



BRIDGEWATER

HIGH SCHOOL

LEARNING WITH PRIDE AND JOY

POLICY

HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION POLICY

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1. Introduction and aims

At Bridgewater High School, 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 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 will use 'parents' to refer to both parents and carers.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy
- Regularly reviewing this policy

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2.2 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's ICT and internet 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 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.

2.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times
- Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Be aware of the timeframes outlined in this document
- Checking all communications from the school

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with our parent code of conduct (see Appendix 2).

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

3. How we communicate 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.

3.1 Email

We use email to keep parents informed about a wide range of matters including, for example, the following:

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests
- Safeguarding issues for parents to be aware of (e.g. current TikTok trends)

To reduce the amount of emails being received by parents each week, the vast majority of these messages will take the form of a fortnightly newsletter for each year group (presented as a Sway

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document). These newsletters will feature both year-group specific messages along with important whole school ones. Obviously where a more urgent message needs to go out to parents this will be emailed separate to the newsletter.

3.2 School calendar

Our school website includes a [full school calendar](#) for the term. 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). Any such event will be included in the school calendar wherever possible.

3.3 Phone calls

We encourage staff to call parents to discuss pupils' performance, both positive and negative. This helps to keep parents informed about their child's progress and any areas that may need attention.

3.4 Homework

Alongside the setting of homework, Satchel One also provides notices for pupils, most often regarding extra-curricular activities. These notices are primarily directed at pupils however, and parents will be notified where necessary using another medium (e.g. our year group specific fortnightly newsletter for parents).

3.5 Reports

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

- Termly progress reports covering their progress and effort in each part of the curriculum, including an assessment percentage, and their attendance
- A report on the results of public examinations

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

3.6 Meetings

We hold one parents' evening per year for each year group. During these online 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. 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.

Additionally, Y7 parents are provided with a "Pastoral Evening" early on in the year in which they can meet with their child's form tutor and discuss how well their child has settled in to life at Bridgewater High.

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3.7 School website

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

Parents should always check the website wherever relevant before contacting the school.

3.7 Arbor

Our Arbor app for parents, whilst not being used for communication per se, allows parents to keep track of both attendance and lesson scores information for their child.

3.8 Rewards

Parents may receive communication at the end of each half-term to inform them that their child has received a praise certificate from a member of our teaching staff. This is in the form of electronic certificate and is part of an ongoing half-termly process. Even though the email will be sent by a member of our office staff, the teacher who generated the nomination will be clearly stated and any responses from parents will be forwarded to the correct teacher.

3.9 Social Media

Bridgewater also provides communication, mostly in the form of celebration of key successes, via a variety of social media platforms, each subsequently featuring a variety of subject specific areas and including:

- * Instagram
- * Facebook
- * Twitter/X

Parents should be aware that these sites are not a two-way communication, they are to share celebrations and information with parents, and as such parental comments on social media sites will not be responded to.

4. How parents can communicate with the school

Expectations in responses to parental communications

Whilst we will endeavour to reply to communications quickly, most teachers have full teaching timetables all day and some are part time.

Whilst we believe people should still feel able to send emails when their working patterns suit them, we do not expect staff to read or respond to emails at weekends or after 3.20pm.

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Parents should 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 (directly to the appropriate member of staff if possible) about non-urgent issues in the first instance. We aim to acknowledge all emails within 3 school days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 5 school days. 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. If parents have not received a response within five school days, then an email should be sent to reply@bridgewaterhigh.com to make the school aware and so that this can be pursued on behalf of the parent involved.

Our staff emails always follow the format **first initial.surname@bridgewaterhigh.com**, however if a parent/carer does not know the email address of the member of staff, they should email enquires@bridgewaterhigh.com with F.A.O. (insert staff name) as the subject.

If a query or concern is urgent, and parents need a response sooner than this, they should call the school office or email safeguarding@bridgewaterhigh.com if the concern is of a safeguarding nature.

4.2 Phone calls

If parents need to speak to a specific member of staff about a non-urgent matter, they should email the relevant member of staff (or school office), as outlined above. On occasion, a member of staff may choose to reply to the query via phone call instead where this is deemed to be more appropriate.

If the parental issue is urgent, parents should call the school office with a request to speak to the relevant member of staff. Urgent issues might include family emergencies or safeguarding/welfare issues.

Parents should also feel free to phone the school office with a query that they believe can be answered by our office staff.

Please see appendix 1 for further examples of the above.

4.2 Meetings

All face to face meetings must be made by prior arrangement. Parents should not expect to be able to meet with a member of staff unless they have an appointment.

