resources can at times be limited. This can make it challenging to respond to demands that are disproportionate or unreasonable. Our ability to fulfil our responsibilities to all pupils is further affected when individual parents or guardians make excessive contact through emails, phone calls or meetings.

In such cases, the school reserves the right to limit or cease communication when the level of contact is judged to be detrimental to our capacity to carry out our duties effectively and in the best interests of all pupils.

Please note that it is not possible to interrupt members of staff during the school day as they need to remain with their classes and often have commitments before, during and after school. If you need to speak to a staff member, please contact the school office who will acknowledge receipt of your query within 1 working days.

Any emergency situations will be dealt with separately.

Please remember that any time dealing with complaints, excessive communications or questioning of school procedures is time away from our primary aim of supporting our pupils.

Please note the following:

- If parents / guardians are rude, abusive or speak in an inappropriate tone over the telephone, our staff will politely end the call.
- If any email is rude or inappropriate in tone, we reserve the right not to reply, or we may choose to take the action outlined within this policy.

- If parents / guardians are rude, abusive or speak in an inappropriate tone during a face-to-face meeting or a virtual meeting, our staff will terminate the meeting immediately.
- In either case, the school will forward a copy of this policy to reiterate our expectations and rights with regard to appropriate communication.
- In circumstances where school has listened to the request of a stakeholder (i.e. parent or pupil), considered the request and shared the outcome of this with the stakeholder, should the stakeholder continue to repeat or labour the same request, school reserves the right to cease communication or to limit the reply with a repeat of key messages already shared.
- In such situations where staff feel that they have been misquoted or misrepresented, the school reserves the right to limit contact to written communications. This is entirely at the discretion of the school.
- When the school judges email correspondence to be excessive, the school reserves the right to:
 - cease communication.
 - limit replies to a repeat of key messages already shared.
 - arrange an alternative method of communication.
 - set out a plan for a reasonable, manageable schedule of contact.
- Following reasonable attempts by the school to arrange a meeting at a mutually convenient time, or if a meeting is refused, then communication on this issue will cease.

Whilst we welcome feedback and regularly consult with a range of stakeholders in making key decisions, ultimately the school has to make decisions in good faith, which we deem to be in the best interests of our pupils. Whilst it is never our intention to disappoint, given the size of our school it is not always possible to secure agreement or consensus (and schools are not duty bound to do so). Decisions around behaviour expectations, uniform, teaching and learning strategies or strategic direction are at the discretion of the Headteacher and do not require consensus or parental approval. Equally, the school reserves the right to disregard advice given or offered by stakeholders (however well-meaning) that it believes are not in the best interests of its pupils or staff. This includes advice that either exceeds or contradicts DfE (Department for Education) guidance. We are therefore unable to enter into lengthy discussions or debate regarding such issues. This position is protected by law. Please see our published 'Operational and Strategic decisions protocol' (available on our website).

3. Communication of Political Views and standpoints

We want our pupils to develop a strong understanding of current and historical affairs; continuing to develop their own opinions, and we fully recognise the benefit of healthy, respectful debate.

However, in line with the provisions set out within the Education Act (1996), the school is not permitted to allow the pursuit of partisan political activities by staff or pupils. This can include, and is not limited to, displaying political symbols and campaign slogans (all graffiti, whatever the intention, is not an accepted part of our behaviour policy). Where political issues are discussed in lessons or extra-curricular activity, steps will be taken to ensure there is a balanced presentation of opposing views.

Given that some topics are incredibly complex and engender strong emotive responses, staff and pupils are asked to take into account the sensitivity of key topics. It may be that, at the discretion of the Headteacher, the school decides that it is not appropriate to open certain topics to whole class or group debate. This is in the interests of avoiding any pupil, or group, feeling marginalised and is ultimately in the interest community cohesion and our fundamental value of kindness.

4. Legal Framework

- This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including but not limited to the following:
 - The Education Act 2011
 - The Education Act 1996
 - The Children Act 2004

- The Malicious Communications Act 1988 prevents the sending of communications (including online messages or letters) that convey a threat, a grossly offensive or indecent message, or false information, if the intention of the sender is to cause distress or anxiety to the reader or recipient. The offence is punishable by up to six months in prison or a fine.

