



Communications Policy

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1. Introduction and Aims

It is very important to us that we work closely in partnership with parents and carers, and communication between home and school is key. Modern communication methods can mean more efficient sharing of information, though this needs to be structured to ensure that it is manageable for staff whose primary responsibility is to teach young people.

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 communication with parents and governors is effective, timely and appropriate; urgent or safeguarding issues will be dealt with as a priority.

Monitoring and reviewing the implementation of this policy.

Ensuring that an out of office pro forma including the safeguarding contact number is used during the school holidays.

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)

2.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times.

Ensuring their contact details are correct and up to date, informing the office of any changes.

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

2.4 Governors

Governors are responsible for:

Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner

Checking all communications from the school regularly

Regularly reviewing this policy with the headteacher in order to promote staff wellbeing and to support staff to find a suitable work life balance.

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 the following regularly to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child.

3.1 Email

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

Upcoming school events, school surveys or consultations, class activities or teacher requests, payment requests/reminders and the weekly newsletter

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).

During term time emails will be responded to within three working days. On occasion this may be a holding email to acknowledge receipt while the item is investigated. Please refer to appendix one for the flow chart on how to raise a concern.

Staff will aim to respond to communication during core school hours (8am – 4pm) or their working hours (if they work part-time).

All emails regarding attendance, general enquiries, requests to speak/make appointments with class teachers or parental support enquiries must be sent via admin@yewtree.herts.sch.uk, where they will then be passed directly to the relevant member of staff, please do not email the staff member directly.

3.2 Arbor portal/app/text message

Used for: general pupil information, trip payments, lunch payments, messages or emails to the office

We may also send in-app messages or text messages about:

Short-notice changes to the school day

Short-notice changes to clubs/activities

Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)

3.4 Phone calls

Office staff will call parents when a phone call is appropriate, for example if a child is unwell, had an accident, regarding outstanding payments or consent etc.

Occasionally teachers, phase leads or the senior leadership team will telephone parents, if a discussion is urgent, normally regarding behaviour, wellbeing, or meeting times.

Parent Phone calls

Please call the office on 01442 424920 (office hours are Mon – Fri 8am to 4pm, the office is very busy at the beginning of the day, end of the day and during lunchtime, so you may want to avoid these times if you have a general enquiry – please leave a message outside of these hours or if there is no answer) to:

- book an appointment with your child’s teacher, the SENCO, Assistant Heads or the Head Teacher or to request that the teacher calls you back (outside of class hours)
- to let the school know if your child is off sick – by 9am each day please.
- to make enquiries or advise of anything important about your child.

3.5 Meetings

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, please approach the following members of staff who are responsible for your child in the following order:

- Classroom Teacher
- Phase Lead
- Assistant Headteacher
- Headteacher

Please refer to appendix one for the flow chart on how to raise a concern.

Meetings should always be pre-arranged with members of staff.

We recognise that sometimes you receive news that may cause upset. It is not appropriate to come to school expecting to speak to a particular member of staff without a prior appointment. Appointments can be made via the school receptionist, and a pre-arranged meeting will allow us to have the right information to hand and to meet with you at a time that both suits you and fits with that teacher's timetable and other fixed commitments.

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 reception 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 five working days. The school will determine the level of urgency at its discretion, to enable it to manage multiple demands.

3.4 School website

Our website is a great source of information for you:

- Individual Class Pages <https://www.yewtree.herts.sch.uk/year-group-pages>
- School Calendar - dates of terms, INSET days, occasional day
<https://www.yewtree.herts.sch.uk/calendar/?calid=1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10&pid=65&viewid=1>
- School policies <https://www.yewtree.herts.sch.uk/policies>
- Newsletter <https://www.yewtree.herts.sch.uk/newsletters-1>
- Dinner menu <https://www.yewtree.herts.sch.uk/lunches>
- Confirmation of school closure (e.g. for snow)

4. No response

Parents should not expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours (8am – 4pm) or during school holidays.

However, if you have not received a response from the school within three working days, please contact the school by emailing admin@yewtree.herts.sch.uk or telephone the school and we will follow up your enquiry.

Communication with parents and carers is important to us, and we will continue to monitor this policy and our approach to improve the process further.

5. Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy and procedures

Appendix 1 - Flow chart for raising concerns:

