

Wirral Grammar School for Boys

Home School Communication Policy



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1. Introduction and aims

Definition of communication

Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications and needs to recognise that the quality of their communications reflect on the school's reputation. Parents and carers, Governors and pupils also have a part to play in reflecting the school's reputation. We strive to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and effective in their purpose.

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
- › Makes the school as welcoming and inclusive as possible

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

- › Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers
- › Setting clear standards 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 communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- › 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
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- › 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 not** respond to communications outside of school hours (08:30-17:00) or their working hours (if they work part-time), or during school holidays.

GDPR/data use policies may be found on the school website [here](#).

2.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- › Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful and non-threatening at all times
- › **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
- › Ensuring that the school has an accurate record of addresses, e-mail addresses, emergency contact details, including phone numbers, as requested. This information can be updated via the Bromcom MCAS app.

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive, or threatening will be treated in line with our parent code of conduct.

2.4 ICT Support

The ICT support team is responsible for:

- › Ensuring that all parents are provided with login details to access the Bromcom's Communication Portal (MCAS)
- › Providing ICT technical and knowledge support for those parents who are not able to access the Communication Portal
- › Update school website with set-up guidance and any subsequent changes

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.

3.1 E-mail

E-mail is a quick, effective way of communicating necessary information and is the school's preferred method of communication. E-mails should be short and clear, and the same care and consideration should be given as when sending a letter. Under no circumstances should staff contact pupils or parents and carers using their own personal e-mail address.

We use e-mail 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
- › Updates on progress

› Behaviour concerns

Under no circumstances will staff share their personal e-mail address with either students or parents.

3.2 School calendar

Our School [website](#) includes a full school calendar for the week/month and can be found [here](#).

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).

Any such event will be included in the school calendar.

The school will endeavour to publish all proposed trips, visits and activities on the school calendar at the start of each academic year. Parents and carers will be notified by email of trips, visits and activities that their child/children may wish to participate in as early as possible, and within at least six weeks of the proposed trip, visit or activity. Occasionally opportunities arise during the academic year to offer pupils additional trips, visits or activities that were not known or available when the school calendar was published. The school will always ensure parents and carers are notified of any additional opportunities for their child as soon as possible to ensure parents and carers have adequate time to plan for such events.

3.3 Phone calls

On occasion, it may be necessary to contact parents directly. For instance, the school encourages staff to call parents regularly to discuss significant changes in pupils' performance (both positive and negative) when they judge it necessary to do so. The pastoral team are encouraged to engage with parents rapidly when they judge it necessary to do so.

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 carers 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 be made within 2 working days, with any follow up action from the request /query/problem being dealt with within 10 working days.** Staff will make a record of a telephone conversation with a parent/carer on the CPOMS log where it is deemed necessary to do so.

Under no circumstances will staff share their personal phone number (mobile or landline) with either students or parents.

3.4 Letters

We send the following letters home regularly:

- › Letters about trips and visits (although these may well come via e-mail)
- › Consent forms

Letters to parents/carers must be processed through the school administration team and approved by a member of the Senior Leadership Team before posting/e-mailing. Letters/e-mails being sent out to all parents/carers should be approved by the Deputy Head teacher responsible for communication and sent out using Bromcom (via e-mail and MCAS Parent app). Copies of correspondence with parents and carers may be placed on pupil files on CPOMS. Any letters of concern or complaint should be dealt with in accordance with the school's Complaints and Suggestions Policy (copy available in the Policy Folder on the [policy page](#) of the school website).

The school will use standard templates for letters where possible.

Parents and carers are encouraged to provide the school with a current e-mail address for prompt and effective communication. However, if we are unable to obtain a current e-mail address for any parent or carer, communications may be delivered home in hard copy by their child or sent by post when we deem it is necessary or where requested.

The correct salutations must be used when writing to or e-mailing parents/carers/partnerships. The use of a parent, carer or staff member's first name is not appropriate. Therefore, all communications will be to and from Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Dr etc and sign off is always full name Ms/Mrs/Mr/Dr Teacher Surname. Any relevant line manager / Head of House / Form tutor may be copied into letters or e-mails.

3.5 Communication regarding Homework

Homework details are communicated via Bromcom (MCAS) where both students and parents can see what work is to be completed. Further details regarding the expectations and explicit instructions may be found on MCAS where students **may** be expected to post their work once completed.

3.6 Reports

Parents and carers receive an interim progress report and a full annual report to provide information about their child's progress in each academic year. These reports are accessible online through the Bromcom (MCAS). In addition, parents and carers have the opportunity to meet their child's subject teachers once a year, at parents' evening (these events will be online through the 'SchoolCloud' site).

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 (Year 11 and Year 13 receive reports prior to their external examinations in the Spring Term)
- Termly progress reports
- A report on the results of public examinations

We may also arrange a meeting where parents can be asked to attend school to discuss their child's achievement and progress (see the section below).

3.7 Meetings

We hold online parents' evenings for each year group. 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
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information
- Information about before and after-school provision

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

Links to the school's social media channels can be found on this site. These provide updates to parents and students who wish to subscribe to them. It is not compulsory to do so and therefore key messages will be relayed through formal school communication channels.

