

Knebworth Primary School Communication Strategy

Rationale

Communication is key in ensuring that every member of our school community feels fully informed. At Knebworth School, we pride ourselves on our strong channels of communication and the many forms, which are utilised. We are a listening school who will always welcome, consider and reflect on feedback from all our stakeholders.

Our school vision is one of **Deep Roots** and **High Aspirations**.

Our school values are **Respect, Responsibility and Resilience** and we aim for all our communication to adhere to our school values and we expect the same from our children, staff, parents and carers.

In order for our vision and values to be realised, we need to ensure that communication is central to school life and learning. Through good communication we build trust and relationships. We will succeed by working closely together.

The aim of this strategy is to promote clear and open communication by:

- Explaining how the school communicates with its stakeholders and how stakeholders can communicate with the school.
- Setting clear standards and expectations for communication.
- Helping parents and 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.

Principles of Communication

A strong communication strategy ensures that every member of our school community feels valued and in turn values the vision and values of the school. Therefore our guiding principles for all school communication will be:

- Clear, accurate and precise.
- Inclusive to the relevant sections and or the whole school community.
- Improve our school by listening to each other.



Monitoring Quality

To achieve the best communication:

- We will ensure messaging is consistent through all forms of school communication (emails, briefings, conversations, meetings, newsletters etc.).
- We will monitor the quality of information going from the school with the senior leadership team approving all letters to parents and carers.

Collective Responsibility

Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Checking email communications/class dojo messages at least once each working day.
- Responding to communication from parents and carers in line with this strategy and any other relevant school policies.
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents and carers receive timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)

Staff will **aim** to respond to communication during core school hours which are **8am – 5pm**, or their working hours if these differ, on their working days. In line with promoting staff wellbeing and helping our staff find a suitable work-life balance, staff are **not** expected to respond outside of these hours.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is **respectful** at all times, in line with our school values.
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance in order to receive a prompt response.
- Respond to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner.
- Read and keep up to date with all communications from the school on a regular basis.

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be referred to the Headteacher. Parents and carers should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours (as above) or during school holidays. Class based staff, such as teachers, may be more limited in terms of times when they can respond due to their duties in class which take priority, however, where possible staff will endeavour to reply within 24 - 48 hours.



Social Media

We hope that everyone in our community uses social media responsibly. Social Media (like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter) should **not** be used to discuss individual children, classes of children or members of staff. It should also not be used to raise concerns or questions. From experience, we have seen that misinformation can spread via social media whereas raising questions, concerns or other matters directly with staff can provide clarity.

In line with our school values, we kindly ask parents and carers to refrain from raising concerns and complaints on social media, as we cannot address them if raised this way. It is also deeply disrespectful to the children and adults who are being discussed and who have no voice.

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.

Parents and carers who need support with communicating with the school can request the following:

- School announcements and communications translated into additional languages.
- Interpreters for meetings or phone calls.
- Our school website has the facility to translate into languages other than English. We can make additional arrangements if necessary. Please contact the school office to discuss these.

If you have concerns

We seek a collaborative partnership based on mutual trust with all our stakeholders. We are a listening school who welcome everyone's views and opinions and our children are always at the forefront of everything we do. However, schools are diverse and not everyone comes from the same point of reference or has the same viewpoint. One parent's views may be very different to another. We want to reassure you that any concern is taken seriously and investigated thoroughly in an attempt to resolve it quickly before it escalates to procedures that are more formal. We have a clear policy framework to guide us through any complaints raised, these will be adhered to in such an incident to ensure all information is considered this ensuring a fair outcome. There may be times where you may disagree with our approach and have differing opinions on how an issue was resolved.

The following steps should be utilised by parents when raising a non-safeguarding related concern:



1. If you have concerns, ***your first point of contact is your child's class teacher.***
2. If you do not feel your concerns have been addressed then you can arrange a meeting with ***your child's class teacher and a Phase Leader.***
3. If you are still concerned and you feel that your issue has not been resolved then you can arrange an appointment to speak to the ***Assistant or Deputy Headteacher.***






4. Failing all of the above, if you still feel that your concern has not been resolved then you can arrange an appointment to speak to the **Headteacher**.



