



Howe Dell School and Day Care

Communication Guidelines for Parents and Staff

Reviewed Summer 2026

Next Review Summer 2028

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1. Introduction and aims

We believe that clear, open communication between Howe Dell and parents/carers have a positive impact on pupils' learning because it:

- Gives parents/carers the information they need to support their child's education
- Helps the school and day care improve, through feedback and consultation with parents/carers
- Builds trust between home and school/day care which helps the school and day care better support each child to thrive

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

- Explaining how the school and day care communicates with parents/carers (Day care also has separate policies from the school)
- Setting clear standards for responding to communication from parents/carers
- Helping parents/carers reach the member of school staff or day care who is best placed to address their specific query or concern so they can get a response as quickly as possible

At Howe Dell all staff will treat everyone with respect, politeness, and courtesy. They should respond promptly to reasonable requests or concerns from parents.

Likewise, parents, carers and visitors are expected to communicate respectfully with and about staff across all channels—face-to-face, phone, email, letter, or social media.

In the following sections, we will use 'parents' to refer to both parents and carers

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Executive Headteacher and Day Care Manager

The Executive Headteacher is responsible for:

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

The Day Care Manager is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- Regularly reviewing this guidance in partnership with the Executive Headteacher

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 out of term time. Day Care is open for 50 weeks per year.

School

Communication from our staff is professional, respectful, timely and in the best interests of our children. We recognise the importance of keeping you informed about your child's experience at school and their progress. We have timely information sent out to all parents. This will include:

- annual report
- parent-teacher consultations
- a range of parent information sessions
- regular updates via the school website
- regular communications through Arbor
- a range of letters
- weekly newsletters

Day Care

- reports
- parent-teacher consultations
- a range of parent information sessions
- regular updates via the day care website school and
- regular communications through Parenta, Tapestry
- monthly newsletters

2.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school and day care is always respectful
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance
- Respond to communications from the school and day care (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school and day care are sent on email, via Arbor or in their child/ren's bag/ on Google Classroom

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 and day care.

- 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 school newsletters to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events
- Health and Safety updates
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days or a change in Bank Holidays)
- Curriculum activities

- Celebrating achievements
- Curriculum enrichment
- PSA updates

3.2 School calendar

Our school website www.howedell.herts.sch.uk includes term dates and 'Dates for Diaries'

Where possible, we try to give parents at least two 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). Please look at the Dates for Diaries for this information.

Day Care website is www.howedelldaycare.co.uk and includes 'Dates for Diaries'.

3.3 Phone calls

Teachers are available to speak to you (outside of teaching time) during the school day at a mutually agreed time. Please phone 01707 263291 ext 0.

Please telephone the day care office on 01707 263291 ext. 6.

3.5 Letters

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

- Letters sent via Arbor (school)
- Class activities or teacher requests
- Consent forms (signed once when your child starts the school/day care)
- Letters sent via Parenta and Tapestry (day care)

3.6 School's Reading records

Children will have a reading record. This is where children and parents log reading at home. 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 termly curriculum flyer and the in-person meet the teacher sessions held in September.

3.7 School Reports

Parents receive a report from the school about their child's learning in the Summer Term, 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/>

School and day care, also arrange Parent/Teacher consultations meetings where parents can speak to their child's teacher(s)/Key worker about their outcomes.

3.8 Meetings

We hold two 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.

For day care, appointments can be made with their child's Key Worker; these are held in the day care rooms.

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

The school and day care 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 (SEND) may also be asked to attend additional meetings as part of 'access, plan, do, review' cycle

The school holds 'New to Reception' (July), 'meet the teacher' sessions, half termly SEND coffee mornings and coffee mornings with leaders for specific year groups. These are held 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
- Newsletters
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information
- Wrap around provision including Breakfast Club, After School Club and Playscheme
- Statutory documents

Parents are requested to check the website before contacting the school.

Day Care website

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- Newsletters
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- Important contact information
- Statutory documents

Parents are requested to check the website before contacting the day care

3.10 Early Years Communication for Early Years (Day Care, Nursery and Reception)

We recognise that effective communication between home and our Early Years settings is essential in supporting children's learning, development and wellbeing. As children in Day Care, Nursery and Reception are at an important stage of development, we aim to maintain regular and meaningful communication with parents and carers.

In addition to the communication methods outlined in this policy, parents of children in Day Care, Nursery and Reception can expect:

- Daily opportunities to speak briefly with staff at drop-off and collection times, where appropriate
- Regular updates about learning, development and experiences through our chosen online learning platforms
- Information about learning themes, curriculum coverage and ways to support learning at home
- Sharing of observations, achievements and milestones throughout the year
- Information regarding routines, personal care, health and wellbeing, where relevant
- Stay-and-play sessions, workshops, curriculum information sessions and transition meetings throughout the year
- Additional meetings with staff where there are concerns about a child's progress, development, wellbeing or readiness for transition

Parents are encouraged to share information about their child's interests, achievements and significant experiences outside of school and day care, as this helps staff plan learning experiences that build on each child's individual needs and interests.

The Early Years team works closely with parents to ensure a smooth transition from Day Care to Nursery and Reception and, where appropriate, from Nursery into Reception and from Reception into Year 1.

Where children attend both the school and day care provision, relevant information may be shared between staff to support continuity of care, learning and development, in accordance with the school's data protection and safeguarding policies.

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/day care office about urgent issues in the first instance to admin@howedell.herts.sch.uk or daycare@howedell.herts.sch.uk

Emails will be acknowledged and forwarded to the most appropriate member of staff where necessary. Parents should include their child's full name, class and a clear description of their query or concern to help us respond efficiently.

