



Ready, respectful, safe

Home School Communication Policy

v. 2023

This policy was formally adopted by governors in September 2023 and will be reviewed every three years.

Date of next review: September 2026

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1 – Introductions and Aims

At William Rhodes, 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
- Enables school and parents to work in partnership to achieve the best outcomes for our pupils

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

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

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 that parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query 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).

Staff are not expected to respond to communication outside of school hours.

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 Parent Hub, including year group messages, regular newsletters, messages sent and letters. All communications for William Rhodes Primary and Nursery School can be found on Parent Hub, 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.
- Respond 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, their working hours if they are part time, or during school holidays.

3 – How We Communicate with Parents/ Carers



Conversations

We believe that if a teacher needs to share information with a parent about their individual child (sharing successes or raising worries) the best place to start is with a conversation. Teachers may speak to parents at the end of the school day, or, if this is not possible, they may contact parents by telephone. If the matter is more serious or needs more time for discussion, the teacher may request to arrange a meeting with the parent.

We will hold a Meet The Teacher event at the beginning of each academic year, so that parents can meet their child's new class teacher, hear about the learning over the year, key events within that year group, find out expectations and ask questions. Parents will be sent information about this via Parent Hub and the school newsletter.

In the Spring term, we will have a formal Parent's Evening, where parents and carers can come to talk to their child's class teacher about their progress, wellbeing and attitudes.



Cards

We think that sometimes, communication just calls for a good old fashioned pen and paper! We love sharing your children's successes, so look out for them bringing a card home saying that they have been spotted going over and above – ask them how they earned it!

As an organisation, it is necessary for us to share information that is relevant to all members of our school community, particular classes, or groups of children. The following section highlights ways in which parents and carers can keep up to date with key information that they may need.



Parent Hub

We use Parent Hub 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 you are unable to connect via Parent Hub, please speak to our friendly office team, who will be happy to help



Text messages

Parent Hub is the main form of communication at William Rhodes, however if this system is not working, we will also use text messages to contact parents. It is therefore extremely important that we have the correct contact information for parents – please keep us up to date if your telephone number changes.

We will text parents about:

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



School calendar

- Our fortnightly newsletters regularly include a list of key upcoming dates.
- Where possible, we try to give parents at least 1 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 events will also be listed on the website.



Phone calls

Members of staff may contact parents via telephone call for a number of reasons, as this is the most direct form of contact if a situation is individual to a child or family. Telephone calls will be the main form of communication in an emergency: it is paramount that the school office has the most up-to-date contact details for parents and carers at all times.



Email

The school office or Head Teacher may contact parents via email if they have any specific documentation to be shared. This will usually be sent home as a paper copy in addition.



Social Media

We will use our school Facebook platform to keep parents informed of:

- Any events that have taken place in school
- Key reminders
- Safeguarding and community information
- Celebrations of children's achievements
- Newsletters

We ask that parents do not use messenger on the school Facebook platform as a method of communication. Please follow the channels listed in the following section.



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
- A report on Key Stage KS1 and KS2 SATs tests
- Parents of pupils with SEND will receive a variety of reports from the school or other professionals to support their child's inclusion and progress.



School Website

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

- School times and term dates

- 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/ Carers Can Communicate With School



Conversation

Working in partnership happens best through conversation. If you have any quick messages or updates you would like to share with your child's class teacher, please catch them or a member of SLT, who will pass the message on, on the doors at the beginning or the end of the day. Alternatively, you can telephone the school office on **01246 234626** from 8:00am- 4:00pm.



Phone calls

We ask that all parents and carers notify us of their child's absence from school by calling the school office. In extreme circumstances, absences can be reported by Parent Hub, however, in the busy morning rush, these could be missed, resulting in you still receiving a phone call from the Family Liaison Worker to chase up the absence.

If you have a worry or a concern about your child's wellbeing or progress, or would like to raise a complaint, please contact the school office to arrange an appointment with a member of staff. The office staff will ask some key questions in order to work out who the most appropriate person is for you to meet with and get back to you with a time as soon as possible in order to try to resolve the situation quickly. To make a formal complaint, please follow EMBARK Complaints Policy, which can be found on the school website and in the appendix.

If there is an emergency situation, please contact the school office via phone call so that we can make any necessary arrangements eg. You will be late collecting your child

The school office is open between 8.00am 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 3 working days during term-time.



Email

If you need to speak to your child's class teacher, please do so via a conversation or through booking an appointment with the school office. All staff are more than happy to meet with parents and carers to discuss any worries, concerns or issues. **Please do not contact your child's class teacher via email as you will not get a response.**

- For general queries, outside of school hours, or to share documents with your child's class teacher, you can contact our office team by email at: info@williamrhodes.derbyshire.sch.uk

- For more serious concerns, outside of school hours, you can contact the Head Teacher by emailing: headteacher@williamrhodes.derbyshire.sch.uk .

Please note that **we cannot guarantee a response** outside of school hours, however we will endeavour to respond to you if there is an emergency.

If you are worried that a child is suffering from, or at risk of suffering from serious harm, you should contact Derbyshire Starting Point on **01629 533190**.

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 Parent Hub notifications and newsletters) available in the following languages:

- English

We are trialing sharing our newsletters via video (in addition to written formats) on our school Facebook page and website.

Parents or carers 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 – Links With Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- Behaviour and Relationship Policy
- EMBARK Complaints Policy
- Anti- Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy

Appendix 1 – Restorative Questions

If you contact the school office to raise a concern or to book a meeting with a member of staff, the office will ask you a series of questions in order to ensure that the correct person can deal with the situation and to provide enough information for school to investigate properly. Please be patient with the office team and answer all of the questions calmly. We know that situations in schools can sometimes be emotive, but staff will not tolerate abuse of any kind.

From your perspective, what happened?

What are your (or your child's) thoughts about this?

How are you (or your child) feeling now?

Who has been affected and how?

What do you think needs to be done to move forward?

Office staff will record your comments and pass them on to the relevant member of staff, based on your responses. The designated member of staff will contact you via phone call to feedback following further investigation, or to book a meeting.