In the very unlikely situation that after following all these steps you still feel your issue has not been dealt with, there is a school complaints policy and procedure, which can be found on our school website.




Knebworth School Communication Channels

Communication Channel	Purpose	Hyperlink	Guidance
Arbor (Email)	<p>Our aim is for parents and carers to feel as much a part of their children's education as possible and we use Arbor as our main channel for communicating in the most safest and efficient way.</p> <p>All information about the work of the school will come from Arbor emails and linked documents and we ask parents and carers to take the time to read these thoroughly.</p>	 <p>Log in to your School Arbor</p>	<p>In order to be environmentally friendly we aim to limit the use of paper letters/permission slips and instead utilise the <i>Consents</i> option on Arbor to seek permission for such events.</p> <p>It is important that all parents and carers sign up to Arbor. The Arbor parent portal and app gives you access to your child's attendance messages and payments and allows you to update key information about your child.</p> <p>Remember: we may need to contact you in an emergency. <i>It is vital that the contact details we have for you are up to date, this includes your home address.</i> Please ensure you use the Arbor app to keep your contact details current.</p> <p>If you have any trouble accessing Arbor please email: admin@knebworth.herts.sch.uk</p>
Arbor (Text Messages)	<p>Text Messages will be used by the school for sending:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Medical tracker messages ○ To invite you to our Friday Celebration Tea 		<p>If you have any questions about these text messages then please telephone the school office on 01438 812184.</p>



<p>Class Dojo</p>	<p>Class Dojo is used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Share and celebrate the learning of the year group via class pages and of the school via school story feed. ○ To remind parents and carers about upcoming events by using the school event function. ○ To reward children with House Points linked to our school values. 		<p>We strongly encourage all parents and carers to sign up to Class Dojo (this is a mobile app) so you can keep up to date with your child's learning and successes.</p> <p>If you have any trouble accessing this platform please speak to your child's class teacher.</p>
<p>Class Dojo Messaging</p>	<p>The messaging function on Class Dojo should only be used for short, non-urgent messages such as a message to the child's teacher to say they have forgotten something, a child is feeling a little unwell etc. or by the Teacher to provide a reminder or a short message of reassurance.</p>	 <p><i>Please be aware our Class Dojo hours are between 8am to 5pm and staff will only reply to messages during these times.</i></p> <p><i>Where possible, staff will endeavour to reply to short non-urgent messages within 24 hours.</i></p>	<p>Staff wellbeing is incredibly important therefore in order for staff to maintain a healthy work life balance and to achieve a good level of wellbeing staff will not reply to lengthy messages received on Class Dojo that fall outside of a short, non-urgent message.</p> <p>Instead, a phone call or meeting will be scheduled to discuss a parent/carers concerns in more detail. If this is the case then the staff member will reply to the class dojo message with the following wording: <i>Thank you for your message. I or a member of the office team will be in touch to arrange a mutually convenient time for us both to be able to discuss this further.</i></p> <p>The school expects all communication on Class Dojo to be in line with our school value of Respect and staff will not respond to messages that fall outside of this value. These messages will be relayed to the Senior Leadership Team.</p>
<p>Emails</p>	<p>Emails should be used for all non-urgent communications between school and parents and carers.</p>		<p>If you need to communicate with a specific member of staff, you can email into the school office with 'FAO of <i>staff name</i>' as the subject at admin@knebworth.herts.sch.uk and your message will be forwarded to the relevant member of staff.</p>

