



Fulbrook Communication Policy

Issue No.	Author or Reviewer	Date Written or Reviewed	Date Approved by FES/PEAP	Date Approved by FGB	Next Review Date
1.	Head Teacher	June 2024	N/A	N/A	June 2026

Contents

1. Introduction and aims	2
2. Roles and responsibilities	3
3. How we communicate with parents and carers.....	4
4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school	8
5. Communication within and beyond school: between staff; between students and staff; with external agencies	9
6. Investigating incidents.....	10
7. Accessibility.....	10
8. Monitoring and review	11
9. Links with other policies	11
Appendix 1: school contact list	12

1. Introduction and aims

Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications and needs to recognise that the quality of our communication reflects on the school's reputation. Parents, carers and students also have a part to play in reflecting the school's reputation. We strive to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and effective in their purpose.

Fulbrook uses several different methods to maintain effective communication with parents and carers, other schools, the wider community and outside agencies. Depending on the nature of the communication, the school will use the most practicable means to contact the recipient.

Communication on issues that affect the safety and wellbeing of a child will be treated as a priority. The school holds emergency contact details for all students; families are asked to alert the school immediately if contact information needs to be revised or update via Arbor.

Staff will always seek to establish friendly relationships with parents and carers, but they will also ensure that these relationships are professional and appropriate. Staff are encouraged to avoid developing close relationships with parents and carers.

The key stakeholders for a school are parents, carers and students; this policy addresses the main ways in which the school will ensure there is effective two-way communication between home and school.

The school recognises that engaging and working with parents and carers is vital in providing their child with an excellent education. Parents and carers are offered opportunities throughout the year to convey to us what they expect from and think of the school. Our wish is to involve as many parents and carers in their child's education as possible.

Our aims include the following:

- To make the school as welcoming and inclusive as possible
- To offer clear, informative and positive signage
- To deal with all written and telephone enquiries promptly. Parents/carers can expect an acknowledgement within three working days, but we shall always make our best endeavours to respond as soon as it is practicable
- To use a variety of forms of communication with parents and carers for example, telephone contact, e-mail and post, selecting the most appropriate in the circumstances
- To contact parents and carers for positive as well as negative reasons
- To provide information to parents and carers on what students will be taught and tips for helping their child
- Parents and carers will be encouraged to help or support their child's learning at school and at home; information will be provided in a timely way to enable this support to be effective.

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/carers has a positive impact on students' 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 shall use 'parents' to refer to both parents and carers.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Head Teacher

The Head Teacher 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 and the school's acceptable use 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 (between 8:30am and 4pm), 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. *Please see Section 3 for more detail on timescales.*

2.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times
- 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) in a timely manner. *N.B. Parents should aim to respond within five school days. They should also endeavour to give at least 24 hours' notice of the need to cancel an appointment, unless in exceptional circumstances and sufficient notice cannot be given.*
- Checking all communications from the school

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with our Respect Policy and our Home-School Agreement. Such behaviour will not be tolerated and action will be taken as necessary.

Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours, at the weekend or during school holidays.

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 Email

We use email, via **Arbor** to keep parents informed about a number of things, including but not limited to the following:

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests
- Payments
- Short-notice changes to the school day

➤ Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather). In the event of emergency closure, communication would be made via email (Arbor) and, when necessary, via the CBC SOS system: [Central Bedfordshire: SOS | School Closure List](#) . We would also endeavour to place a notification on the home page of the school website.

In addition to this use of email, staff and parents may communicate with each other individually via email. Email can be a quick, effective way of communicating necessary information. Parents should note, however, that staff may have a very busy day; they may be running extra-curricular activities or working with students at lunchtime or after school.

Emails received will be acknowledged within three working days and responded to within 10 working days. Staff will make their best endeavours to respond as soon as it is practicable.

We are mindful that our families are busy and streamline our communications as much as possible, for example by sending the majority of messages together in the weekly bulletin. Emails should be short and clear and the same care and consideration should be given as if sending a letter.

Parents may wish to contact the school via email for a general enquiry, as an alternative to a telephone call or letter. The school email address is: office@fulbrook.school

Under no circumstances should staff contact students or parents using their own personal email address.

3.2 School calendar

Our school website includes a full school calendar for the year.

Where possible, we endeavour to give parents at least one week's notice of any events or special occasions (including non-uniform days, special assemblies or visitors, or requests for students to bring in special items or materials).

3.3 Phone calls

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school, where teachers may be teaching full-time, running extra-curricular activities or working with students at lunchtime or after school.

Parents may be frustrated if they feel that a message elicits no immediate reply, when in fact there has been no available opportunity for the member of staff to reach a telephone to return a call. In a non-emergency, a return call will be made within three working days, with any follow up action from the request/query/problem being dealt within 10 working days. Staff will make a record of a telephone conversation with a parent on the communication log for the student on Arbor. Use of personal telephones is discouraged. However, where this is unavoidable, staff members must make sure that their personal number is blocked before making a call.

As outlined in the aims of this policy, a telephone call can be used to discuss students' to discuss students' performance; telephone conversations should be about positive matters too, not just to report or discuss negative situations.

