

# Newton Hill Community School

## Communication Policy



**Approved by:**

NHCS GB

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2028

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## 1. 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.

## 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
- › 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 9:00-3:30pm 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 the Parent Hub app has been downloaded to allow communication from school.
- › Ensuring that communication with the school (verbal and written) is respectful at all times (in line with our parent code of conduct).
- › 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 or emails) in a timely manner (withing 3 working school days).
- › 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 9:00-3:30pm or during weekends/school holidays.

Our parent code of conduct can be found on our school website.

## 3. 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.

### 3.1 Parent Hub App / Direct Messages

We use Parent Hub to keep parents informed about the following things:

- › Upcoming school events
- › Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- › Class activities or teacher requests
- › Payment reminders
- › Short-notice changes to the school day
- › Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- › Direct messages regarding absence notifications
- › Direct messages to ask parents to contact school

### 3.2 Termly Newsletter/School calendar

Our school website and newsletter include a full school calendar for the academic year (stating term dates and holiday dates).

We will share dates as early as possible and we will try to give parents at least 4 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 on the school newsletter and a message via Parent Hub.

### **3.3 Phone calls**

General administration calls will be made by the office team.

If school needs to contact you regarding an accident/incident at school, two members of staff may be present on the call. You will be informed that you are on speakerphone and which staff members are present.

If any phone calls breach the parent code of conduct and the behaviour on the call does not improve, parents will be advised that the call will be terminated.

### **3.4a Letters**

We send the following letters home regularly via Parent Hub (sometimes paper copies may be sent where a signature is required).

- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms
- Our termly newsletter

### **3.4b Email Communication**

If school receives an email, the response may be via email from the school office. Your email will be acknowledged and you will receive a response within 3 working days.

If we are unable to contact you via telephone, we may contact you via the email you have provided to school. The subject line will be Newton Hill Community School.

### **3.5 Homework books**

Homework is sent home weekly. Communication regarding homework will be via Parent Hub.

### **3.6 Reports**

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

- An end-of-year report covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, and their attendance
- A KS2 SATs test results overview

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

### **3.7 Meetings**

We hold two parent consultations each year offering 10-minute appointments. During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, their child's wellbeing, or any other area of concern. Two members of staff may be present at these meetings. Where two separate meetings are required for consultations, one consultation may be via a phone call.

The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings between parents' evenings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing. Two members of staff may be present at these meetings.

Parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), or children who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings. These meetings will be time specific and two members of staff may be present at these meetings.

We do not offer virtual/online meetings.

### 3.8 School website

Key information about the school is posted on our website, including:

- School times and term dates
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information
- Information about before and after-school provision
- Useful forms e.g. absence request forms

Parents should check the website prior to contacting the school.

## 4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

Parents should use the school office number/email address and the list in appendix 1 to identify the most appropriate person to contact about a query or issue.

### 4.1 Email

Parents should always try and speak to a member of staff on the door about non-urgent issues in the first instance or parents can email school.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within three working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within five working days. This does not include safeguarding concerns.

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

Any formal complaints received will be dealt with in line with the Complaints Policy (see separate policy).

### 4.2 Phone calls

If parents need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should email the school office regarding the matter and the relevant member of staff will contact them within three working days via a phone call or if resolved, a response will be sent from the office.

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 an appropriate member of staff within three 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 refer to the school website first and then call the school office.

### 4.3 Meetings

If parents would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the school office or call the school to request an appointment.

We try to schedule all meetings within five working days of the request depending on staff availability. A phone call will be offered as an alternative.

Drop off/Pick up: Quick messages can be passed to members of staff at the door. However, teachers are not available before school unless an appointment has been pre-arranged due to teaching commitments. Please be mindful that other parents may also need to speak to the member of staff.

While teachers are available at end of the school day, once all children have been dismissed, for quick messages, if parents need to speak to class teachers at length, we recommend booking appointments/phone calls to discuss:

- Any concerns they have about their child's learning
- Updates related to pastoral support, their child's home environment, or their wellbeing.

Please note, members of staff may ask other members of staff to be present during conversations.

## **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 communications are written as clearly and concisely as possible
- Accessibility is considered when designing/updating the school website
- Staff are trained on accessibility and will endeavor to provide information in an accessible format

Parents who need help communicating with the school can request reasonable adjustments, such as:

- School announcements and communications in accessible formats

Please contact the school office to discuss these.

Parents who need help communicating with the school can request the following support: e.g. school announcements and communications may be translated into additional languages.

## **6. Monitoring and review**

The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every three years.

The policy will be approved by the governing board.

## **7. Links with other policies**

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- IT and internet acceptable use
- Parent code of conduct
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints
- 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 the school office on [admin@newton-hill.org.uk](mailto:admin@newton-hill.org.uk)
- Include your child's full name and Year group in the subject line

You will receive an acknowledgement to your email and we try to respond to all emails within three days.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO FIRST:
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's teacher via the school office
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your child's teacher/Learning Mentor via the school office.
Payments	School office
School trips	School office
Uniform/lost and found	Please check the lost property box outside in the playground or contact the school office
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, call: 01924 303680 and leave a voicemail. If you want to request term-time absence, contact the school office for a form or download a form from the school website.
Bullying and behaviour	School office FAO Headteacher/SLT
Safeguarding	School office FAO Headteacher/DSL Team
School events/the school calendar	Please check the school website for term dates or contact the school office
Special educational needs (SEN)	School office FAO SENCO
Before and after-school clubs (Newts)	<a href="mailto:Newts@newton-hill.org.uk">Newts@newton-hill.org.uk</a>
Governing board	School office FAO Governing Body
Catering/meals	School office FAO Chartwells Catering

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO FIRST:
Music Lessons	You can contact Get Into Guitar or Rocksteady directly or through the school office FAO Rocksteady etc

## Complaints

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

*Policy Source: The Key*