



# **Home – School Communication Policy**

**March 2025**

**Approved by the Governing Body Strategy Group 06/03/25**

**This Policy is due for renewal in Term 4  
2026–27**

# **COMMUNICATION POLICY**

## **OF**

### **GODINTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Throughout this policy the term ‘parents’ refers to parents and carers.

#### **SECTION ONE – INTRODUCTION**

Godinton Primary School endeavors to communicate effectively with all stakeholders, with its pupils, with their parents and with other members of the wider school community. Godinton Primary School aims to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

Godinton Primary School understands that communication is much more than the exchange of information. It involves the management of relationships and the need to involve people. Communication is as much about the attitude and behavior as it is about the message. Every member of the school community has a responsibility to support effective communication. For the purpose of this policy communication includes not only the message but how that message is communicated.

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- › IT and Online Safety / Acceptable Usage Policy
- › Parent Handbook
- › Staff Code of Conduct
- › Complaints
- › Staff Wellbeing Policy
- › Attendance Policy
- › Confidentiality Policy

#### **SECTION TWO – AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents has a positive impact on pupils’ learning because it:

- › Gives parents the information they need to support their child’s education
- › Helps the school improve, through feedback and consultation with parents
- › 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
- › Setting clear standards and expectations for responding to communication from parents
- › Helping parents 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

## **SECTION THREE – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **3.1 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

### **3.2 Staff**

All staff are responsible for:

- › Ensuring that communication with parents is always through the approved professional channels i.e. letter, school telephone or school email as outlined in both the **Staff Code of Conduct Policy** and this **Communication Policy**.
- › Ensuring that any communication with parents is professional and that any communication is handled respectfully and with courtesy at all times, upholding our school values and is in line with this policy.
- › Ensuring that all communications with parents are treated as confidential within the school context and that the school **Confidentiality Policy** is adhered to.
- › Ensuring that they adhere to school's code of **Conduct Policy**, the school's **IT and Online 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)
- › Aiming to respond to communication during core school hours (8.30am – 4.30pm), and not during the evening or at weekends. Staff will endeavour to respond to parent communication within 2 working days and all other emails within 3 working days. This is in line with our school **Staff Wellbeing Policy**.

**NB:** Teaching staff may choose to communicate / respond outside of core school hours, in order to manage their own working hours and wellbeing. However, they should never be asked or expected to do so. (Please refer to Staff Wellbeing Policy)

### 3.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times
- Ensuring that they are able to receive and check communications through the methods set out in this policy and contacting the school if they are unable to do this.
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance
- Respond to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours (8.30am – 4.30pm weekdays) or during school holidays.

A copy of the Parent handbook can be found on the school website:

<https://godinton.kent.sch.uk/media/7773/parent-handbook-june-2023.pdf>

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with our Parent and Visitor Code of Conduct. (Please refer to Appendix 2)

## SECTION FOUR – HOW THE SCHOOL COMMUNICATES WITH PARENTS

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.

### 4.1 Home-School Communications App – Arbor

From February 2025, Godinton Primary School, uses a home-school communications app called 'Arbor'. This is linked to the school's Management Information System and is the school's main method for sharing group communications. Arbor is used for the following purposes:

- Upcoming School event notifications and reminders
- Whole school, year group or class activities or requests
- Sharing of monthly Newsletters
- Notification of School clubs and visits

- Enable parents to book parent consultation appointments
- The means by which parents can make school payments such as educational visits, Early Birds Breakfast Club, Night Owls After school Club as well as school lunches
- Notification of educational events in the local area
- Notification of emergency school closures (e.g. heating issues, bad weather)
- Notification or updates about other school issues
- As the means by which parents can update information about their child e.g. medical information or contact details
- As the means by which parents give consent for various school activities e.g. school trips or photo permissions.
- As the means by which parents can provide admissions information about their child, replacing the need for a school admissions form.

## 4.2 Email

Emails are sent to the email address registered with the school via Arbor. Parents can use the Arbor app to ensure that contact details are up to date. Email is often used to contact individual parents and to keep parents informed about the following things:

- School office contact parents in relation to individual queries
- Class teachers, Senior Management (SMT) or our Family Liaison Office (FLO) may email individual parents to share news, arrange a meeting or respond to a query raised relating to the education and well-being of a child.
- Each year group has a school email account ([yearx@godinton.kent.sch.uk](mailto:yearx@godinton.kent.sch.uk)). Staff must use this email address to email parents. This is the email address that is shared with parents as a means of contacting their child's class teacher.