3.4 Letters

We send the following letters home regularly, by email, via Arbor:

➤ Letters about trips and visits

- Consent forms
- Our weekly bulletin
- Safeguarding newsletters
- Governor newsletters

Staff will always reply to a letter from parents as quickly as possible and, as is the case for email and telephone calls, response to acknowledge receipt of a letter will be made by telephone, letter or email within three working days and responded to within 10 working days. Formal letters to individual parents must be processed through the school administration team and approved by a member of the Senior Leadership Team before posting/emailing.

Any form of written communication should be proof read before sending. Any letter of concern or complaint should be dealt with in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy. The school will use standard templates for letters where possible. As this is a formal communication, it will be expected that the tone and content of the letter is appropriately professional. The correct salutations must be used when writing or emailing parents/carers or partnerships. The use of a parent, carer or staff member's first name is not always appropriate; therefore, the vast majority of communications will use the correct salutation (Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Dr, etc.). Where it is relevant, the Line Manager, Head of Year, Subject Leader, Form Tutor etc. should be copied into letters or emails.

3.5 Reports

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

- Termly reports, covering progress and attainment, Attitude To Learning (ATL) grades and attendance; generally, the autumn and spring reports contain data, and the summer report also contains form tutor comments
- A report on KS2 SATs results
- A report on the results of public examinations
- Information about vocational qualifications gained (or credits gained towards these)

We also arrange regular meetings where parents can speak to their child's teacher(s) about their achievements.

3.6 Meetings

We hold a number of parents' evenings each year. These include welcome events, consultation evenings and information sharing events (such as details about GCSE options). During consultation meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's attainment and progress, the curriculum or schemes of work, their child's wellbeing, or any other area of concern.

The school may also contact parents to arrange a meeting if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, wellbeing or behaviour.

Parents of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these additional needs.

Parents who wish to meet a member of staff must contact the school to make an appointment. This request should be responded to within three working days and the school will endeavour to hold

the meeting within a further seven school days, dependent on the availability of all parties involved. Parents should report to Reception prior to the arranged meeting with a member of staff. Another member of staff may attend the meeting. This may be a colleague, member of the Senior Leadership Team or a member of the Admin Team. This depends on the nature of the meeting and/or to provide note taking if needed.

In the rare event of the parent becoming angry or abusive, the staff member may call the meeting to a close. This should be reported immediately to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. If immediate assistance is required, office staff should be contacted. They will need to be given sufficient information to quickly alert the most appropriate person(s).

3.7 School Website

The website is used to inform current and prospective parents; it is used to promote the school to a wider audience. It is checked for compliancy by the school governors.

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

- School times and term dates
- Important events and announcements
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information
- Information about extra-curricular provision

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

3.8 Home-school communications apps: Arbor and Studybugs

At Fulbrook we use **Arbor**: a simple cloud-based MIS (Management Information System), which helps us work faster, smarter and more collaboratively as a school. The Arbor App and Parent Portal mean we can keep parents informed about their child's life at school in a much more accessible way. We also manage all online payments via Arbor.

We use the **Studybugs** app to report student absence and **Caterlink** is our school meal provider. School meal payments are managed online and further information is shared on how to register, prior to a child joining the school.

The information parents provide is treated confidentially and processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). The majority of personal information the school collects is under the legal basis of public interest and legal obligation to enable the school to function, as well as to educate and safeguard all the children in the school's care.

3.8 Social Networking

The school has an Instagram account (@fulbrookschool), which is used to provide updates to parents who wish to follow us. It is not compulsory to do so; the majority of messages are relayed through formal communication channels, as already detailed.

4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

Parents should use the list of staff contacts, available on the school website, to identify the most appropriate person to contact about a query or issue.

The school telephone number is 01908 582022 and the office email address is office@fulbrook.school

4.1 Email

Parents should always email the school, or the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

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 a further seven school days.

If a query or concern is urgent, and parents need a response sooner than this, they should call the school, making it clear that an urgent response is required.

Please see section 3.1 above for more detail on the school's approach to email communication.

4.2 Telephone calls

If parents need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should email the school office and the relevant member of staff will contact them within three working days.

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 the appropriate member of staff within ten working days of the request.

If the issue is urgent, parents should call the school office, making it clear that an urgent response is required.

Urgent issues might include, but will not be limited to:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

For more general enquiries, please call the school office.

Please see section 3.4 above for more details about the school's approach to telephone communication.

4.3 Meetings

If parents would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the appropriate email address (as listed on the staff page of the school website), or call the school office to book an appointment.

We try to schedule all meetings within ten working days (acknowledging the request within three days and holding the meeting within a further seven school days).

We recommend that parents book an appointment to discuss:

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

5. Communication within and beyond school: between staff; between students and staff; with external agencies

5.1 Staff as parents

The school recognises that, in some cases, staff fulfil a dual role of parent and employee. Parents as employees should ensure that they uphold boundaries between the two roles and that their behaviour does not constitute a conflict of interest. For example, they must maintain the same level of confidentiality expected of them, as per our staff code of conduct.

