



Howe Dell School

Communication Guidelines for Parents and Staff

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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 guidance is to promote clear and open communication by:

- Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers
- Setting clear standards 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 Executive Headteacher

The Executive Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- Regularly reviewing this guidance

2.2 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this guidance
- 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 not respond to communications outside of school hours, or their working hours (if they work part-time), or during school holidays.

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
- Respond to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school sent on email via Arbor or in their child/ren's bag

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 Weekly Newsletter

We use the newsletter (longer newsletter every other week and in the final week of term) to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events
- Health and Safety updates such as parking, building work and infections
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days or a change in Bank Holidays)
- School surveys or consultations

3.2 School calendar

Our school website www.howedell.herts.sch.uk includes a full school calendar and term dates are uploaded here:

<https://www.howedell.herts.sch.uk/dates-for-diaries/>

<https://www.howedell.herts.sch.uk/term-dates/>

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).

3.3 Phone calls

Teachers are available to speak to you (outside of teaching time) during the school day at a mutually agreed time.

3.5 Letters

Hard copies are available on request from the school office. Letters cover these areas:

- Letters sent via Arbor
- Class activities or teacher requests
- Consent forms (signed once when your child starts the school)

3.6 Homework books/school planners/reading records

Children will have a reading record to record reading in. This will also contain their login details for google classroom where home learning and spellings will be set. Further information will be communicated via the curriculum flyer and meet the teacher sessions.

3.7 Reports

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

- A report covering your child's attainment in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, attitudes towards learning and their attendance
- A report on the results of public examinations – uploaded onto the website here <https://www.howedell.herts.sch.uk/ofsted-reports-and-performance/>

We also arrange Parent/Teacher consultations meetings where parents can speak to their child's teacher(s) about their achievement and progress.

3.8 Meetings

We hold 2 parent/teacher consultations per year and appointments can be booked by parents using Arbor. They are held in the main school hall for parents of children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1, 2 and 3. For Years 4,5 and 6 the multi- purpose hall is used.

During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum, their child's wellbeing, or any other area of concern.

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.

There will coffee mornings for individual year groups, meet the teacher sessions and new to reception / Year 6 meetings throughout the year. These will be shared in the dates for diaries and through newsletters.

3.9 School website

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

- School times and term dates
- Important events and announcements
- Letters and Newsletters
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

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

4.1 Email

Parents should always email the school office about non-urgent issues in the first instance to admin@howedell.herts.sch.uk

Please make sure your subject is always FAO followed by the class e.g. FAO 1.1 and your child's name to ensure your email is viewed by your child's class teacher.

Please consider whether a reply is required and make sure you state this within the email

Staff will not access emails when offsite therefore emails will be checked 8.30am - 4.00pm Monday to Friday. Please be mindful that teachers are teaching your children during the day.

Staff will respond to emails within 5 working days.

If a query or concern is urgent, and you need a response sooner than this, please call the school.

Each year group also have an email for parents to contact regarding any questions that are curriculum related. 2025-2026 year group class emails addresses are as follows:

Year Group:	Email address:
Nursery	nursery@howedell.herts.sch.uk
Reception	reception@howedell.herts.sch.uk
Year 1	year1@howedell.herts.sch.uk
Year 2	year2@howedell.herts.sch.uk
Year 3	year3@howedell.herts.sch.uk
Year 4	year4@howedell.herts.sch.uk
Year 5	year5@howedell.herts.sch.uk
Year 6	year6@howedell.herts.sch.uk

Phase Leaders

Phase leaders are contactable via the school office. If you feel that the matter is not resolved by the teacher in the first instance, then you would contact the Phase Leader.

Early Years Phase Leader (Nursery and Reception) - Miss Wood - Reception Teacher

Years 1 to 2 Phase Leader - Miss Christmas - Senior Assistant Head and Year 2 Teacher

Years 3 to 4 Phase Leader - Mrs Ritchie - Deputy Head and Teacher

Years 5 to 6 Phase Leader - Mrs Micklewright – Assistant Head and Teacher

If all avenues have been explored and are unsuccessful, then Miss Prickett will meet with you. Miss Prickett is a solutions focussed person and the vast majority of concerns or worries would have been resolved following the conversations with the class teacher or phase leader.

4.2 Phone calls

If you need to speak to a specific member of staff about a non-urgent matter, please email the school office and the relevant member of staff will contact you within 3 working days.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will get in touch with you to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure you have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within 3 days of your request.

If your issue is urgent, please call the school office. Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues
- To notify us that another adult is picking your child up (please phone the school office on the day of change of pick up).

For more general enquiries, please call the school office.

If you are not regularly in school parents can telephone to ask questions or raise concerns as appropriate.

If your child is absent:

Telephone the office and leave a message on the school absence line by phoning 01707 263291 Option 1. Please confirm your child's name and class and the reason they will not be in school. **Do not send an email.**

If your child is sick/vomits or has an upset stomach or diarrhoea your child will need to be absent for 48 hours from their last bout of illness. This is Herts County Council and National Health advice.

If you are going to be late to collect your child or someone else is collecting them

Telephone the office where staff can inform the class teacher if you are going to be late or if someone else will be collecting your child. We will also require a password so that someone different can collect them. If you are put through to the answering machine, please keep calling as your message may not get picked up.

School finishes at 3.15pm.

4.3 Meetings/In person

If you would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, please email the school office, or call the school to book an appointment.

We try to schedule all meetings within 3 working days of the request.

While teachers are available at the beginning or end of the school day if you need to speak to them urgently, we recommend you book appointments to discuss:

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

5. Inclusion

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

Please let the school know if you have any concerns over receiving or understanding communications.

6. Monitoring and review

The Executive Headteacher monitors the implementation of this guidance and will review the guidance every 2 years.

7. Links with other policies

The guidance should be read alongside our policies:

- Complaints policy which is a Hertfordshire County Council policy and will be updated in line with their guidance.

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 or call the school office
- Put the subject and the name of the relevant member of staff (from the list below) in the subject line (for emails) with your child's name and class.
- We will forward your request on to the relevant member of staff

We try to respond to all emails within 5 days. Office hours are 8:30am to 4pm.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's class teacher in person or via the school office
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your child's class teacher in person or via the school Office
Payments including booking school lunches	Miss Brinkley in the school office
School Trips	Mrs Connery in the school office.
Uniform/lost and found	There is a tub in the reception area for parents to look through lost items. Please ensure all of your child's items are named.
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, please call 01707 263291 and use option 1. Leave a clear message with your child's name, class and why they are unable to come into school.
If you want to request term-time absence.	Forms are available from the school office. All requests will be reviewed in line with the school's Attendance Policy.
Bullying and behaviour	Your child's class teacher in the first instance and then your child's Phase Leader.
Special educational needs	Our INCO (Mrs Wall) via the school office
Before and after-school clubs	Mrs Connery or Mrs Worsley via the school office
Hiring the school premises	Mrs Allgood or Mrs Hill via the school office
Financial Hardship	Mrs Wall
The PSA	Please email psa@howedell.herts.sch.uk Or contact via their Facebook page
The Governing Board - The Chair of Governors (Mrs Katie Fox)	Email the school office and this will be passed on to Mrs Fox

Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy:

<https://www.howedell.herts.sch.uk/policies/>

Select the Complaints Policy and Procedure