



Positive Communication Policy for families of the School

This document has been prepared to set out the Positive Communication Policy for families of the School of Hanham Primary Federation. The document shall be reviewed annually and approved by the Local Governing Board for the school.

Document Control

Version	Revisions	Approved By	Date
1	N/A	LGB	May 24

Document Information

Review Cycle	Bi-Annual
Category	Optional
Effective Date	June 2023
Reviewing Authority	Local Governing Board

1. Rationale

At Hanham Primary Federation, we believe that clear and open communication between our school and the families we serve is vital to fostering a sense of belonging to build trust and partnership which strengthens our community. All should be empowered with the right information, at the right time, to support our main aim of providing the highest level of education for our children to secure them academically, socially and emotionally.

2. Terms

In this policy, **communication** refers to the information shared between parties regardless of the manner in which that information was sent or received.

Social media refers to online platforms that facilitate communication that can be shared or seen by more than two parties such as;

- WhatsApp
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- Class Dojo

We are one entity under a single leadership structure across Hanham Abbots Juniors and Samuel White's Infants therefore **Federation** will be interchangeable with **school**.

The terms **SLT** and **FLT** refer to Senior Leadership team (Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Assistant Headteachers) and Federation Leadership Team (a wider group of leaders consisting of Phase Leads and Raising Standards Leads). The Federation Leadership Team sits underneath the Senior Leadership Team.

The Federation is officially two separate legal entities with a specific URN (Unique reference number) and DfE (Department for Education) number, along with two different OFSTED registrations. Therefore we require two separate records (our provider is Arbor). This means that children in different schools that are part of the same family will receive two separate communications about the same event. This may seem a duplication but is necessary to adhere to our legal requirements.

3. Aims

The aim of this policy is to promote clear and open communication by:

- Explaining how, when and why the school communicates with families and how families can communicate with school
- Setting clear standards and expectations for communication
- Ensuring a consistency in communication applicable to all children and families in the Federation
- Helping parents and 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

4. Principles of Communication

At Hanham Primary Federation, all stakeholders commit to the following communication principles as per our values.

“Be Ready” To offer clear communications in a timely and transparent manner.

“Be Respectful” To promote belonging through a culture of active listening and mutual respect.

“Be Safe” To lead with empathy and kindness with focus on wellbeing and safeguarding.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with families is timely and appropriate
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy
- Regularly reviewing this policy

Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from families in line with this policy and the school's Acceptable Use Policy [and Staff Use of Social Media policy](#)
- Working with other members of staff to make sure families get timely information
- Ensuring all communications are treated as confidential within school
- Ensuring that all communications are welcoming, professional and conducted with respect and empathy
- Responding to communication during the core school hours (8:00am-4.30pm) 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.

Families

Families 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
- Engaging with all communications from the school in a timely manner
- Ensuring that individual family communications are treated as confidential

Admin Team

Our Admin Team are responsible for:

- Ensuring that central communications are managed in line with this policy
- Maintaining communication channels and supporting families to access these
- Informing new starters of our communication protocols
- Granting access to our communication channels to families as needed

6. Communication to Families

This section explains how we keep our families up-to-date with their child's education and what is happening in school. This is summarised in our Family Communication Map [Appendix 1].

Communication from school should be expected during term time and within the core school hours of 8:00-4.30pm. On occasion, text messages or emails may be sent to families outside of these hours if communication is of an urgent nature.

Staff will not respond to messages about non-learning related matters on Class Dojo and responses will not be made outside of the core hours above or during non-school days.

Social Media (excluding Class Dojo) will not be used for any formal or informal communication between school and families.

Email

We use email to keep families informed about:

- Upcoming whole school events e.g. photographs, vaccinations
- School surveys or consultations
- Responses or information relating to individual learners or families e.g. attendance/absence, responses to feedback, forwarding external reports e.g. from educational psychologists, screener outcomes.

Text messages

We will text families about:

- Short-notice changes to the school day or after-school club provision
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- Head injuries including guidance on actions to take if needed
- When Arbor bookings are live
- Incidents during the school day where it has not been possible to speak to families in person or on the telephone

Phone calls

We use phone calls to communicate to families about:

- Serious or significant injuries or incidents which require medical attention and/or the learner to be collected from school
- Learners who are unwell and may need collecting
- Important 'need to knows' from the school day where it has not been possible to speak to families in person at pick up (e.g. behaviour concerns or well-being concerns)
- Concerns regarding a learner's progress or wellbeing
- Concern or complaint follow up

Class Dojo

We use Class Dojo to communicate to families about:

- Holiday challenges, events and competitions for learners
- Events – reminders and calendar
- Class event information
- Celebration of individual or group achievements
- Sharing photos and updates of what is happening in school
- Curriculum overviews and learning updates
- Emergency alerts (duplication of text alerts for awareness)

Letters (sent via email)

We use letters to communicate to families about:

- Educational visits and offsite events – initial information
- Weekly and termly updates (newsletters)
- Significant updates or news e.g. changes to policy, incident response, staffing updates
- Complaints
- Significant behaviour incidents e.g. suspensions and exclusions, conduct of parents

Homework Books and Reading Records

We have moved to an online reading record system so that parents and children can record their daily reading. These are used by learners from EYFS to Year 6.