			<p>If you need to communicate directly with the Senior Leadership Team you can do so by emailing support@knebworth.herts.sch.uk and your query will be answered.</p>
<p>Face to Face Meetings</p>	<p>Meetings are an effective method used by both school and parents and carers to communicate with one another in more depth about a certain topic.</p>	<p>Email: admin@knebworth.herts.sch.uk</p> <p>Telephone Number: 01438 812814</p> <p><i>Please note Office Hours are 8:30am to 4pm</i></p>	<p>If parents and carers would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the admin email address or call the school to book an appointment.</p> <p>In order for the school to be fully informed and prepared, parents and carers should be prepared to briefly outline the purpose/nature of the meeting required to a member of the office team. Meetings will not be scheduled if this information is not provided.</p> <p>We aim to schedule all meetings within 10 working days of the request.</p> <p>When a face to face meeting is required, a suitable time will be agreed by all parties. The purpose and duration of the meeting will be agreed by all parties. We expect all meetings to be held in line with our school value of Respect and we reserve the right to pause or stop the meeting should it fall outside these expectations.</p>
<p>Friday Newsletters</p>	<p>Written by the Headteacher to inform, celebrate and give updates about life at the school.</p>		<p>These are sent out weekly via Arbor and all parents and carers are encouraged to read this weekly update. Click on the icon to the left to view all past newsletters on our school website.</p>
<p>Phone Calls</p>	<p>Phone Calls are an effective method used by both school and parents and carers to communicate with one another.</p>	 <p>Telephone Number: 01438 812814</p>	<p>Staff members will return calls to parents and carers who have asked to speak with them, where they are the appropriate point of contact and only if an outline of the nature of the phone call has been provided to a member of the office team.</p> <p>Staff will use phone calls to celebrate positive choices and behaviours as well as communicating concerns. Teachers may also make arrangements with parents and carers to call regularly because school and home are working together to support an aspect of a child's education or welfare.</p> <p>If parents and carers provide important information during a phone call that needs to be shared with others, such as a message for the wider staff team for</p>

		<p><i>Please note Office Hours are 8:30 to 4pm</i></p> <p>Please note Teaching staff are unable to take phone calls during the school day.</p>	<p>example, a written record will be made of this information and it will be circulated to staff as appropriate.</p>
School Calendar	<p>Our Friday Newsletter includes all dates for the term ahead.</p> <p>Our Term Dates are published on our school website.</p> <p>Our school website also has a calendar which includes key school dates for the academic year.</p>		<p>Where possible, we try to give parents and carers 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).</p>
School Website	<p>Our school website is used to share key information such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Term Dates ○ Curriculum Information ○ School Policies ○ Parent Handbook ○ Contact information ○ Past newsletters etc. 		<p>Please check the website in the first instance if you are looking for this kind of information.</p>
WhatsApp (not official)	<p>Some parents and carers share their contact information and create class and year WhatsApp groups.</p> <p>This is an unofficial form of communication and is not</p>		<p>Some parents use WhatsApp to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Remind the group about school events ○ Seek information about lost property (e.g. my child has lost their coat has anyone seen it?) ○ Arrange 'play dates' or social events not run by the school <p>WhatsApp should not be used:</p>

	managed or endorsed by the school.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To discuss individual children or make comments about staff members ○ To raise concerns about something happening at school or ○ Complaints <p>A reminder that WhatsApp is for ages 16 and over.</p>
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Appendix: School Contact List

<i>I have a question about ...</i>	<i>Who you need to talk to</i>
Attendance and Absence Requests	<p>All absences should be reported to the school office team only by telephone or email. Voicemails can also be left on the school answerphone. The Arbor Parent Portal can also be used to report an absence.</p> <p>To request a term time absence the absence request form will need to be completed. This can be found here: Knebworth Primary and Nursery School - Attendance (knebworthprimaryschool.org.uk)</p>
Extended Care Provision – Knebbers Crew	To book a place at Knebbers Crew, please visit: https://knebworth-primary.cbfs.uk/
Friends of Knebworth School (FOKS) events	Please email the FOKS team at FOKSchool@outlook.com
My child's behaviour	Your child's class teacher
My child's learning/class activities/homework	Your child's class teacher
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your child's class teacher
Ordering my child's school lunch	This can be directly through the HCL School Grid system: SchoolGrid
Payments	The school office team
Safeguarding	A member of the Safeguarding Team, they can all be contacted via the school office
School Uniform	Please see the Parent Handbook or the School Website for further information
School Trips and Events	<p>Your child's class teacher if you require further information.</p> <p>The school website if you just need to recall the date.</p> <p>The office team if you have misplaced an email communication about a trip/event.</p>
Uniform lost/found	Please check the lost property first which is by the front entrance of the school near the mosaic.

