

# ACES Academies Trust / Godmanchester Community Academy



## Home-School Communication Policy

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## 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 receive 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 Co-Headteachers

The co-headteachers are 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:

- Ensuring that communication with parents is professional and timely
- 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 during core school hours (8.30am-4.30pm), 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.

### 2.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

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

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

Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours (8.30am-4.30pm), or during school holidays.

### **3. How we communicate with parents and carers (School to Home)**

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 Home-school communications app: Class Dojo**

We use Class Dojo to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events, trips and visits
- Class activities or teacher requests
- Weekly round ups including photos
- Stars of the Week
- Online platforms (AR, TTR, Spelling Shed)

#### **3.2 Email**

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

- Upcoming school events, trips and visits (including consent when required)
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests
- Absence that falls below the expected level
- Updates accessible via the Arbor app

We aim to send one weekly update email on a Friday to limit the number of communications parents receive, but occasionally, there may be additional email communications

#### **3.3 Text messages**

We will text parents about:

- Unexplained absence
- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- Behaviour incidence (Stage 3)

#### **3.4 School calendar**

Our school website includes a full school calendar for the academic year. Parents have the option to subscribe to this calendar to link it with a smart device.

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.

### **3.5 Phone calls**

Phone calls are difficult for staff to make during the core hours as they are in class teaching the children. However, when appropriate (depending on the circumstances and the level of urgency) a phone call will be used.

On the occasions that a phone call is required, the focus of the phone call may be recorded on Arbor to explain:

- who the conversation was between
- the reason for the conversation
- the outcome of the conversation

The purpose for completing these records is to ensure that we have a clear chronology. At the end of the phone call the member of staff will make the parent aware that notes will be made in line with this policy.

Should the nature of the phone call be linked to safeguarding, the record of the call will be made on MyConcern.

### **3.6 Reports**

Via Arbor, 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
- Termly progress reports
- A report on statutory assessments

### **3.7 Meetings**

We hold 2 sets of parents' evenings per academic year. During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, their child's wellbeing, or any other relevant information sharing.

Parents of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), 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.

## **4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school (Home to School)**

Parents should 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 email address.

### **4.1 Home-school communications app: Class Dojo**

Parents should use Class Dojo about the following things:

- Queries about the school day
- Changes to collection (although changes to collection that day should be communicated to the school office)
- Family updates or changes which may affect the child
- Injuries or illness which affect the child's ability to participate in PE and Games (although if this information is being provided on the same day it should also be communicated to the school office)
- Queries about home learning

#### **4.2 Email**

Parents should always email the school office about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within 2 working days, and to respond (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 5 working days.

#### **4.3 Phone calls**

If a parent wishes to request a phone call with a staff member, they must call the main office and provide information regarding the request. This will be passed on to the most appropriate staff member who will liaise with the parent within 5 working days via email, Class Dojo or the phone based on the information presented.

The following, details situations or information that should be presented to the school, via a phone call, as a matter of urgency:

- Safeguarding or welfare issues
- Family emergencies

### **5. Accessibility**

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school.

#### **5.1 Parents with additional communication needs**

We aim to make communications accessible to all. We have taken the following steps to achieve this:

- All whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) are made available in multiple formats
- All communications are written as clearly and concisely as possible
- Accessibility is considered when designing/updating the school website
- Staff are trained on accessibility and will endeavor to provide information in an accessible format

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

- School announcements and communications in accessible formats
- Sign language interpreters for meetings

Please contact the school office to discuss these.

#### **5.2 Parents with English as an additional language (EAL)**

We can offer translation services for the following forms of communication:

- Emails
- Class Dojo

Parents 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. Monitoring and review**

The co-headteachers monitor the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every 2 years.

The policy will be approved by the local governing committee

## **7. 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?

Option 1:

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

- Email or call the school office on [office@gca.acesmat.uk](mailto:office@gca.acesmat.uk); 01480 375115
- Put the subject and the name of the relevant member of staff (from the list below) in the subject line (for emails)
- We will forward your request on to the relevant member of staff

**Remember:** check Class Dojo, the weekly update email or our website first, much of the information you need is posted there.

We try to respond to all emails within 5 working days, acknowledging receipt within 2 working days.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework/behaviour	Class teacher via Class Dojo
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Class teacher via Class Dojo
Payments	<a href="mailto:office@gca.acesmat.uk">office@gca.acesmat.uk</a> ; 01480 375115
School trips	See information posted on Class Dojo/ weekly updates email <a href="mailto:office@gca.acesmat.uk">office@gca.acesmat.uk</a> ; 01480 375115
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, call: 01480 375115 If you want to submit a leave of absence request, download the form from the school website and send it to <a href="mailto:office@gca.acesmat.uk">office@gca.acesmat.uk</a>
Bullying	<a href="mailto:office@gca.acesmat.uk">office@gca.acesmat.uk</a> ; 01480 375115 making the subject 'Allegation of Bullying'
Special educational needs (SEN)	Unidentified needs: Class teacher via Class Dojo Identified needs: <a href="mailto:sendco@gca.acesmat.uk">sendco@gca.acesmat.uk</a>
Hiring the school premises	<a href="mailto:office@gca.acesmat.uk">office@gca.acesmat.uk</a> ; 01480 375115
Governing board	<a href="mailto:chair@gca.acesmat.uk">chair@gca.acesmat.uk</a>