



The Grey Coat Hospital

Home - School Communication Policy

POLICY NAME:	Home – School Communication Policy
GOV COMMITTEE:	Strategy Committee
POLICY REVIEW TIMING:	2 Years

Contents

Home - School Communication Policy.....	1
1. Introduction and aims.....	3
2. Roles and responsibilities	3
3. How we communicate with parents and carers	4
4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school	6
5. Accessibility	8
6. Monitoring and review.....	9
7. Links with other policies	9

1. Introduction and aims

The Grey Coat Hospital, founded in 1698, is a Church of England school for girls aged eleven to eighteen which welcomes boys into the Sixth Form. We are a school with strong values, committed to ensuring that each student is known as an individual, develops the knowledge, skills and personal qualities to lead a successful and fulfilling life, and is empowered to do so.

The aim of The Grey Coat Hospital is *“to enable students to take charge of their learning, make decisions based on Christian values, live in the world as independent women and men and meet the challenges of the twenty-first century”*. We aim for excellence both in and out of the classroom, seeking to develop the qualities of inquisitiveness, resilience, independence, humility and kindness. We have dedicated staff, supportive parents and experienced governors who work together to ensure that each student experiences a challenging learning journey in a reflective, creative and vibrant atmosphere

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 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 (8.00am – 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 (8.00am – 4.30pm), or during school holidays.

3. How we communicate with parents and carers

Staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents, it is appropriate that relationships are professional and parents are addressed in a formal manner.

Communication can take a variety of forms: verbal (through meetings or by telephone); written (through letters, notes in planners or email). Our aim is to use all means of communication effectively and use the most appropriate means of communicating to support the development of a positive productive relationship.

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 Email

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

- Weekly Headteacher briefing
- Upcoming school events/key information
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests

Parents should ensure that they update us with any changes to their email address, so that they can continue to receive key information.

3.2 School calendar

Our school website includes a full list of term dates for the academic year. Additional information regarding other school events are communicated via our weekly Headteacher's briefing email and our termly school newsletter.

Where possible, we try to give parents at least two 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).

We aim to include any such event in the school newsletter.

3.3 Phone calls

From time to time, it might be necessary for staff to call parents to discuss their child's progress. We will also contact you if your child has had to receive first aid at our school office, or if your child is unwell during the school day and so please ensure your contact details are kept up-to-date. Parents can update their contact details via the EduLink One platform.

3.4 Parents' Evenings

Parents evenings are conducted in person, once an academic year. All parents are invited to attend to review the academic, personal and social progress of their child. Appointments are booked via our EduLink One parent communication platform.

3.5 Homework diaries

All students will be given their own homework diary that they can use to organise their homework/write reminders for themselves. Parents are encouraged to sign these once a week.

3.6 Reports

Parents receive regular reports from the school about their child's learning, which are sent to parents via email and are available to access on EduLink One, via the documents section.

3.7 Meetings

The school may contact parents to arrange meetings 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 discuss these.

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.

3.9 Home-school communications app

We are pleased to use the parental information and communication system, EduLink One to provide parents with essential information about their children at The Grey Coat Hospital.

EduLink One can either be accessed by logging into the EduLink One website (<https://www.edulinkone.com/#!/login?code=greycoat>) or by downloading the EduLink One App via the App Store.

EduLink One offers a variety of different functions so that parents can be kept up-to-date with information about their child. Some of the main functions we will use it for initially are:

- Viewing and reporting attendance information about their child
- Updating parent/carer contact details
- Viewing their child's achievement and behaviour points log
- Viewing their child's tracking reports
- Viewing their child's timetable
- Making parents' evening appointments
- Receiving communication regarding important school events

A user guide and log on details are sent to new parents via email at the start of each academic year or when they join the school, which they should consult for more detail about the different functions available.

If parents are having issues with using EduLink One then they should contact the school, via the contact us form on our website.

4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

The main communication from parents is via our contact us form on the website or telephone to the school office, for urgent matters.

This enables the school to act in a timely manner and also ensures that the response is addressed within an appropriate time scale. The length of time supports the staffing body to balance their roles and responsibilities and to give sufficient time for the query to be investigated and responded to. Where possible we aim to respond well within the timeframes.

4.1 Contact Us Website Form

Parents should always contact the school, via our contact us website form in the first instance. <https://www.gch.org.uk/contact-us>

Messages sent via this form are received by key members of staff in our office, who will then pass the concern on to the relevant staff members. We aim to **acknowledge** all messages sent via this form within two working days, and to **respond** in full as soon as possible and no later than five working days.

In exceptional cases, where further information or a thorough investigation is required, a 15 working day limit to respond in full is applicable.

Teachers and support personnel set aside time to check communications. However, commitments, illness and part-time working may restrict an immediate response. We therefore ask for patience and understanding from our parents when awaiting a response.

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

4.2 Phone calls

If parents need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should contact the school via the **contact us website form**, as explained above.

Parents should not contact the school via the phone line and expect an immediate response, unless the matter is considered as urgent. If the issue is **urgent**, parents should **call the school office**.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Urgent safeguarding or welfare issues
- Urgent appointments that a child was not aware about when leaving for school that morning.

If your enquiry does not fall under the above categories, it is not considered as urgent and you will be asked to fill in the **contact us form** on the website.

All telephone enquires will pass through the main school office, who will direct the call to the relevant member of staff. In the likely event that the member of staff is not available to answer the call, a message should be left and a return call will be placed at the earliest appropriate time which would fall within the **five** working days timescale.

For more general enquiries, please use the **contact us form** on the website.

4.3 Meetings

At times, at the request of the school or parent, a meeting may take place if this is the most appropriate communication method. Formal meetings are conducted to discuss points or concerns pertaining to a student's welfare or well-being.

All meetings must be agreed in advance and parents should not turn up at the school unannounced and expect a meeting to take place. If parents would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should use the **contact us form** on the website to request this.

There may also be times when a parent has a concern which they would like to address with the Headteacher directly. Unfortunately, this is not feasible and would significantly delay the resolution to the concern. The vast majority of concerns and queries can be resolved and answered quicker, by dealing directly with the relevant member(s) of staff. The Headteacher monitors all communications marked for their attention, and reviews the outcomes and resolutions with the staff members involved. All concerns are taken seriously.

Communication from parents should be polite and civil at all times. Rudeness, inappropriate language, verbal abuse or threatening behaviour will result in the communication being ended immediately. Should the Headteacher deem it necessary for safeguarding and security reasons, action will be taken and restrictions may be put in place for future communication.

4.4 Home-school communications app

Parents can use the EduLink One platform to communicate their child's absence to school.

EduLink One can either be accessed by logging into the EduLink One website (<https://www.edulinkone.com/#!/login?code=greycoat>) or by downloading the EduLink One App via the App Store.

All other communication with the school should be done via the **contact us form** on our website.

4.5 Contact during the school holidays

Please be aware that our school office is open from 8.00am – 4.30pm, Monday to Friday, term time only. Messages received outside of these times will be dealt with the next working day. If you send a message via this form during a school holiday, we will respond to it once school reopens.

If you have sent your message during the school holidays, there will be a delayed response to your message and so we will reply to your message within five working days from school reopening.

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

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 to discuss these, via the **contact us** form on the website.

5.2 Parents with English as an additional language (EAL)

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 us** via the website to discuss these.

6. 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 board.

7. Links with other policies

This policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- Complaints
- Home-school agreement