



HOBLETTS MANOR SCHOOLS' COMMUNICATION POLICY

This policy is written and approved by governors and applies to all governors, members of staff and members of our school community.

1. Purpose

At Hobletts Manor Schools we are committed to an open, approachable culture that sustains strong, respectful partnerships with families. Effective, kind and professional communication enables the best outcomes for children and a positive school environment. All interactions must safeguard staff and pupil wellbeing and align with the expectations in this policy. All parties are asked to approach conversations with openness, to listen, and to assume positive intent.

This policy sets expectations for everyday communication across all channels (in person, phone, email, written correspondence) defines unacceptable communication and explains our responses and expected response timescales.

2.. Our Communication Commitment

All staff are expected to treat everyone with respect, politeness, and courtesy.

Likewise, parents/carers and visitors are expected to communicate respectfully with staff across all communication channels—face-to-face, phone, written communications, including email.

3.. Communication from our staff

Communication from our staff will be professional, respectful, timely and in the best interests of our children. We recognise the importance of keeping you informed about your child's experience at school and their progress. We have timely information sent out to all Parents/Carers. This may include:

- academic reports
- family consultations
- family events
- updates via the school website
- communications through Arbor
- letters/newsletters sent home

We also communicate with our Parents/Carers informally - either face-to-face, via email or via telephone.

Members of the Junior staff team are available on the playground from 8.40-8.45am after which Mrs Sides or Mrs Archer, our Parent Partners, will remain available until 8.55am to take a message for you. Class teachers across both schools are also available when children are collected at the end of each day for informal, brief communication.

Our admin offices remain open during the day for Parents/Carers to visit or telephone between the following hours:

- Infant School: 8.30am -3.30pm
- Junior School: 8.00am -4.00pm

4. Communication with our staff

Our expectations from those communicating with us is that they—

- trust that staff are skilled professionals who endeavour to always act in the best interests of the child,
- listen to and work together,
- treat all members of the school community with respect,
- follow outlined channels of communication,
- communicate in a respectful manner: reasonable, proportionate, constructive, and timely.

5. Communication Channels

We ask Parents/Carers to carefully consider which type of communication is best suited for the situation – some communications are best held face-to-face at the end of a school day, whilst others, given their nature, may be quickly resolved over the phone or via email.

Initial Communication

Please refer to Appendix 1.

Email/Written Communication

All queries or concerns should be sent to the main admin email address for your child's school.

The admin team will forward emails to the relevant staff member/s as appropriate.

Staff aim to acknowledge emails within 24 hours of receipt. Response timelines will be dependent on the nature of the communication, this will be outlined in the acknowledgement. All queries and concerns will be responded to within 10 school opening days. This also includes letters/information referral forms for partner agencies, such as Health and Housing. Thank you for understanding that teaching staff may not be able to respond to emails during the school day.

The school office will periodically check emails beyond opening hours. If you ever have an urgent safeguarding concern outside these hours, please ring Children's Services on 0300 1234043 Option 1 or the police 999

Telephone Communication

All phone calls must be made to the school's switchboard.

The admin team will pass on a communication to the relevant member of staff.

Thank you for understanding that teaching staff may not be able to respond to phone calls during the school day

Face-to-face Communication

Requests for face-to-face meetings should be made through the school office (in person, via email or telephone.)

Meetings will be scheduled at a mutually convenient time and held with relevant staff. This could include class support staff, the school's SENDCo/InCo, a Senior Leader or a Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL/DDSL).

6. The difference between a query, concern, and a complaint

A query may be defined as 'a question, especially one asking for information or expressing a doubt about something.'

A concern may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought.'

A complaint may be defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action.'

It is in everyone's interest that queries, concerns, and complaints are resolved as quickly as possible.

We understand, that there may be occasions when people feel they need to raise their queries or concerns formally. In this case, the stages outlined within the Complaints Policy will be followed. This document is available via the school's website with a hard copy available on request via the school office.

7. Use of artificial intelligence to communicate

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools can be helpful in supporting individuals to clarify, structure or articulate their communication. When used appropriately, such tools may assist everyone to express and respond to queries, concerns, or complaints clearly and constructively. Staff may make appropriate professional use of AI tools to support the drafting and formulation of responses and for assistance with structure, clarity, and tone. No personal data or sensitive information will be entered, and AI use will be restricted to Microsoft-approved systems operating within the school's secure Microsoft environment, in line with data protection requirements and school policy. All final communications remain the responsibility of the staff member sending them.