For the current home learning schedule, please see the home learning section on the school website.

Reporting to Parents

We report to families about their child's progress and achievement in the following ways:

- A mid-year progress report covering achievement and progress across the core subjects and the Early Years Framework for children in Reception.

- An end-of-year report covering achievement and progress across the curriculum, attendance and results of any statutory assessments
- Two 'parent consultation' meetings throughout the year where parents are invited to speak to their child's teacher about their achievement, progress and wellbeing
- The school may also contact families to arrange meetings between parents' evenings if there are concerns
- Parents of learners with special educational needs (SEN), or who have other additional needs, meet periodically with a member of staff for a review of their SEN support plan.

School Website

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

- School times and term dates
- Weekly and termly updates (newsletters)
- Information about our school's vision and values
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Staff information
- Contact information
- Information about before and after-school provision
- Information about our Governing Board
- Safeguarding information
- Important information for families such as how to make payments, school lunches and uniform

7. Communication from Families

This section explains how families can communicate with our team at school and should be read alongside our 'Get in Touch with Us' flowchart [Appendix 2] and our 'How Can We Help?' flowchart [Appendix 4]. These documents will help families to identify the most appropriate route of communication and person to contact about a query or issue.

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be challenged in line with our **Managing Challenging Communications Policy**.

Families should not expect staff to respond to their communications outside of core school hours (8:00-4:30pm) or during school holidays.

Email

If families have a general query of a non-urgent nature, an email should be sent to;

samuelwhites@hanhamprimaryfederation.org

or

hanhamabbots@hanhamprimaryfederation.org

All emails will be treated with appropriate confidentiality. We aim to **acknowledge all emails within one working day**, they will then be passed to the relevant member of the team and a **full response** (or contact to arrange a meeting or phone call if needed) **will be given within two working days**.

If a query or concern is urgent, families should call the school.

Phone Calls

Families should phone the school office for urgent matters such as:

- Family emergencies
- Changes to collection arrangements
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

If families wish to speak via telephone to a specific member of staff about a non-urgent matter, they should email the school office to schedule a call. **We aim for calls to be returned within two working**

days. If this is not possible (due to teaching, other commitments or absence), another member of the team will respond to fact-find and a call will be scheduled with the relevant member of staff at the earliest mutually convenient time.

Families are asked to phone the school office by 9am if their child is absent from school. If a learner is absent and we have not received notification of this, we will contact nominated contacts by text to establish the learner's whereabouts.

Meetings

If families wish to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email or call the school to book an appointment.

samuelwhites@hanhamprimaryfederation.org

or

hanhamabbots@hanhamprimaryfederation.org

We aim to schedule all meetings within 10 working days of the request. The school will triage requests for meetings and make decisions about prioritisation to allow us to manage multiple requests for meetings.

Teachers and leaders may be available at the beginning or end of the school day if families need to speak to them urgently, however we recommend that scheduled appointments are made to discuss concerns about learning, progress or wellbeing.

Class Dojo

School and Class Story

We know that families appreciate the swift and accessible communication that Class Dojo provides. However, this app is designed as a communication tool between school and parents. We expect the same professional standards of communication on Class Dojo as any other method of communication with families. Comments and likes are encouraged and welcomed, but again we would expect public comments to be those of support for the school, please direct any challenges or queries to the relevant staff member using the above channels.

School to parents-Direct Messaging

School may find the need to communicate with parents directly using Classdojo and parents are encouraged to reply to these communications, such as; letting parents know about a good behavioural incident, short term project work ie parent helpers for a trip, organising an SEN review with a parent. Where a new situation or query has arisen from a parent, school would encourage parents to continue to contact through the school office.

Parents to school-Direct Messaging

Families can send messages to class teachers **about academic learning progress and concerns only** via Class Dojo. All other communications or queries should be sent via the main school office as detailed above or in Appendix 3.

Where, for example, a child may need specific care or treatment for a medical issue, this is better to contact the school office where the information can go to all relevant staff members such as the Inclusion Lead, The PPA teachers and any other appropriate adults.

Sometimes a friendship issue may arise. In this case, it is best to email the school office so that all school leaders are made aware and so that all staff that support children are in the picture. Some year groups are supported by large teams and SLT aim to keep all adults in the loop of communication to best support learners.

Class Dojo should not be used by families as a means of urgent communications with staff. To protect their own wellbeing and workload, staff will not respond to communications on Class Dojo about non-learning related matters or outside the hours of 8:00-4:30pm/on non-school days.

Complaints

We operate a fair and inclusive approach in how we deal with behavioural incidents. Our children's safety and happiness is at the forefront of our practice but we must also implement our behaviour policy with consistency. Where we feel appropriate, we will inform you of what actions school has taken to ensure the fair treatment of individuals. Where low level incidental behaviours have been addressed, we may not inform parents.

