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Knebworth Primary School Communication Strategy

Our Vision and Values

Communication is key to ensuring that every member of our school community feels informed, valued and listened to. At Knebworth School, we pride ourselves on our strong channels of communication, which help us build positive relationships and foster a sense of belonging.

We are a listening school. We welcome feedback from all our stakeholders, taking the time to consider, reflect on and respond to the views and experiences of our community.

Our school vision is **Deep Roots and High Aspirations**, underpinned by our core values of **Respect, Responsibility and Resilience**. We strive to ensure that all our communication reflects these values and expect all members of our school community, including children, staff, parents and carers, to communicate with one another in the same spirit.

Effective communication is central to school life and learning. It builds trust, strengthens relationships and enables us to work collaboratively to achieve the best possible outcomes for our children. By working in partnership, sharing information openly and listening to one another, we can ensure that every member of our community feels supported and able to contribute positively to school life.

The Aim of Our Strategy

The aim of this strategy is to promote clear, consistent, respectful and effective communication across our school community by:

- Explaining how the school communicates with its stakeholders and how stakeholders can communicate with the school.
- Establishing clear standards and expectations for communication that reflect our school vision and values.
- Ensuring parents and carers can identify the most appropriate member of staff to contact with their query, question or concern, enabling a timely and effective response.
- Promoting positive, respectful and productive relationships between school, home and the wider community.
- Ensuring that feedback is welcomed, considered and used to inform reflection and continuous improvement.

Through this shared commitment to effective communication, we aim to strengthen partnerships, build mutual trust and ensure that everyone works together in the best interests of our children.

Principles of Communication

Effective communication ensures that every member of our school community feels valued, informed and connected to our school vision and values. At Knebworth School, we recognise that positive communication is built on mutual respect, active listening and a shared commitment to continuous improvement.

Our guiding principles for all school communication are that it will be:

- **Clear, accurate and purposeful:** Information will be communicated in a way that is easy to understand, timely and appropriate to its audience.
- **Inclusive and accessible:** Communication will reach the relevant individuals or groups within our school community, ensuring that information is shared appropriately and that everyone has the opportunity to engage.
- **Respectful and constructive:** All communication will reflect our school values of ***Respect, Responsibility and Resilience.***
- **Collaborative and reflective:** We will listen to one another, welcome feedback and use this to strengthen relationships and improve our school.

Monitoring Quality

To ensure that communication across Knebworth School remains effective, consistent and aligned with our vision and values, we will:

- **Maintain consistency:** Ensure that messages are clear and consistent across all communication channels, including emails, briefings, conversations, meetings and newsletters.
- **Quality assure communication:** The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will oversee and approve letters and key communications to parents and carers, ensuring that information is accurate, appropriate and reflects the school's ethos.
- **Review and improve:** Regularly reflect on the effectiveness of our communication, taking account of feedback from staff, parents, carers and other stakeholders to identify opportunities for improvement.

Through these principles and processes, we aim to maintain high standards of communication, strengthen trust across our community and ensure that all communication supports the best interests of our children.

Collective Responsibility

Effective communication is a shared responsibility. Staff, parents and carers all play an important role in ensuring that communication is respectful, timely and constructive, reflecting our school vision of Deep Roots and High Aspirations and our values of Respect, Responsibility and Resilience.

Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Checking email and ClassDojo messages at least once each working day.
- Responding to communication from parents and carers in line with this strategy and other relevant school policies.
- Working collaboratively with colleagues to ensure parents and carers receive accurate and timely information, particularly when a query needs to be directed to another member of staff.

Staff will **aim to respond to communication during core school hours (8.00 am–5.00 pm), or within their individual working hours where these differ, on their working days**. To support staff wellbeing and a healthy work-life balance, staff are not expected to monitor or respond to communications outside these hours or during their non-working days.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all communication with the school is respectful and constructive, in keeping with our school values.
- Making every reasonable effort to contact the most appropriate member of staff in the first instance to help ensure a timely response.
- Responding to school communications, including requests for meetings or information, in a timely manner.
- Reading and keeping up to date with communications from the school through its established communication channels.

Communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be referred to the Headteacher and addressed in accordance with the school's relevant policies.

Parents and carers should not expect staff to respond to communications outside core school hours, during staff members' non-working hours or during school holidays.

We recognise that class-based staff, including teachers, have teaching, supervision and other professional responsibilities that take priority during the school day. Consequently, opportunities to respond may be limited. **Where possible, staff will aim to respond within 24–48 working hours**, although more complex queries may require additional time. Where a response cannot be provided within this timeframe, staff will endeavour to acknowledge the communication and advise when a fuller response can be expected.

By respecting these shared expectations, we can maintain positive relationships, protect staff wellbeing and ensure that communication remains focused on achieving the best outcomes for our children.

Social Media

We encourage all members of our school community to use social media responsibly and respectfully, in keeping with our school values of Respect, Responsibility and Resilience.

Social media platforms, including WhatsApp, Facebook and X, should not be used to discuss individual children, groups or classes of children, or members of staff. They should also not be used to raise concerns, make complaints or seek answers to questions about school matters.

