

# Home-school Communication Policy



<b>Policy Date</b>	<b>Autumn 2024</b>
<b>Next review</b>	<b>Autumn 2027</b>

## 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

We use a number of online communication systems including Arbor, Marvellous Me (Y1 – Y6) and Evidence Me (Reception).

### 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)

Staff will **aim** to respond to communication 8.30 – 4.00pm Monday to Friday 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. Staff **will not** be expected to respond to communications during school holidays. However, the headteacher and assistant headteachers will respond to emergencies or serious safeguarding matters.

### 2.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- › Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times including interactions with other parents or children on the school yard.
- › 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, particularly Arbor and the weekly newsletter which is on the school website

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive, or threatening will not be tolerated and may result in the perpetrator being banned from certain forms of communication.

### 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.

In addition to the communication methods below, staff may speak to parents at the start or end of the day during drop off or pick up times if needed or appropriate.

These are the primary communications tools we use:

- Arbor – <https://login.arbor.sc> is our web-based parent App. We use this to assist us with paperless communications by sending texts and occasionally sending letters home electronically via email. It is the school notification system for sending urgent news, or emergency information to parents via in app message and text message. We publish pupil attendance records on the Arbor parent app and this is also the system to pay for school meals, trips, after school clubs, uniform and other events.
- School Website – [www.crookhillprimary.org](http://www.crookhillprimary.org) The weekly newsletter is uploaded every Friday to the parent section of the school website. We also upload general information and letters to our website but not class or child specific letters. Examples of what is happening in the classroom are regularly added here.
- Marvellous Me – parents who have children in Y1 – Y6 will receive a Marvellous Me log in. Class teachers will share achievements and information or messages such as reminders about trips, wearing PE kit etc.
- Evidence Me (Reception class) – parents who have children in Reception receive emails through Parent Share emails with children's achievements and successes in class.
- Paper-based communications/letters

#### 3.1 Arbor (including text and in-app messages)

We use Arbor to contact parents or keep parents informed about the following things:

- Some letters home
- upcoming school events
- Parent consultations
- scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- school surveys or consultations
- class activities or teacher requests
- payments
- short-notice changes to the school day
- emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather, a power failure etc)
- Unexplained absences
- Text messages are also used if we are unable to contact a parent by telephone.

#### 3.2 Emails

We use emails to respond to parent questions, queries and concerns

#### 3.3 Diary Dates

A list of diary dates for the upcoming term is uploaded onto the school website at the start of each term.

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).

### **3.4 Phone calls**

We may use phone calls to contact parents about:

- an emergency situation e.g. a first aid injury / illness which requires their attention
- a specific and urgent concern about their child
- an incident which has happened and we need to discuss
- something positive which we would like to discuss
- emergency school closure while the children are on-site
- in response to a concern or query raised by the parent
- unexplained absence

### **3.5 Letters**

We send the following letters home regularly:

- › Letters about trips and visits
- › Consent forms
- › Information about school policies and procedures
- › letters with updates and information for parents
- › Extra-curricular club information and sign-up forms

### **3.6 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 KS2 SATs tests, Y1 phonics screening, Reception end of year assessments and the Y4 Multiplication Check (included in the annual report)

We also arrange regular meetings where parents can speak to their child's teacher(s) about their achievement and progress (see the section below).

### **3.7 Meetings**

We hold 2 parents' evenings 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.

### **3.8 School website**

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

- › School times and term dates
- › Important events and announcements
- › Curriculum information
- › Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 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 School**

Staff are available to speak with parents before and after school. The Head Teacher and other members of the leadership team are on the school gates or in the yards every morning. Staff greet children at the start of the day and dismiss at the end of the day and are available to speak to parents. Please be mindful that that these times are very busy and you may have to wait to speak to a member of staff.

##### **4.1 Email**

Parents can email the school with questions or regarding issues and concerns at [schooloffice@crookhillprimary.org](mailto:schooloffice@crookhillprimary.org)

We aim to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 3 working days.

If a query or concern is urgent, and you need a response sooner than this, please call the school.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- family emergencies
- safeguarding or welfare issues
- specific concerns about your child or their well-being

##### **4.2 Phone calls**

If you need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, please email the school office and the relevant member of staff will contact you within 3 working days.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will get in touch with you to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure you have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within 3 days of your request.

If your issue is urgent, please call the school office on 0191 4334066.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- family emergencies
- safeguarding or welfare issues
- specific concerns about your child or their well-being

For more general enquiries, please call the school office.

**Please remember that the person at the other end of the phone may not be the person who can deal with your issue and so we expect all contact to be courteous and polite.**

##### **4.3 Meetings**

Staff are available at the start and end of the school day if you need to speak to them. However, we recommend you email or call the school office if you want to discuss:

- any concerns you may have about your child's learning or wellbeing
- updates related to pastoral support, your child's home environment, or their wellbeing

We try to schedule all meetings within 7 working days of the request.

##### **4.4 Home-school communications app**

Parents can use Arbor to text school with any non-urgent information or to reply to messages from school.

## **5. Accessibility**

### **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 English.

Parents who need help communicating with the school can request reasonable adjustments such as:

- 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 3 years. The policy is approved by the governing board.