## 4.3 Text Messages

Arbor has the facility to text parents. The school will only use this facility when there is an important and/or urgent need to contact parents.

- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- Unable to contact parents by any alternative method and the school needs to speak with parents as a matter of urgency.

The school's Family Liaison Officer has a school mobile phone which may be used to receive and send communications to individual parents.

#### **4.4 Phone Calls**

The school holds contact numbers for parents on Arbor and may use these to call parents on a variety of issues such as:

- In the case of illness, accident or injury
- To share positive behaviour or achievements
- To discuss concerns about pupil well-being, behaviour or progress.
- To follow up any absence queries where notification has not been received.
- To request information

Phone calls to parents will be made no earlier than 8am and no later than 5.30pm unless in an emergency situation.

All children should have at least 2 contacts named on their pupil record. Parents are responsible for keeping contact details up to date; this can be done through the Arbor App.

We appreciate that receiving telephone calls during the working day can be difficult for some parents. Staff will always check that it is convenient for parents to take the call. If they would prefer to call back at a more convenient time, this should be arranged with the member of staff who has called.

#### **4.5 Letters**

Godinton Primary School endeavours to reduce the number of letters sent home in paper form to reduce our waste and our environmental impact. If we are able to communicate via 'in-app' notifications on Arbor or via email, we will. However, certain situations do require a letter to be sent home. The type of letters sent home may include:

- Letters about trips and visits which require consent / signature
- Request for a formal meeting in school to discuss a child's well-being, attendance, progress or behaviour.
- Notification of concerns raised by attendance data.
- Letters sent to parents offering a place at the school / transition information for new starters.

#### 4.6 Reports

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

- › Reports are sent home to parents three times per year. During the year, reports will include details relating to a child's achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, their engagement with homework activities and their attendance
- › Results of any statutory assessment (Phonics Screening, EYFS, Multiplication Tables Check, KS2 SATs)

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

#### 4.7 Meetings

We hold two parents' consultation evenings during the academic year (Term 2 and Term 4). During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum or schemes of work, their child's wellbeing, or any other area of concern.

In the Summer Term, the school invites parents to contact the school if they wish to discuss their child's end of year report.

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

Parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these additional needs.

Parents may also request meetings with staff at the school. The school will endeavour to respond to parental requests for a meeting within 2 working days. At this point, available dates for a meeting will be shared. We will endeavour to arrange urgent meetings within no longer than 5 working days and non urgent meetings in 10 working days.

#### 4.8 School Website

Godinton Primary School adheres to the DfE requirements for information to be displayed on the school website.

The School website ([www.godinton.kent.sch.uk](http://www.godinton.kent.sch.uk)) contains a wealth of information about the school. All 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 before and after-school provision

#### **4.8.1 School Calendar**

Our school website ([www.godinton.kent.sch.uk](http://www.godinton.kent.sch.uk)) includes a full school calendar which outlines school events for the year. Term dates for the current academic and forthcoming academic year are published on the school website as soon as they have been confirmed.

Where possible, we try to give parents at least 2 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 events are included on the school calendar. Parents will be notified of any date changes via Arbor notifications.

#### **4.9 School Newsletter**

At the start of each academic year, parents receive a welcome to Year X newsletter. This newsletter outlines key information for the academic year specific to their child's year group. These letters can also be found on the school website.

A monthly newsletter is sent via Arbor / email. The newsletter includes a wide range of information including:

- Celebration of year group learning
- Celebration of school events
- A look ahead to forthcoming events
- Important information about school policies and procedures

#### **4.10 EYFS – Tapestry**

For children in Year R (EYFS), the year group uses the online platform 'Tapestry' as the primary means of communication between staff and parents, in addition to a year group email account. Parents are supported in setting up a Tapestry account from the moment their child starts Godinton, and are kept informed of learning that takes place in class through regularly uploaded newsletters. We understand how valuable parent voice can be and invite parents to upload observations, pictures or videos onto Tapestry that relate to the child's learning at home.



#### **4.11 Social Media – Instagram**

The school has one official social media account – this is on Instagram #godinton\_primary\_school

This is a private business account used to promote events and activity at the school. The school has the ability to post content on its Instagram site but followers or viewers are unable to post comments. There is no direct messaging facility; if anyone wishes to contact the school, they should do so via other means.

### **SECTION FIVE – HOW PARENTS CAN COMMUNICATE WITH THE SCHOOL**

Parents should use the list in appendix 1 to identify the most appropriate person to contact about a query or issue. To avoid delays in receiving and/or responding to communications, it is important that the correct channel of communication is used.