8. Unacceptable Communication

Hobletts Manor Schools takes any aggressive behaviour or threatening language towards any member of staff extremely seriously.

Communication that is deemed unreasonable is determined by the following categories :

- * Chronic
- * Malicious
- * Vexatious
- * A refusal to communicate seriously

Chronic Communication

Definition: Excessive, persistent, or repetitive communication often expressing anger, frustration, or unhappiness.

Characteristics: Overwhelming volume, recurring messages, frequent contacts in a brief period, or prolonged communication.

Vexatious Communication

Definition: Communications pursued solely to harass, annoy, or subdue, often without a valid basis, rather than seeking resolution or information.

Characteristics: Unwarranted, without foundation, repetitive, burdensome, and frivolous, often involving excessive demands on staff time.

Malicious Communication

Definition: Communications intended to cause harm, upset, or damage someone's reputation. Often indecent, offensive, or threatening.

Characteristics: Intentionally hurtful or offensive and may include threats or harassment.

Refusal to communicate

Definition: Deliberate avoidance of or refusal to engage in any form of communication.

Characteristics: Parent/Carer/Carers are unresponsive to contact and show a lack of engagement with their child's school life.

9. Action taken against unacceptable communication

Where unacceptable communication persists, or where unacceptable communication is deemed too severe for restrictions not to be imposed, we may consider putting formal restrictions in place on communications.

Our schools reserve the right not to respond to communications that are deemed unreasonable, chronic, vexatious, or malicious and reserve the right not to respond to communications made through incorrect channels.

10. Legal implications of unacceptable communication

Both vexatious and malicious communications can have legal consequences. Vexatious communications can be stopped or sanctioned by the courts. Malicious communications may be prosecuted under criminal law. The Communications Act 2003 and the Malicious communications Act 1988 in the UK address this.

Unacceptable communication hinders staff's ability to focus on teaching and caring for children, negatively impacts staff wellbeing and school operations, and affects children's experience and education.

11. Unreasonable Communication

Unreasonable Communication is defined as follows –

- * Communication intended to overwhelm and influence decision making at all levels.

Characteristics can include some or all of the following

- * Frequent and repetitive demands
- * Unreasonable demands on timelines or responses
- * Disruption of school operations.

Where communication is deemed to be unreasonable, meetings will be offered to agree a way forward as we work together to achieve a positive outcome.

Appendix 1

Type of Communication	Who do I contact?	Contact Information
Initial queries or concerns about my child General or class related query	Class teachers via school Admin Team	Infant School admin@hoblettsinfants.herts.sch.uk 01442 213854 Junior School admin@hoblettsjm.herts.sch.uk 01442 251805
Queries or concerns related to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • behaviour • attendance • admissions • uniform • administering medicines. • end of day arrangements. • school premises • wrap around care • trips • free school meals school apps (including TTRS, MME and Arbor {contact information, on line payments})	School Admin Team	Infant School admin@hoblettsinfants.herts.sch.uk 01442 213854 Junior School admin@hoblettsjm.herts.sch.uk 01442 251805
Queries or concerns about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • behaviour that have not been resolved by the class teacher • staff conduct • safeguarding Queries about the curriculum Formal complaints	Headteacher via school Admin Team	Infant School admin@hoblettsinfants.herts.sch.uk 01442 213854 Junior School admin@hoblettsjm.herts.sch.uk 01442 251805
Queries or concerns regarding all aspects of SEND which could include specialist external support, EHCP applications.	SENDCo/InCo	Infant School admin@hoblettsinfants.herts.sch.uk 01442 213854 Junior School senco@hoblettsjm.herts.sch.uk 01442 251805
Queries or concerns about your child's mental well-being	Mental Health Leads via School Admin Team	Infant School admin@hoblettsinfants.herts.sch.uk 01442 213854 Junior School admin@hoblettsjm.herts.sch.uk 01442 251805
Questions or queries relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • swimming lessons • sporting fixtures 	PE Team via School Admin Team	Infant School admin@hoblettsinfants.herts.sch.uk 01442 213854

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PE • sports clubs 		Junior School admin@hoblettsjm.herts.sch.uk 01442 251805
Freedom of Information or Subject Access requests	Data Protection Officer	Infant School DPO@hoblettsinfants.herts.sch.uk Junior School DPO@hoblettsjm.herts.sch.uk