4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

Please use the list in appendix 1 to identify the most appropriate person to contact about a query or issue, including the school office number and e-mail address.

4.1 E-mail

Parents should always e-mail the school, or the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

We aim to acknowledge all urgent e-mails within 2 working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 10 working days. Please do not re-send the email prior to this or communication.

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

4.2 Phone calls

If you need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, please e-mail 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.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

For more general enquiries, please call the school office.

When staff regularly call parents to talk about their child's attainment and progress, you may use these calls to ask questions or raise concerns as appropriate.

4.3 Meetings

If you would like to request a meeting with a member of staff, please e-mail the appropriate address (see appendix 1) or call the school to book an appointment. A request may not be granted when it is deemed a more appropriate and/or timely solution is available.

We try to schedule all meetings within 10 working days of the request.

While teachers are available at the beginning or end of the school day, if you need to speak to them urgently, we recommend you phone the school office. You may request a meeting to discuss -

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

5. Communication between pupils and staff

Two-way communication between pupils and staff is an important aspect of school life. The school welcomes and encourages pupils to engage in conversation with all members of staff within the school.

When communicating with a member of staff pupils should:

- Stand in front of the member of staff they are speaking with and make eye contact;
- Address the member of staff using their formal name e.g. Mrs Smith, never referring to a member of staff by their first name or surname;
- Be respectful, do not talk over, raise voice, or walk away before the conversation has ended.

When communicating with pupils, staff should use pupils' first names and full names of staff (Mr Surname and Ms/Mrs Surname) in front of pupils.

Pupils may also e-mail staff on their school accounts in relation to their learning. All pupils should follow e-mail protocol (this applies to messages sent on Teams):

- › Complete the subject line
- › Use Mr/Mrs/Ms and surname as salutation
- › Use standard English
- › Avoid abbreviations
- › Sign off with 'Thank you' or 'Kind regards'

Students and staff must not communicate using personal e-mail addresses at any time.

6. Communication between staff and staff

Staff are to use full names (Mr/Dr/Ms/Mrs Surname) in front of pupils.

6.1 E-mail

- › consider whether an e-mail is appropriate when face to face communication may be more conducive
- › avoid exclusive e-mail correspondence without requesting or organising a face-to-face meeting
- › avoid 'send' or 'reply all' unless absolutely necessary – please pick the most appropriate, **single** person to deal with your communication
- › keep e-mails concise, use Standard English and bullet points if necessary
- › Staff to check e-mails twice a day
- › Use group e-mails as appropriate e.g. 'teachers', 'HOD' etc.

Staff should not send non-urgent e-mails before 8am or after 6pm. E-mails should instead be saved as drafts and sent during work hours. E-mails can be delayed using Outlook; please seek guidance from ICT_Support@wirralgrammarboys.com if you are unsure how to address this issue. It is not expected that staff respond to e-mails outside normal school hours.

The principles outlined above apply to messages sent between staff on Teams i.e. it is not expected that staff reply to non-urgent messages outside normal school hours.

Please do not 'reply all' to email threads that can fill multiple colleagues' inboxes. Again, pick the most appropriate, single person to deal with your communication.

7. Monitoring and review

The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every 2 years. The policy will be approved by the Governing body.

8. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- › ICT and internet acceptable use
- › Parent code of conduct
- › Staff code of conduct
- › Complaints

Appendix 1: school contact list

Who should I contact?

There are several routes of communication for parents/carers to contact school. We recommend, for non-urgent queries you utilise the school office contacts (e-mail/phone).

If you have questions about any of the topics in the table below, or would like to speak to a member of staff:

- E-mail or call the school office on schooloffice@wirralgrammarboys.com or 0151 644 0908
- Put the subject and the name of the relevant member of staff (from the list below) in the subject line (for e-mails)
- We will forward your request on to the relevant member of staff.
- Normal school office hours are 8:30-16:00

Remember: check our website first, much of the information you need is posted there.

We try to respond to all e-mails within 2 working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 10 working days.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Academic Support – School Office schooloffice@wirralgrammarboys.com Please put 'Academic Support' in the subject line
Pastoral support	Pastoral Support Manager – gsenior@wirralgrammarboys.com
My child's wellbeing	Learning Mentor – asmith@wirralgrammarboys.com
Payments	Finance – finance@wirralgrammarboys.com
ICT Support	ICT Support – ICT_Support@wirralgrammarboys.com
School trips	School office
Uniform/lost and found	School office
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, e-mail: absence@wirralgrammarboys.com or call: School office (0151 644 0908) - Option 3 If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact absence@wirralgrammarboys.com
Behaviour	Pastoral Support Manager – gsenior@wirralgrammarboys.com

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
Bullying	Antibullying Team – antibully@wirralgrammarboys.com
School events/the school calendar	School office
Special educational needs	School office
Before and after-school clubs	School office
Learning Resource Centre	LRC@wirralgrammarboys.com
Hiring the school premises	Finance – finance@wirralgrammarboys.com
The PTA	School office
The governing body	Clerk to the Governing Body – clerktothegovernors@wirralgrammarboys.com
Catering/meals	Finance – finance@wirralgrammarboys.com

Complaints

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

The link to the complaints policy can be found [here](#).