5. Accessibility

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

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Parents with additional communication needs

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

- All communications are written as clearly and concisely as possible
- Accessibility is considered when designing/updating the school website, such as using text colours that show up clearly against the background colour
- 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
- Sign language interpreters for meetings

Please contact the school office to discuss these.

6. Monitoring and review

The Principal monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every 2 years. The policy will be approved by the governing body.

7. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside the following policies:

- Online safety
- Complaints

8. Appendix 1: School contact list

Who should I contact?

See the table below for a range of examples regarding who and how to contact for a particular issue (including hyperlinks for you to click on wherever possible). Where a particular query is not listed below, parents should attempt to find the closest example in nature. See above for how to work out a teacher's email address. Heads of Subject/Faculty/Year are here on our website.

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

We try to respond to all emails within 3 school days.

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GENERAL NATURE OF CONCERN/QUERY	SPECIFIC EXAMPLES	WHO TO CONTACT	HOW TO CONTACT US
A subject related matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Your child's progress within one subject * Clarification re. an unclear homework 	The subject teacher	Email
Concerns regarding a subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Concerns regarding the quality of teaching in a subject * Queries about setting in a subject 	The Head of Department/Head of Faculty	Email
Non-urgent concerns across a range of subjects or about school-life in general	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Your child's progress in a range of subjects * Your child's general welfare at the school * Friendship issues for your child 	Your child's Head of Year/Assistant Head of Year/Pastoral Support	Email
Information needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Information needed about a school event * Help needed with school systems, e.g. payment 	School office	Email (to enquiries) or phone call
An urgent safeguarding matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * A major concern which affects your child's immediate welfare 	Safeguarding leads	Phone call to office (to be re-directed)
SEND queries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Information or queries you wish to pass on regarding your child's SEND needs 	SENDCO	Email
Enrichment queries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Further information about an activity which takes place outside of the school day (e.g. an after-school club) 	Enrichment coordinator	Email
Exams queries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * A query about the logistics of our exam process for formal exams in Y10/Y11. 	Exams officer	Email
IT queries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Help with access to Office 365 * Assistance needed with Satchel One 	IT Support Team	Email

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Finance queries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Issues paying for an item/service online * Assistance needed with payments for your child's lunch money 	Finance Team	Email
Attendance/absence queries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Applying for absence for your child * Queries about your child's attendance 	Attendance Officer	Email Click here for absence requests
Complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Raising an informal complaint about a subject * Raising an informal complaint about a pastoral issue * Raising a formal complaint having tried the above 	<p>The Head of Department/Head of Faculty</p> <p>The Head of Year</p> <p>School Office</p>	Email Our complaints form can be found in the policy page here .
Careers queries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Further information about our careers programme 	CEIAG & Alumni Officer	Email

What if I just have a suggestion for school improvement?

This can be sent to our parental Suggestion Box which can be found [here](#).

9. Appendix 2: Parent Code of Conduct

Introduction

At Bridgewater High School, we believe that a positive and respectful relationship between parents and the school is essential for the success and well-being of our students. This Code of Conduct outlines the expectations for parents in their interactions with the school, staff, and other members of the school community.

Respectful Communication

- **Respectful Interactions:** Parents are expected to communicate with school staff, other parents, and students in a respectful and courteous manner at all times. Disrespectful,

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abusive, or threatening communication will not be tolerated and will be addressed in line with our policies. This includes addressing staff with the correct salutation, e.g. "Mr Smith" and not using first names (parents can expect the same courtesy from staff in return).

- **Appropriate Channels:** Parents should make every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance (See Appendix 1). This ensures that queries and concerns are handled efficiently and by the right person.

Timely Responses

- **Responding to School Communications:** Parents are expected to respond to communications from the school, such as requests for meetings, in a timely manner. This helps maintain effective communication and ensures that any issues are addressed promptly.
- **Checking Communications:** Parents should regularly check all communications from the school, including emails and updates on the school website.

Core School Hours

- **Respecting Staff Time:** Parents should not expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours or during school holidays. Staff will aim to respond to communication during their working hours, promoting a healthy work-life balance.

Supporting School Policies

- **Adherence to Policies:** Parents are expected to adhere to the school's policies, including the Online Safety policy. This ensures a consistent approach to supporting students' education and well-being.

Addressing Concerns

- **Raising Concerns:** If parents have concerns about their child's education or well-being, they should follow the appropriate channels to raise these concerns as outlined in Appendix 1.

Accessibility and Inclusion

- **Supporting All Parents:** The school is committed to making communications accessible to all parents, including those with additional communication needs or English as an additional language. Parents can request reasonable adjustments or support to ensure they can effectively communicate with the school.