We recognise that concerns can sometimes arise from misunderstandings or incomplete information. Discussing these matters on social media can allow misinformation to spread and may impact negatively on relationships within our school community. Raising questions or concerns directly with the school enables us to listen, clarify information and work together towards a constructive resolution.

We therefore kindly ask parents and carers to raise any concerns or complaints through the school's established communication channels and in accordance with our complaints procedure, rather than on social media.

Discussing children or adults online without their knowledge or opportunity to respond can be distressing and may compromise their privacy and dignity. We ask all members of our community to consider the impact of their words and actions on others and to communicate with empathy, discretion and respect.

Inclusion

At Knebworth School, we are committed to ensuring that all members of our school community can access information, communicate effectively with the school and feel welcomed, valued and included. We recognise that families may have different communication needs and are committed to making reasonable adjustments to support access and understanding.

Whole-school announcements and communications, including email alerts and newsletters, are currently provided in English. However, we want to ensure that language or communication barriers do not prevent parents and carers from accessing important information or engaging fully with school life.

Parents and carers who require additional support with communication can request:

- **Translated communications:** Key school announcements and communications translated into additional languages where needed.
- **Interpreting support:** Interpreters for meetings or telephone conversations, where required.
- **Website translation:** Our school website has a translation facility to support access in languages other than English.

We recognise that individual circumstances and needs vary, and additional arrangements can be explored where necessary. Parents and carers are encouraged to contact the school office to discuss their requirements so that we can work together to identify the most appropriate support. Our aim is to ensure that every family feels informed, heard and able to participate fully in our school community.

Raising Concerns and Resolving Complaints

At Knebworth School, we strive to build collaborative partnerships with all our stakeholders, based on mutual trust, respect and open communication. We are a listening school and welcome the views and opinions of our community, with the best interests of our children at the heart of every decision we make.

We recognise that our school community is diverse and that individuals may have different perspectives, experiences and expectations. We understand that concerns can arise and want to reassure parents and carers that every concern raised with us will be taken seriously and considered carefully. Wherever possible, we aim to resolve concerns promptly, informally and collaboratively before they escalate into more formal procedures.

We have clear policies and procedures to guide us when concerns or complaints are raised. These ensure that information is considered fairly, that all relevant perspectives are heard and that appropriate action is taken. While we always aim to reach a resolution, we recognise that there may be occasions when parents and carers disagree with the school's approach or the outcome of a matter.

Steps for Raising a Concern

For non-safeguarding concerns, we ask parents and carers to follow the steps below to help ensure that concerns are directed to the most appropriate person and resolved as effectively as possible.

1. **Speak to your child's class teacher.** Your child's class teacher should be your first point of contact for any concerns relating to your child's learning, wellbeing or day-to-day school experience.
2. **Arrange a meeting with the class teacher and Phase Leader.** If you feel your concern has not been fully addressed, the next step is to arrange a meeting with your child's class teacher and the relevant Phase Leader to discuss the matter further.
3. **Contact an Assistant Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.** If the concern remains unresolved, you can arrange an appointment with an Assistant Headteacher or the Deputy Headteacher to explore the matter further.
4. **Contact the Headteacher.** If you remain concerned after following the previous steps, you can arrange an appointment with the Headteacher.

If, after following these steps, you feel that your concern has still not been resolved, you can refer to the school's formal Complaints Policy and Procedure, available on the school website.

We encourage parents and carers to work with us through these steps, allowing us the opportunity to listen, understand concerns and find constructive solutions. By communicating openly and respectfully, we can strengthen our partnership with families and ensure that the needs and best interests of our children remain central to every discussion.

Safeguarding concerns: If your concern relates to the safety or welfare of a child, please do not follow the steps above. Instead, contact the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (Miss Bains) or another appropriate member of the safeguarding team without delay. If a child is at immediate risk of harm, contact the relevant emergency services.

Knebworth School Communication Channels

Communication Channel	Purpose	Guidance
Arbor (Email) Log in to your School | Arbor	Our aim is for parents and carers to feel fully involved in their children's education. We use **Arbor as our primary communication platform**, providing a secure and efficient way to share information with families. We ask parents and carers to check Arbor regularly and read all emails and linked documents carefully to stay informed about school life, learning and events.	To reduce paper waste, we use Arbor's **Consents** feature to seek permission for school trips and events wherever possible, rather than sending paper letters and forms. All parents and carers are asked to register for Arbor, which provides access to attendance information, messages, payments and the facility to update your child's details. **Please ensure your contact details, including your home address and telephone numbers, are kept up to date**, as we may need to contact you in an emergency. If you need support accessing Arbor, please email admin@knebworth.herts.sch.uk.