5.2 Communication between students and staff

Two-way communication between students and staff is an important aspect of school life. The school welcomes and encourages students to engage in conversation with all members of staff within the school.

When communicating with each other, both staff and students should:

- Use appropriate language
- Be respectful; do not talk over, raise voice or walk away before the conversation has ended
- Be respectful; do not raise voice aggressively
- Not use sarcasm or phrases which may be interpreted as offensive

The school has the same expectations of staff and students when communicating with each other.

5.3 Communication between Fulbrook staff

The same expectations and level of respect, as listed above, should be shown between members of staff when they are communicating with each other. This includes communication within face-to-face or online meetings.

When communicating with each other, staff should:

- Use appropriate language
- Be respectful; do not talk over, raise voice or walk away before the conversation or meeting has ended
- Be respectful; do not raise voice aggressively
- Not use sarcasm or phrases which may be interpreted as offensive
- Avoid corridor conversations that should really take place in a more private, professional space

Much communication between staff is via email. When communicating by email, staff should:

- Consider whether an email is appropriate, when face-to-face communication may be more conducive.

- Avoid exclusive email correspondence without requesting or organising a face-to-face meeting.
- Avoid *send to all* or *reply all*, unless absolutely necessary.
- Avoid copying in too many recipients, unless absolutely necessary.
- Ensure it is clear, when there is more than one recipient, if and from whom a response is expected.
- Keep emails concise; use standard English and bullet points if necessary.
- Tone and content must be professional and conducive to collaborative working practice.
- Staff should not send non-urgent emails before 8.00am or after 5.00pm, unless absolutely necessary. In the event of sending emails out of core hours, staff should not expect an immediate response.
- Where possible, emails should be saved as drafts and sent during work hours or scheduled to be sent later or the next working day.
- Where a response has not been received within an expected time (i.e. within three working days), a follow-up email should be sent, or a verbal reminder/check-in made. Emails can get 'buried'. Where something requires an urgent response, this should be indicated in the subject header or by using the 'high importance' function.
- Staff should remain mindful of and support each other's workload and wellbeing, when communicating by email.

5.4 Communication with external agencies

We hold information on all students in our school and, from time to time, we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. All personal data is held and processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (for full details see our Data Protection Policy).

6. Investigating incidents

When investigating an incident involving students, school members of staff interview all involved; written accounts may be taken. The school will only share any information that would identify any students, in accordance with data protection regulations, legislation and our policies. Disciplinary information on students is confidential and will not be shared with other parents.

7. Accessibility

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school.

7.1 Parents with additional communication needs

We aim to make communications accessible to all. We have taken the following steps to achieve this:

- All whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts, bulletins and newsletters) can be made available in multiple formats

- 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 endeavour 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
- Interpreters for meetings

Please contact the school office to discuss these. Please also note that, to provide the most appropriate support, additional time might be needed before a meeting can take place.

7.2 Parents with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Currently, we make whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts, bulletins and newsletters) available in English.

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

- School announcements and communications translated into additional languages
- Interpreters for meetings or phone calls

We can make additional arrangements if necessary. Please contact the school office to discuss these.

8. Monitoring and review

The head teacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every two years.

The policy will be approved by the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies, such as:

- ICT and internet acceptable use
- Complaints (*please note the separate communication timelines that are specific to this particular policy*)
- Home-school agreement
- Respect

Appendix 1: school contact list

With whom should I make 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 or call the school office at office@fulbrook.school or on 01908 582022
- Put the subject and the name of the relevant member of staff in the subject line (for emails). We shall forward your request on to the relevant member of staff
- Alternatively, if you know which member of staff you would like to contact, include your child's name and form class in the subject line.
- Staff email addresses are listed on our school website: [Fulbrook School - Our Staff](#)

Remember: please check our website first; much of the information you need is posted there.

We endeavour to acknowledge all emails within three working days and respond fully within ten working days.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	PLEASE CONTACT...
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's form tutor or subject teacher
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your child's Form Tutor/Head of Year/Pastoral Team
Payments	finance@fulbrook.school
School trips	Your child's form tutor, subject teacher or visit leader
Uniform/lost and found	The school office: office@fulbrook.school 01908 582022
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, use the Studybugs app If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact scollins@fulbrook.school
Bullying and behaviour	Your child's Form Tutor/Head of Year/Pastoral Team
School events/the school calendar	The school website: www.fulbrook.school

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	PLEASE CONTACT...
	Or the school office: office@fulbrook.school 01908 582022
Special educational needs (SEN)	send@fulbrook.school
Before and after-school clubs	The school website: www.fulbrook.school Or the school office: office@fulbrook.school 01908 582022
Hiring the school premises	Fulbrook School - Hire our Facilities
PTA	Fulbrook School - PTA
Governing board	clerk@fulbrook.school
Catering/meals	Fulbrook School - School Meals office@fulbrook.school 01908 582022

Complaints

We hope that parents will not feel the need to complain about the operation of our Communication policy, and that any difficulty can be sensitively and efficiently handled before reaching that stage. However, a formal complaint can be filed by following the procedure set out in our complaints policy, via the school website:

[Fulbrook School - Policies and Documents](#)