#### **5.1 Reporting your child's absence from school**

It is parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and their whereabouts is known. Parents should update the school daily on any subsequent day of absence and inform the school when their child is returning. The school has a designated telephone line on which parents can leave a message to report a child's absence.

Parents can report a child's absence by telephoning the school office (01233 621616). Absences can also be reported via the Arbor App.

#### **5.2 Telephone calls – Important/ Urgent Messages**

If parents need to contact the school or the child's class teacher to ensure that an important/ urgent message is received, then please ring the school office who will ensure the message is passed on. Parents are unable to text the school.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- › Family emergencies
- › Safeguarding or welfare issues
- › Change to end of day pick up arrangements
- › Medical needs changes for staff to be made aware of

Please do not use the year group email address provided to contact class teachers regarding urgent issues. Teachers will be teaching in class and will not be able to read

or respond to emails during lesson time. A telephone call to the school office must be made for urgent/ important messages as this is the most efficient means by which your communication will be answered.

### **5.3 Telephone calls – Non Urgent**

If parents need to speak to a specific member of staff about a non-urgent matter, they should either contact the school office or email the relevant member of staff who will contact them within 2 working days. Please refer to appendix 1 to find the most relevant person to contact.

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 2 days of your request.

For more general enquiries, please call the school office. The school office is staffed between 8.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m.

### **5.4 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 2 working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 5 working days.

If a query or concern is urgent, and parents need a response sooner than this, they should call the school office – please see section 5.2

### **5.5 Meetings**

If parents would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the appropriate email address (see appendix 1), or call or email the school office who will pass on the message to the appropriate person

We try to schedule all meetings within 10 working days of the request. Urgent issues will be attended to sooner. Parents are asked to give an indication of the issue to be discussed when initially contacting the school to request a meeting.

### **5.6 Start and end of the School Day**

At the start of the school day, a member of SMT and our Family Liaison Officer (FLO) will be available at the main gate to greet children and parents. Staff on gate duty are available to answer any queries. If a matter needs a longer or more confidential conversation, staff will suggest a meeting with the parent at a mutually convenient time.

If an important message needs to be passed on to your child's class teacher, please contact the school office.

At the end of the school day, all teachers are available most days after school for a brief conversation. If a matter needs a longer or more confidential conversation, staff will suggest a meeting with the parent at a mutually convenient time

## **5.6 Social Media Platforms**

The school has one official social media account – this is on Instagram #godinton\_primary\_school

This is a private business account used to promote events and activity at the school. The school has the ability to post content on its Instagram site but followers or viewers are unable to post comments. There is no direct messaging facility; if anyone wishes to contact the school, they should do so via other means.

Some staff may have personal social media accounts but these must not be used to communicate with any parent relating to any school matter.

## **SECTION SIX – COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS**

### **6.1 Complaints**

Our staff at Godinton Primary School are very approachable and in the event you should have any concerns, will be happy to do what they can to resolve any issues as soon as possible.

If however parents still feel concerned about any aspect of provision at Godinton, our school has a clear complaints policy which outlines how to raise a complaint. Please refer to our concerns and complaints page on the school website to access the school's complaints policy. <https://godinton.kent.sch.uk/parents/concerns-and-complaints/>

Our complaints policy applies to all complaints, including those relating to Special Educational Needs and Disability.

### **6.2 Compliments**

We like to know when you are happy with a particular aspect of school life, so please tell us by emailing the school office: [office@godinton.kent.sch.uk](mailto:office@godinton.kent.sch.uk) . The school office will ensure that your comments are shared with the relevant school staff and Senior Management Team.

## **SECTION SEVEN – EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

At Godinton Primary School, we are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all members of our school community irrespective of race, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy or maternity, marriage and civil partnership or socio-economic background. We are determined to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and ability to participate fully in school life.

We tackle discrimination through the positive promotion of equality by challenging stereotypes and by creating an environment that champions respect for all. At Godinton Primary School, we believe that diversity is a strength that should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit us.

All school policies have an explicit aim of promoting equality and will be reviewed in terms of their contribution and effectiveness in achieving this aim.

## **SECTION EIGHT– CHILDREN IN CARE**

As for all our pupils, Godinton Primary School is committed to helping every Child in Care to achieve the highest standards they can. Staff are aware that Children in Care can be at risk of underachieving at school because they have experienced disruption to their family life and education. Some may have low expectations, poor emotional and psychological health and a lack of family support. Godinton Primary School will support Children in Care with their participation in physical activity.

