



Parent Communication Policy

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Adopted: September 2026

Next Review: September 2027

Our Commitment to Effective Communication

At Highfields Primary School, we recognise that effective communication between school and families is an important part of supporting our children. We value our relationships with parents and carers and want to ensure that families are able to contact the right member of staff when they have a question, concern or information to share.

Since September, we have seen a significant increase in the number of emails being sent to school staff outside of normal working hours, including during evenings, weekends and school holidays.

We understand that parents and carers may choose to send an email at a time that is convenient for them. However, it is equally important that we protect the health and wellbeing of our staff and ensure that there is a clear and sustainable approach to school communication.

This policy sets out our expectations for email communication and provides guidance to help parents and carers contact the most appropriate area of school.

Communication Response Times

School staff will aim respond to any form of communication (email, gate messages, Schoolcomms, telephone calls) from parents/carers between the hours of 7.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday, during term time.

We will aim to respond to emails within three working days. Emails will not routinely be monitored or responded to during:

- Evenings after 5.00pm
- Weekends
- Bank holidays
- School holidays

Parents and carers are welcome to send emails outside of these hours if this is more convenient; however, there is no expectation that a member of staff will read or respond to the email until normal school communication hours resume.

The three-working-day response period begins on the next school working day. For example, an email sent during a weekend or school holiday will be treated as received when school reopens. These boundaries allow us to continue to provide effective communication and support for our families while also protecting the health, wellbeing and work-life balance of our staff.

Choosing the Right Email Address

To help us respond to enquiries as efficiently as possible, we ask parents and carers to use the most appropriate school email address.

General Enquiries

Email address: highfields.enquiry@highfields.sandwell.sch.uk

The 'General Enquiries' email should be used for routine administrative questions or information.

Lost property – for example, asking whether a lost coat, water bottle, glasses or other item has been handed into school.

School events and arrangements – for example, asking for clarification about the time of a school event, trip arrangements or information contained within a school letter.

General school administration – for example, updating contact details, asking about forms or requesting general information about school procedures.

Where appropriate, the school office may forward your email to another member of staff who is better placed to respond.

Safeguarding and Welfare Concerns

Email address: safeguarding@highfields.sandwell.sch.uk

This email address should be used where a parent or carer has a concern relating to the safety, welfare or safeguarding of a child.

A concern about a child's safety or welfare – for example, information that suggests a child may be at risk of harm or may require additional support.

A disclosure or concerning information – for example, where your child has shared information with you that you believe school needs to be aware of from a safeguarding perspective.

A significant change in family circumstances affecting a child's welfare – for example, a serious family situation or circumstance that may have an immediate impact on a child's safety or emotional welfare.

Safeguarding concerns should never be delayed because of this email policy. If you believe a child is in immediate danger, please contact the emergency services or the appropriate children's safeguarding service. During the school day, urgent safeguarding concerns can also be reported directly to the school office. Due to the sensitive nature of safeguarding reports, this address inbox is only monitored by the Highfields Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Phase Leaders

- Email addresses:
- EYFS@highfields.sandwell.sch.uk
- Y1Y2@highfields.sandwell.sch.uk
- Y3Y4@highfields.sandwell.sch.uk
- Y5Y6@highfields.sandwell.sch.uk

Phase Leaders should be contacted where a matter relates to your child's experience within their year group or phase and requires support beyond a routine classroom query.

An ongoing concern relating to your child's experience in school – for example, a matter that has previously been discussed with the class teacher but remains unresolved.

A concern about friendships, relationships or repeated incidents involving other pupils – particularly where you believe there is an ongoing pattern that requires further support or monitoring.

A concern relating to learning, progress or support within the phase – for example, where you would like to discuss a broader or ongoing concern about your child's learning experience.

Where possible, parents and carers should initially raise routine classroom matters with their child's class teacher. The Phase Leader can provide further support where a concern is ongoing or requires additional oversight.

Senior Leadership Team

Email address: leadershipteam@highfields.sandwell.sch.uk

The Senior Leadership Team should be contacted for significant or complex matters that require senior leadership involvement.

A serious concern that has already been raised through the appropriate school channels but remains unresolved – for example, following previous communication with a class teacher and Phase Leader.

A significant concern relating to whole-school policy, provision or practice – where the matter extends beyond an individual classroom or phase.

A formal or particularly complex concern requiring senior leadership oversight – including matters where a parent or carer believes a significant school-level response is required.

We ask parents and carers to follow the appropriate communication route wherever possible. Contacting multiple members of staff or sending the same email to several school email addresses can delay our response while staff establish who is best placed to deal with the matter.

Urgent Messages During the School Day

Email should not be used for information that requires an immediate response or action during the school day. For example, if there is an urgent change to collection arrangements or important information that school needs to receive immediately, parents and carers should telephone the school office directly on 0121 559 1037. We cannot guarantee that an email will be read immediately (especially when staff have teaching commitments during the school day), even when it is sent during normal school communication hours.

Communication with Individual Members of Staff

Staff are not expected to monitor or respond to school emails outside of the communication hours outlined within this policy. Parents and carers should not expect individual members of staff to respond during evenings, weekends or school holidays.

Where a member of staff is teaching, leading meetings, undertaking training, absent from school or carrying out other professional duties, their response may not be immediate. We therefore ask parents and carers to allow up to three working days for a response.

In some circumstances, an acknowledgement may be sent within this timeframe as acknowledgement of the communication and a fuller response provided at a later date if the matter requires investigation, discussion with other members of staff or the gathering of further information.

Respectful Communication

Highfields Primary School is committed to maintaining positive and respectful relationships with all members of our school community. We understand that parents and carers may sometimes contact school when they are worried, upset or frustrated. We will always seek to listen, understand concerns and work constructively with families. In return, we ask that all email communication is respectful and appropriate.

Emails containing abusive, threatening, discriminatory or personally offensive language will not be accepted as appropriate communication with school staff and may be managed in accordance with the school's relevant policies.

Working Together

Our aim is not to create barriers between school and families. We want parents and carers to feel able to contact us and to know that their questions and concerns will be taken seriously.

By using the correct communication route and allowing staff a reasonable period of time to respond, parents and carers can help us ensure that communication is effective, consistent and manageable.

At the same time, clear communication boundaries are an important part of supporting the health and wellbeing of our staff.

We thank all parents and carers for their understanding, cooperation and continued support.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2027