Arbor (Text Messages)	The school may send text messages to parents and carers for the following purposes: ○ To send a message relating to your child's attendance if they are not at school. ○ To invite parents and carers to our Friday Positive Noticing Tea, 2:45pm, for children in Years 1–6. ○ To share an urgent message with the school community.	If you have any questions about these text messages then please telephone the school office on 01438 812184.
Class Dojo	ClassDojo is used to support communication between school and home. It enables us to: ○ Share and celebrate children's learning through year-group class pages and whole-school updates via the School Story feed. ○ Remind parents and carers about upcoming events using the school events function. ○ Award Values Points in recognition of children demonstrating our school values of **Respect, Responsibility and Resilience.**	We strongly encourage all parents and carers to sign up to ClassDojo, a mobile app that helps you stay connected with your child's learning, achievements and successes at school. If you experience any difficulties accessing ClassDojo, please speak to your child's class teacher, who will be happy to help.
Class Dojo Messaging	The messaging function on ClassDojo should be used for **short, non-urgent messages only**. For example, parents and carers may message their child's teacher to let them know that their child has forgotten something or is feeling slightly unwell. Teachers may also use the messaging function to share brief reminders or provide reassurance. ClassDojo messages should not be used to communicate urgent information or to raise complex concerns. These should be shared with the school through the appropriate channels.	To protect staff wellbeing and maintain a healthy work–life balance, ClassDojo should be used for short, non-urgent messages only. Lengthy or complex concerns will be discussed by telephone or in a meeting. Staff may reply with: *"Thank you for your message. I or a member of the office team will be in touch to arrange a mutually convenient time to discuss this further."* All ClassDojo communication must reflect our school value of **Respect**. Messages that do not meet this expectation will not receive a response and will be referred to the Senior Leadership Team.
Emails	Emails should be used for all non-urgent communications between school and parents and carers.	To contact a specific member of staff, email admin@knebworth.herts.sch.uk, using *FAO [staff member's name]* as the subject line. Your message will be forwarded to the relevant person. To contact the Senior Leadership Team directly, email support@knebworth.herts.sch.uk and a member of the team will respond.

Face to Face Meetings	Meetings provide an opportunity for school staff and parents/carers to discuss matters in greater depth and work together to support children's needs and wellbeing.	Parents and carers wishing to meet with a member of staff should email admin@knebworth.herts.sch.uk or telephone the school (01438 812184) to arrange an appointment. Please provide the office team with a brief outline of the meeting's purpose so staff can prepare appropriately. Meetings will not be arranged without this information. We aim to arrange meetings within **10 working days** of the request. Where a face-to-face meeting is needed, the purpose, duration and a mutually convenient time will be agreed in advance. All meetings must reflect our school value of **Respect**. The school reserves the right to pause or end a meeting if this expectation is not upheld.
Friday Newsletter	Written by the Headteacher to share important information, celebrate achievements and provide updates on life at school.	Our weekly newsletter is shared via Arbor and is an **important source of information for all parents and carers**. We ask that you make time to read it every week to ensure you are up to date with key messages, upcoming events, important dates and celebrations of school life. Previous newsletters can be found on our school website.
Medical Tracker	The school will use Medical Tracker to communicate notifications regarding medical incidents as per the Injury Appendix in The Parent Handbook and to share relevant medical care plans with parents and carers.	**Please note:** Medical Tracker is used solely to communicate information relating to medical incidents and care plans. If you would like any further clarification about how your child came to be hurt or the circumstances surrounding an incident, please contact your child's class teacher in the first instance, who will be happy to help.
Phone Calls	Phone calls provide an effective way for school staff and parents/carers to communicate directly and discuss matters that may require a timely response or further conversation.	Staff will return calls where they are the appropriate point of contact, provided parents/carers have given the office team a brief outline of the reason for the call. **Teaching staff are unable to take calls during the school day.** Phone calls may be used to celebrate positive choices and behaviour, discuss concerns or establish regular communication to support a child's education or wellbeing. Where important information needs to be shared with other staff, a written record will be made and shared as appropriate.

School Calendar	Parents and carers are encouraged to check this regularly to plan ahead. Term and Event dates can be found in The Friday Newsletter and on the school website.	Where possible, we aim to give parents and carers at least a term's notice of events and special occasions with dates published in the first Friday newsletter of a new term. Teachers may also use Class Dojo for requests for children to bring in specific items or materials.
School Website	Our school website provides access to key information, including: ○ Term dates ○ Curriculum information ○ School policies ○ Parent Handbook ○ School contact details ○ Previous newsletters	Parents and carers are encouraged to visit the website regularly to access important information and updates.
WhatsApp (not official)	Some parents and carers choose to share contact details and create class or year-group WhatsApp groups. These are **unofficial communication channels that are not managed, monitored or endorsed by the school**. For accurate information or to raise concerns, please contact the school directly through our established communication channels.	Some parents and carers use WhatsApp groups to: ○ Share reminders about school events. ○ Ask about lost property. ○ Arrange play dates or social events outside school. ○ WhatsApp groups should **not** be used to discuss individual children, comment on staff members, raise concerns about school or make complaints. These matters should be addressed directly with the school through our established communication channels. **Please remember that WhatsApp is intended for users aged 16 and over.**

Appendix: School Contact List

I have a question about ...	*Who you need to talk to*
Attendance and Absence Requests	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. 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)
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	Your child's class teacher if you require further information. The school website if you just need to recall the date. The office team if you have misplaced an email communication about a trip/event.
Uniform lost/found	Please check the lost property first which is by the front entrance of the school near the mosaic.