## **SECTION NINE – MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The implementation of this policy is monitored by the Headteacher. This policy is reviewed every two years or sooner if required.



## Appendix 1: School Contact List

### Who should I contact?

Please refer to the table below to find the most appropriate person to contact regarding your query. Where relevant, we have include key contact information.

When communicating via email:.

- › Email the most appropriate address
- › Include your child's full name in the subject line

We try to respond to all emails within 2 working days

Key contact information:

School office hours are: 8am – 4pm

School office telephone number: 01233 621616

School office email: [office@godinton.kent.sch.uk](mailto:office@godinton.kent.sch.uk)

Headteacher: [headteacher@godinton.kent.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@godinton.kent.sch.uk)

Family Liaison Officer – please use school office email address

Year groups can be contacted via the following address. Replace the X with the year group that your child is in: [yearXparent@godinton.kent.sch.uk](mailto:yearXparent@godinton.kent.sch.uk)

For help and support in using the Arbor App, please contact the school office.

I WANT TO CONTACT THE SCHOOL ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
Reporting my child absent	School office: 01233 621616 or can be done via the Arbor App
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's class teacher via year group email as shown in key contacts.  If you require further support, please contact the Head of each mini school via the school office:  Miss Ward – Lower School (Years R and 1)

I WANT TO CONTACT THE SCHOOL ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
	<p>Mrs Walker – Middle School (Years 2 and 3)</p> <p>Mrs Crowfoot – Upper School (Years 4 to 6)</p>
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your child's class teacher or Mrs McGibney (FLO).
Payments for school trips or school events	<p>School office: 01233 621616</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:office@godinton.kent.sch.uk">office@godinton.kent.sch.uk</a></p>
Early Birds Breakfast Club	<p>The Breakfast Club Team:</p> <p><a href="mailto:breakfastclub@godinton.kent.sch.uk">breakfastclub@godinton.kent.sch.uk</a></p>
Night Owls After School Club	<p>The Night Owls Team:</p> <p><a href="mailto:afterschoolclub@godinton.kent.sch.uk">afterschoolclub@godinton.kent.sch.uk</a></p>
Uniform/lost and found	Please check in the foyer of the school office
Request term-absence	All requests must be received in writing via email to: <a href="mailto:office@godinton.kent.sch.uk">office@godinton.kent.sch.uk</a>
Bullying and behaviour	<p>Child's class teacher in the first instance.</p> <p>Further concerns should be raised with a member of the Senior Leadership Team</p>
School events/the school calendar	<p>Refer to the school website: <a href="http://www.godinton.kent.sch.uk">www.godinton.kent.sch.uk</a></p> <p>For further information, please contact the school office</p>
Special educational needs (SEN)	<p>Mrs Sarah Stein</p> <p><a href="mailto:Sarah.stein@godinton.kent.sch.uk">Sarah.stein@godinton.kent.sch.uk</a></p>
Extra Curricular Clubs	<p>Refer to the school website: <a href="http://www.godinton.kent.sch.uk">www.godinton.kent.sch.uk</a></p>

I WANT TO CONTACT THE SCHOOL ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
	For further information, please contact the school office
Hiring the School Premises	The School Business Manager: Mrs Claire Williams <a href="mailto:claire.williams@godinton.kent.sch.uk">claire.williams@godinton.kent.sch.uk</a>
PTFA	Ptfa@godinton.kent.sch.uk
Governing Board	clerk@godinton.kent.sch.uk chair@godinton.kent.sch.uk
Catering/meals payment queries	Please telephone the school and select option 3
Making a Complaint	This will depend on the nature of the complaint. Please see the school's Complaints Policy for further information. <a href="mailto:headteacher@godinton.kent.sch.uk">headteacher@godinton.kent.sch.uk</a> <a href="mailto:chair@godinton.kent.sch.uk">chair@godinton.kent.sch.uk</a>

## Appendix 2: Parent and Visitor Code of Conduct



Dear Visitors,

At Godinton Primary we expect everyone to uphold our school values, including any grown ups who visit our school. Please be a good role model to our children and show respect:

- by being kind and respectful in the way you behave to others,
- by not shouting or being argumentative,
- by not being intimidating or threatening,
- by only using acceptable language—no swearing or inappropriate comments that might offend,
- by not showing physical aggression,
- by respecting personal space.



When you visit our school, please set an example.

Thank you

The children at Godinton Primary

Failure to show respect to our team or to others may result in you being asked to leave the school site.