

**ACES Academies Trust**

**Godmanchester Bridge Academy School**



## **Home-School Communication Policy**

<b>Approved by:</b>	Governing Body	<b>Date:</b> February 2025
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	February 2025	
<b>Next review due by:</b>	February 2028	

## Contents

1. Introduction and aims.....	2
2. Roles and responsibilities .....	2
3. How we communicate with parents and carers .....	3
4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school.....	5
5. Accessibility.....	6
6. Monitoring and review .....	7
7. Links with other policies .....	7

## 1. Introduction and aims

It is very important that we work closely in partnership with parents and carers, and communication between home and school is key. We recognise however that it can often be difficult communicating with staff because they have a very full timetable; and we recognise that parents and carers also have very busy lives.

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

### 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.
- 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 their working hours. 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. Please see the Parent and Carer Code of Conduct for further information
- 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

Parents should not expect staff to respond to their communication outside of working hours or during school holidays.

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

## 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. If there are any issues, you should always feel free to contact your child's class teacher by emailing [office@gba.acesmat.uk](mailto:office@gba.acesmat.uk) and addressing it for the attention of the class teacher.

Parents should monitor all of the following regularly to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child.

### Arbor Parent / Carer App

The school uses a Management Information System (MIS) called Arbor. Parents and carers can access information on Arbor either via the Parent Portal or by downloading the app. The aim is to centralise as much information as possible through the one app to make things easier for parents and carers. Parents and carers can pay for school lunches and activities through Arbor.



### 3.1 Email via Arbor

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

- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Newsletter
- Bookable whole school events such as parent consultations
- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms
- Information about the Local Offer and parenting support
- End of year reports
- Formal letters
- Absence that falls below the expected level
- Updates accessible via the Arbor App

### 3.2 ClassDojo

We use ClassDojo App to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events

- Internet Safety
- Class activities
- Teacher requests
- Knowledge Organisers
- Homework
- Weekly round ups
- Stars of the Week
- Online platforms (AR, TTRS, Athletics)

### **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)

### **3.4 School calendar**

Our school website includes a full school calendar for the year and can be found on the website.

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).

### **3.5 Phone calls**

We ask staff to contact home to discuss any concerns around behaviour, progress, attendance or wellbeing, which will be logged on Arbor.

### **3.7 Homework setting**

All homework is set via the App, ClassDojo. Pupils have logins given to them by their class teachers and parents are invited to join Class Dojo at the start of each year. It is the parent and carers responsibility to join Class Dojo. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to record:

- Details of the task
- Date it is due in
- Upload any relevant materials

### **3.8 Meetings**

In addition to parents' evenings the school may also contact parents to arrange meetings 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. All meetings are recorded logged on Arbor.

### **3.9 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.

### 3.10 Social Media

We use our social media channels to promote student achievements, subject information and whole-school information. We do not use these accounts for direct messaging.

## 4. How parents and carers should communicate with the school

Communication sequence:

Office ➤ Class teacher ➤ Phase leader ➤ Pastoral Lead ➤ SENDCO & Deputy Headteacher ➤ Headteacher

### 4.1 Email

Please use the office email address [office@gba.acesmat.uk](mailto:office@gba.acesmat.uk) if you need to contact staff:

- Teachers are not in a position to check email messages consistently throughout the day and the school does not expect work emails to be checked during a teacher's personal time
- We aim to respond to you as soon as possible, usually within 48 hours (please note that this applies to the working week and not weekends and/or school holidays)
- Part-time staff may take longer to reply as they are not expected to check their email or Class Dojo on non-working days
- Please ensure all emails sent to school are courteous in line with our school value, Respect

Communication with parents and carers is important to us and we will continue to monitor this policy and our approach to improve the process further.

### 4.2 Phone calls

Please use the office number (01480 276599) to leave a message for a member of staff to contact you. If a call is urgent, please inform the Office Administrator who will attempt to find a senior member of staff to speak to you. We will try to respond to you within 24 hours but please note lessons will never be interrupted for teachers to take phone calls.

If you need to get a message to your child, please contact the office number (01480 276599). If your child is in year 5 or 6, do not phone or message your child on their mobile during the school day as their phones should be handed in and switched off.

### 4.3 Meetings

The day-to-day care, welfare and safety of your child is managed by the person who is placed closest to them. In the first instance, please approach the following members of staff who are responsible for your child in the following order. Levels should not be jumped unless urgent:

1. Class Teacher depending on the nature of your query
2. Phase Leader / Pastoral Lead
3. SENDCo & or Deputy Headteacher
4. Headteacher

Meetings should always be pre-arranged with members of staff. If you urgently need to see someone, for instance if there is a serious family emergency or a safeguarding issue, please phone ahead (01480 276599) and the Office staff will do their best to find the most suitable member of staff to see you. For non-urgent meetings we will aim to meet with you within five working days. The school will determine the level of urgency at its discretion, to enable it to manage multiple demands.

#### 4.4 Class Dojo

Parents and carers should check the website before using Class Dojo to message the class teacher. Parents and carers should only use Class Dojo to monitor set homework and to interact with the Class Story.

Urgent messages must go to [office@gba.acesmat.uk](mailto:office@gba.acesmat.uk) or call the office on 01480 276599, not Class Dojo as teachers are not in a position to check Class Dojo messages consistently throughout the day. If the message is about a health concern, medicine, pick-up/drop-off, an appointment, after-school club, breakfast club, music lessons, lost property, absence etc. this **must** go to [office@gba.acesmat.uk](mailto:office@gba.acesmat.uk) or call the office on 01480 276599.

If parents and carers have a concern over well-being, progress or attainment please arrange a telephone call/meeting (see section 4.3).

The school does not expect Class Dojo messages to be checked during a teacher's personal time.

If parents and carers message the class teacher via Class Dojo:

- We aim to respond to you as soon as possible, usually within 48 hours (please note that this applies to the working week and not weekends and/or school holidays)
- Part-time staff may take longer to reply as they are not expected to check their email or Class Dojo on non-working days
- Please ensure all Class Dojo messages sent to school are courteous in line with our school value, Respect

#### 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 (The Dojo App will translate messages)
- 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 (01480 276599) 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 (01480 276599) 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 will be approved by the governing board.

## **7. Links with other policies**

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- ICT acceptable use
- Complaints
- Home-school agreement
- Parents and Carers Code of Conduct