If you have any questions around any incidents that have happened in the school day, please contact the school office with FAO: to the teacher who had involvement. We would appreciate all communication through the lens that understands children may not always fully communicate the situation to their parents, so an open approach is most constructive with home/school communication.

We always endeavor to resolve matters by working in partnership with families using the communication channels detailed above. However, we recognise that there may be occasions when a resolution has not been possible in this way and families may wish to follow a formal complaint route as set out in our Complaints policy.

8. Feedback and Working in Partnership

At Hanham Primary Federation, we value the voice of all stakeholders and are keen to gather feedback from our families to support our aspiration of making Hanham Primary the best it possibly can be. We will always consider feedback which is offered with kindness and respect in line with our value of belonging. In addition to informal feedback offered through daily interaction with our team, there are some scheduled opportunities for families to offer their views which are detailed below.

Surveys

We use online surveys throughout the academic year to collect the voice of families about a number of key areas. These surveys support us in reviewing policies and practices in school and have been chosen as areas of most interest to our families, they may include:

- Homework
- Lunchtimes
- Vision and Values
- Communication
- Inclusion
- Behaviour

Annual Family Survey

[Our Local Governing Board will](#) issue an annual family survey in the spring term. This contains a fixed set of questions and allows us to compare results to measure progress. The survey results are analysed for trends and patterns and used to inform our school growth plans.

Online Polls

We also use online polls during the year to support significant decision-making regarding trips and activities in school. For example, polling families about options for residential visits to ensure that there is consultation about what is financially viable for our families.

Parent Forum Sessions

Parent Forum sessions are open to all families and provide an opportunity for voice to be collected in a discursive session with a senior leader. Parent forum is opened up in September and meet once a term to discuss new initiatives or clarify ongoing implementations.

9. Access and Adaptation

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school. Families 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.
- Hard copies of emailed communications or school policies.

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

Appendix 1 – Family Communication Map

How parents will receive information.

Key

Primary source/initial communication	Secondary source/reminders
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	 Text (Arbor)	 Email (Arbor)	 Class Dojo	 Phone Call	 Face-to- Face	 Website
School information			S			P
News and updates		P			S	
Emergency alerts	P		S	P		
Incident reports	P			P	P	
Learner progress				P	P	
Learner celebration			P		P	
Events—whole school		P	S			
Events—class		S	P			
Curriculum info			S		S	P
Homework			P			S
Collecting voice		P			P	

Who should I contact?

HPF office

To inform about
lateness or
absence

Questions about
Arbor/ Boomreader/
Classdojo

Dinner money

Lost and found

To arrange a
meeting with a
teacher or a
member of the
leadership team

AOB

Teacher

On the classroom door at 8.40am
and at 3.15pm

To share or talk
about learning

*Please note that teachers do
not have access to ClassDojo
during the school day and
this should not be used as a
point of contact.*

*Teachers are often in
meetings, running clubs,
planning learning or
marking books before and
after school they will not
always have capacity to
access Classdojo. Please only
use this to share messages
that do not require a quick
response.*

OR

OR

COMMUNICATION

ClassDojo is used by teachers to update you about your children's successes and learning.

The teachers **do not** access the messaging facility during the school teaching day, evenings or weekends. If you require quick responses please contact the main office.

If you need to speak to your class teacher please follow the guidance below.

1

Staff are available outside the classroom doors at the start of each day. This is a great time to share a quick update.

2

If you need to make a last minute change linked to pupil collection this should be communicated to the office to ensure the message is received before the end of the day.

3

If you would like to meet with a teacher please email or call the office who will arrange a meeting.

4

If you need help with login details please contact the school office e.g. Arbor

5

The leadership team are on the gate at the beginning/end of the day - please ask us for help.

Appendix 4: Who will you see on the playground?

As well as your child's class teacher, please refer to these members of our team. You will see them on the playground in the mornings before school and afterschool.

COMMUNICATION

Who should I go to for support with...



Behaviour

- Initially please talk to the class teacher
- For further support please speak to **Mr Wills**



Attendance (holidays and absence)

- Please speak to **Mrs Howells**



Support for a pupil who has or may have a special educational need (SEN)

- Please talk to **Mrs Lees**



Emotional support for pupils

- Contact **Mrs Dimond** our Federation Parent Support Champion

Hanham Primary Federation Parent Forum

Introduction

The Hanham Primary Federation Parent Forum is run to give parents, staff and other people involved with the school a place to share ideas, discuss relevant issues and generally get to know each other.

Forum Rules

In order for the forum to be successful we must follow the rules below:

- Individual children or issues must not be discussed at the forum
- The Federation welcomes constructive feedback with a view to improving our offer
- Parent forum should encourage parents/carers with individual concerns to talk to the class teacher.
- Issues raised should impact a large variety/number of children
- Members are encouraged to raise positive ideas for the future in the meetings
- Items raised should be factual and not unconfirmed rumours
- Don't forget if we are doing something well - please let us know!

