



THE HERMITAGE SCHOOLS

Inspire, Learn, Achieve

Home-school communication policy

This document sets out the home school communication procedures at The Hermitage Schools.

Person responsible:	Executive Headteacher
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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 Hermitage Schools communicate 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 Executive Headteacher

The Executive 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 during core school hours (Monday to Friday 8:30am until 4:00pm), or their working hours within 48 hours of first receipt of communication. 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. Most staff are unable to respond on the same day due to teaching commitments.

Staff may refer to our ICT and Acceptable Use policies.

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 or for the attention of and naming the member of staff when emailing the school office
- Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school

Abusive or aggressive behaviour – in person, by phone or email – will not be tolerated. 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 (Monday to Friday 8:30pm to 4pm), or during school holidays. For correspondence for Holiday club during school closures call or leave a text message on 07446 906590

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 ensure they have logged in to the following forms of communication below and hold an account to enable them to monitor all of the following regularly. This ensures they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child.

3.1 ParentMail

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

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff INSET training days)
- School questionnaires or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests

3.2 School calendar

Our school website includes a full school calendar for the academic year [The Hermitage School - Inspire, Learn, Achieve](#)

Where possible, we try to give parents at the very 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.

Occasionally with sporting fixtures or competitions, we receive short notice.

3.3 Phone calls

At times, parents may be contacted by a member of our office staff, the class teacher or a senior member of staff by telephone. This may be to share news or an update on academic achievements, report a change in behaviour which causes concern, to enquire about an absence from school, following an incident on site, to invite you in for a meeting or to inform you of behaviour which seriously breaches the Schools' Behaviour Policy.

3.4 Letters

We send the following letters home regularly, usually in Friday Post via ParentMail but occasionally via paper format via your child's bag:

- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms
- Our half termly newsletter
- Letters informing parents about their child's attendance

3.5 Home Reading Records

Any written homework tasks will normally be sent out by Wednesday and should be returned to school by the following Monday. Even though the time period includes a weekend, there is no expectation that homework should be completed at weekends; the homework time period will always include a number of weekday evenings.

We request that parents sign their child's Reading Record book to show that their child has read at home.

[Homework guidelines](#)

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 against age related expectations, and their attendance
- A report on the results of annual public examinations - EYFS outcomes, Phonics Screening outcomes, Multiplication Tables Checking Exercises and KS2 SATs tests

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 two parents' evening(s) per year, autumn and spring terms, electronically via School Cloud and three for parents of children with SEND face to face on site termly. 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 or parents can request to arrange meetings between parents' evenings, for additional information or if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing.

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
- Information about admission arrangements

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

3.9 SeeSaw (Tapestry for EYFS)

Each September, a login for Seesaw (or Tapestry for Nursery and Reception children) will be sent home with your child. This is an app class teachers use to share photos of your child's work and activities at school and also to communicate with you.

Quick messages can also be sent via Seesaw from school staff. Other messages from school are on occasion passed on verbally at home time face to face when collecting your child.

3.10 Notice boards

There are several notice boards placed around the school site which hold key information for parents. These include; term dates for the academic year, posters and important dates coming up for this half term and more.

4. How parents and carers can communicate with the 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 Email

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

We aim to acknowledge all emails within two working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within five working days.

If a query or concern is urgent, and parents need a response sooner than this, they should call the school office.

4.2 Phone calls

If parents need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should email the school office, and the relevant member of staff will contact them within two working days.

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

If the issue is urgent, parents should call the school office.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues
- Attendance concerns

For more general enquiries, please call the school office.

4.3 Meetings

If parents would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the appropriate email address (see appendix 1), or call the school to book an appointment.

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

While teachers may be available or seen at the end of the school day, if parents need to speak to them urgently or at length, we recommend they book appointments to discuss:

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

4.4 See Saw (Tapestry for EYFS) communications app

In September, a login for Seesaw will be sent home with your child. You can use this app to communicate with your child's class teacher.

All messages sent to us via Seesaw are only visible to the parent and teacher regardless of how many parents are on the account.

Quick messages can be passed on to the staff at school verbally at home time, but longer meetings must be arranged at a mutually convenient time via the school office.

Messages will be replied to within within two working days.

5. Accessibility

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school and therefore we have access to translators or mediators should they be required or requested.

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 endeavour 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 currently make whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) available in English, but we are happy to translate for any family who is unable to access this written communication into any language.

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 Executive Headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every three 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
- Complaints
- Home-school agreement
- Staff well-being
- Social media policy
- Attendance Policy
- Homework Policy

Appendix 1: school contact list

Who should I contact?

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 schooloffice@hermitage.surrey.sch.uk 01483 474981 or 01483 472047
- Put the subject and the name of the relevant member of staff (from the list below) in the subject line (for emails)
- Our Admin team will forward your request on to the relevant members of staff

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

We try to respond to all emails within two working days to acknowledge receipt and five days with a full response.

Our office is closed between the hours of 12noon and 1pm and phone calls and emails will not be responded to during this time. Office hours are 8:30am until 4pm.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's class teacher – via SeeSaw or contact via school office
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your child's class teacher – via SeeSaw or contact via school office
Payments	School office via: schooloffice@hermitage.surrey.sch.uk
School trips	School office – Extended services leader Extendedservices@hermitage.surrey.sch.uk
Uniform/lost and found	Your child's class teacher – via SeeSaw or contact via school office
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, call: 01483 472047 If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact The School Office schooloffice@hermitage.surrey.sch.uk
Bullying and behaviour	Your child's class teacher – via SeeSaw or contact via school office
School events/the school calendar	See School Website or contact schooloffice@hermitage.surrey.sch.uk

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
Special educational needs (SEN)	SENCo Inclusion@hermitage.surrey.sch.uk
Before, After School (wrap around care) and Holiday Clubs	See School Website or contact clubs@hermitage.surrey.sch.uk After school club - 07788 953112 Holiday club - 07446906590
Staff run clubs and external company clubs	Extended Services Leader Extendedservices@hermitage.surrey.sch.uk
Hiring the school premises	See School Website or contact Extended services leader Extendedservices@hermitage.surrey.sch.uk
PTA	Chair of the Hermitage Schools Association(HSA) Hello@hermitageschoolsassociation.co.uk
Governing board	Contact The School Office marking email For the attention of (FAO) Chair of Governors schooloffice@hermitage.surrey.sch.uk
Catering/meals	Via the school office 01483 474981 or 01483 472047 schooloffice@hermitage.surrey.sch.uk

Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy which can be found on the school's website.

[SWAN-Trust-Complaint-Procedure.pdf](#)