



Home/School Communications Policy

Core Values

Readiness

Resilience

Respect

School Values

Independence

Ambition

Compassion

Co-operation

Initiative

Enjoyment

Responsibility

Confidence

Celebration

Kindness

Honesty

Individuality

Agreed Autumn 2023
Reviewed: Autumn 2026

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 get a response as quickly as possible

In the following sections, we will use 'parents' to refer to both parents and carers

Roles and responsibilities

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

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, ie from 08:30-16:00 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. Similarly, we do not expect responses outside of these hours.

See the school's ICT and Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy on the school's website.

Staff will be mindful that whilst as a school we aim to build open and clear communication with our parents, communications must be conducted on a professional basis. Decisions will be taken only with the agreement of SLT. If members of staff are concerned by the sensitivity of any communications with parents, the communication should be copied to the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.

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
- Respond 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, ie from 08:30-16:00 or during school holidays.

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.

Email

We use email 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
- Newsletters
- Forwarding on information from third parties, eg NHS or after school clubs

Text messages

We will text parents about:

- Payments
- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- Up to date information re school trips return times etc

School calendar

Our school website includes a full school calendar for the academic year. Dates are also included in the weekly 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).

Any such event will be included in the school calendar.

Phone calls

We make phonecalls to parents regarding attendance and welfare, accidents which we judge to need parental input, late collection. This is not an exhaustive list.

Letters

We send the following letters home regularly:

- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms

Home/school contact books

We use home/school contact books from time to time for children needing closer monitoring of their behaviour. The book provides parents with additional information regarding their child's progress and learning on a daily and weekly basis.

Reports

Parents receive reports from the school about their child's learning, including:

- An annual report covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, and their attendance
- Termly progress reports
- A report on KS2 SATs tests and other statutory assessments

We also arrange regular meetings where parents can speak to their child's teacher(s) about their achievement and progress (see the section below).

Meetings

We hold two evening meetings each year, one in the Autumn and one in the Spring. 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 or disabilities (SEND), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these additional needs.

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.

Home-school communications app

We use the in-App messaging service within the Arbor Education Application for less urgent communications. We are aiming to use this in preference to SMS messages as it is cheaper for both parties to use. Currently we use it for less urgent messages. If in-App messages have not been read by a parent within 24 hours, the system then sends the message as a Text message.

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.

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.

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 two 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

For more general enquiries, please call the school office. Our phone lines are open from 08:30-16:30. The office can get very busy and if there is no answer, it may be that staff are dealing with another parent. If this is the case, please leave us a voicemail message and we will call you back as soon as possible.

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 are available at the end of the school day if parents need to speak to them urgently, 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

Home-school communications app

Parents can use the in-App messaging service that is part of our Arbor Education App to communicate with us. We aim to respond within two days of receipt.

Inclusion

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school. We currently make whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) available in English but if any parent needs assistance, please let us know.

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.

Monitoring and review

The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every three years. The policy has been approved by the governing board.

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
- Home-school agreement
- Staff wellbeing

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 020 7639 4654, info@kender.lewisham.sch.uk or office@kender.lewisham.sch.uk. The office is open between 08:30-16:00, Monday - Friday
- 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 our website first, much of the information you need is posted there. We aim to respond to all emails within two days.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's class teacher – all our teachers' email addresses are on the school website
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your child's class teacher – all our teachers' email addresses are on the school website
Payments	sbm@kender.lewisham.sch.uk emma.george@kender.lewisham.sch.uk
School trips	emma.george@kender.lewisham.sch.uk
Uniform/lost and found	emma.george@kender.lewisham.sch.uk
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, call: 020 7639 4654 If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact keith.barr@kender.lewisham.sch.uk
Bullying and behaviour	keith.barr@kender.lewisham.sch.uk
School events/the school calendar	emma.george@kender.lewisham.sch.uk
Special educational needs (SEN)	sendco@kender.lewisham.sch.uk
Before and after-school clubs	emma.george@kender.lewisham.sch.uk
Hiring the school premises	sbm@kender.lewisham.sch.uk

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
PTA	friendsofkender2018@gmail.com
Governing board	Clerk to governors: Helen.rutherford@lewisham.gov.uk
Catering/meals	sbm@kender.lewisham.sch.uk

Complaints

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