- The Protection of Harassment Act 1997, which makes it a criminal offence to pursue a course of conduct that, in the eyes of a reasonable person, amounts to harassment, or to harass two or more individuals with the intention of persuading a person to do or not do something. As such, online trolling or cyber-bullying can be criminal offences, for which there are serious consequences. Under section 2 of the Protection of Harassment Act 1997, a person guilty of the offence of harassment, which is a summary offence, can be imprisoned for a term of up to six months or given an unlimited fine. There is also a more serious offence, which involves a course of conduct that puts a person in fear of violence, which is an indictable offence carrying a potential sentence of five years in prison (section 4 of the Protection of Harassment Act).
- The Defamation Act 2013 which covers libel and slander and allows legal action to be taken in respect of comments which you make (or have made) relating to the school or its employees where such comments cause (or may be likely to cause) serious harm to the reputation of the school or its employees. This would include any comments you make online, such as Facebook or other social media platforms.
- This policy also has due regard to statutory guidance, including (but not limited to the following):
 - DfE (2025) Keeping Children Safe in Education.

5. Expected Behaviour

We expect that all parents, visitors and members of the public will treat each other, staff members, pupils and external agencies with dignity and respect.

Parents should be aware of school policies, and know that copies are available via the school's website or from the school directly. When raising a concern, we would ask parents to ensure that they act in accordance with school policies and maintain a positive approach at all times whilst on the school premises and in their communications with school.

6. Parent and Staff Email Communication Protocol

For administrative purposes, all general correspondence should be directed to the school office via email or telephone. Alternatively, parents and guardians may contact the relevant year group using the addresses listed below.

This ensures that messages are received, logged, and addressed appropriately. All emails will be treated with appropriate confidentiality. Please ensure that your message clearly identifies the member of staff to whom it is addressed — in most cases, this will be your child's class teacher.

Emails received will be acknowledged within one working day and responded to within ten working days during term time.

Staff Communication

Under no circumstances should staff contact pupils or parents/guardians using their personal email addresses. Staff should also refrain from using their individual work email accounts wherever possible. Instead, communications should be sent via the designated year group or role-based email accounts (e.g. office@, sbm@, sendco@) where applicable.

Absence Notifications

Parents and guardians must inform the school if their child will be absent, including the reason for absence, by emailing the attendance address below by 9.30am on each day of absence. If no reason is provided, the school will attempt to contact parents or nominated emergency contacts by telephone.

Year Group and Key Contact Email Addresses

- reception@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk – Reception
- year1@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk – Year 1
- year2@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk – Year 2
- year3@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk – Year 3
- year4@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk – Year 4
- year5@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk – Year 5
- year6@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk – Year 6
- attendance@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk – Absences / Attendance

7. Telephone calls

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school, where teachers may be teaching full-time and running clubs or working with pupils at lunchtime or after school. Parents and guardians may be frustrated if they feel that a message elicits no immediate reply, when in fact there has been no available opportunity for the member of staff to reach a telephone to return a call.

In a non-emergency, a return call will aim to be made within one working day. Any follow-up action relating to the request, query, or problem will normally be completed within ten working days. Staff may record a summary of a telephone conversation with a parent or guardian on CPOMs.

School operating hours are: 8.45am to 4.00pm

8. 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 only method to make payments for activities.

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, etc. may send a message to the school business manager at sbm@grimsdyke.harrow.sch.uk

School will communicate with parents/guardians via Arbor using the following methods:

- Emails – sent to the email addresses recorded on Arbor
- Text messages – sent to the mobile number recorded on Arbor
- In-App messaging – Sent to the parent portal

9. 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.

10. Parent Consultation Evening

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.

11. How you can find out more about school events and activities

11.1 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/guardians should check the website and the latest newsletter before contacting the school.

11.2 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.

11.3. Curriculum information on school website

At the beginning of each term teachers notify the parents or guardians 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 guardians to support their child's work through a range of suggested activities to be shared with the child at home.

12. How you can find out about your child's progress and achievement?

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 face to face in the autumn and spring term. You will be invited to book an appointment for using Arbor.

Annual Pupil Report

In the summer term parents/guardians 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 electronically via Arbor.

13. How you can share your views about the school

Parent Surveys

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

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.

14. Related School Policies

This communications and Electronic Policy has due regard to the following school policies and procedures:

- Complaints Policy
- Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Parent Code of Conduct
- Health and Safety Policy

15. Monitoring and Review

This Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis by the Headteacher and Governing Body.

If any parent / guardian behaves in a manner that this policy outlines as unacceptable (such as abusive, aggressive, inappropriate or excessive contact, etc) the school may choose to take appropriate action in line with our legal position or forward a copy of this policy to appropriate individuals to ensure that parents/guardians are aware of expectations for future behaviour; the position of the school; our legal rights and protection and any action that we might choose to take.

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.

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.