We aim to acknowledge emails within 2 school working days and provide a full response within 5 school working days where possible. Where a more detailed investigation is required, parents will be informed of the anticipated timescale for a response.

Staff are not expected to respond to emails outside of their working hours, at weekends or during school holidays. Emails sent during these times will be dealt with as soon as reasonably practicable during the next working day or term.

School parents should not use email to report pupil absences. Absences should be reported via the school's designated absence reporting procedure.

Where concerns are complex or are unlikely to be resolved through email correspondence, parents may be invited to attend a telephone call or meeting with the appropriate member of staff.

Any school emails sent directly to staff, as opposed to the school admin email address, may not be responded to.

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.

School 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 and may not respond. If the matter is urgent, please call the school office.

Staff will respond to emails within five working days.

Day care will not access emails when offsite therefore emails will be checked 8.00am - 6.00pm Monday to Friday. Please be mindful that staff are teaching your children during the day and may not respond. If the matter is urgent, please call the day care office.

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

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

Year Group:	Teacher:	Email address:
Day Care	Alison Reck Melissa Esty	daycare@howedell.herts.sch.uk
Nursery	Mrs Gula	nursery@howedell.herts.sch.uk
Reception	Mrs Parker (R.1) Mrs Saldin (R.2)	reception@howedell.herts.sch.uk
Year 1	Miss Burt (1.1) Miss Keenan (1.2)	year1@howedell.herts.sch.uk
Year 2	Miss Bigginton (2.1) Mrs Probert (2.2)	year2@howedell.herts.sch.uk
Year 3	Miss Redwood (3.1) Miss Palmer (3.2) Mrs Cattermole (3.2)	year3@howedell.herts.sch.uk
Year 4	Mrs Mehmet (4.1) Mrs Kiely (4.1) Miss Lass (4.2)	year4@howedell.herts.sch.uk
Year 5	Mrs Adekanye (5.1) Miss Lock (5.2)	year5@howedell.herts.sch.uk
Year 6	Miss Davis (6.1) Mrs Joo (6.2) Mrs Ellis (6.2)	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.

Day Care Leaders – Alison Reck - Manager- Melissa Esty- Deputy Manager

Early Years Phase Leader (Nursery and Reception) – Mrs Parker- Reception Teacher

Phase 2 Leader (Years 1 to 3) - Miss Christmas - Senior Assistant Head

Phase 3 Leader (Years 4-6) - Mrs Ritchie - Deputy Head

If the matter is SEND related then please contact Mrs Bridges – Assistant Head for Inclusion, Pastoral Care and well-being.

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

Day Care

All correspondence must be through daycare@howedell.herts.sch.uk or 01707 263291 ext. 6

4.2 Phone calls to main school

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 three 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 three 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- do not email).

For more general enquiries, please call the school office or day care.

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

If your child is absent from school:

Telephone the office or 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 a Herts County Council and National Health requirement.

For children attending school, 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/staff 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.

Day care closes at 6pm

4.3 Meetings / In person with school staff

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. You will be contacted within three working days to arrange a mutually convenient time.

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 or behaviour
- 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 and day care. Please let the school or day care know if you have any concerns over receiving or understanding communications.

6. Use of artificial intelligence to communicate

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools can be helpful in supporting individuals to clarify, structure or articulate their communication. When used appropriately, such tools may assist everyone to express and respond to queries, concerns, or complaints clearly and constructively.

Staff may make appropriate professional use of AI tools to support the drafting and formulation of responses and for assistance with structure, clarity, and tone. No personal data or sensitive information will be entered, and AI use will be restricted to Microsoft-approved systems (Co-pilot) operating within the school's site secure Microsoft environment, in line with data protection requirements and school and day care's policy. All final communications remain the responsibility of the staff member sending them.

However, AI tools can also be misused to generate excessive, repetitive, or disproportionate correspondence, including large volumes of information, obscure legal references or arguments that may be irrelevant, inaccurate, or inappropriate to the matter being raised. This can place unreasonable demands on staff time and hinder our ability to operate effectively in the best interests of children.

At Howe Dell we reserve the right to treat communication that is generated using automated or AI tools, and which we perceive as aggressive, incoherent, misleading, repetitive, or irrelevant, as unreasonable or vexatious communication, as defined below. In such circumstances, the school and day care may apply communication restrictions in line with this policy, including limiting or refusing further engagement

7. Monitoring and review

The Executive Headteacher monitors the implementation of this guidance and will review the guidance annually.

8. 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.
- Behaviour Policy

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 five days. Office hours are 8:30am to 3.30pm.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
Anything to do with Day Care 8am-6pm	Alison Reck or Melissa Esty Day care office
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/home learning	Your child's class teacher in person or via the year group email

My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your child's class teacher in person or via the year group email
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 notifications	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.
Application for Leave of Absence from School during term time	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 and disability (SEND)	Our Inclusion Leader (Mrs Bridges) via the school office
Before and after-school clubs	Mrs Connery or Mrs Worsley via the school office
Hiring the school premises	Mrs Hill via the school office
Financial Adversity	Mrs Field
The PSA	Please email psa@howedell.herts.sch.uk Or contact via their Facebook page
The Governing Board - The Chair of Governors (Mrs Nicola Winch)	For the email for chair of governors, please contact the school office and they will be able to confirm it for you.

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/>

<https://www.howedelldaycare.co.uk/policies/>

Select the Complaints Policy and Procedure