



THAMESMEAD SCHOOL

Home School Communication Policy

Person responsible	P. Reeves
Governors Committee	Finance, Audit & Risk Committee
Review Period	Every 2 years
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1. Introduction and aims

Our vision for Thamesmead is to be a school that is committed to excellence, nurtures individuals, fulfils potential and respects our community. It is to provide the best possible standard of teaching and learning so that our students have the necessary qualifications and personal and social skills to be successful in whatever path they choose in the future.

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/carers has a positive impact on students' 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 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

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) within 2 working days of receiving an email or telephone message. 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.

Our ICT and internet acceptable use policy, can be found on our website here:

<https://www.thamesmead.surrey.sch.uk/about-us/policies/>

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
- Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school on email and in the MCAS app (for texts and announcements)

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with our Home/School Expectations (<https://www.thamesmead.surrey.sch.uk/students/home-school-expectations/>)

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 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 Email

Email is our primary method of communication. We use email to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Routine correspondence, information and updates
- Student positive and negative behaviour
- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Activities, trips or teacher requests

3.2 Text messages

We will text parents about important or urgent updates e.g. emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather) or overdue payments.

3.3 School calendar

Our school website includes a full school calendar for the year and the school newsletter (Thamesmead Ten, sent weekly) includes the most important dates for the next 3 months ahead.

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 students to bring in special items or materials).

Any such event will be included in the school calendar. A link to the website calendar can be found here: <https://www.thamesmead.surrey.sch.uk/about-us/school-calendar-2/>

3.4 Phone calls

Verbal communication is essential for building strong relationships between the school and parents. We encourage staff to regularly communicate with parents regarding students' performance, whether to highlight positive achievements, address areas for improvement, or discuss behaviour. These conversations are particularly important when dealing with high-level behaviour incidents and sanctions, such as suspensions.

While phone calls are an excellent way to engage directly, we understand that staff commitments may sometimes limit their availability. In such cases, email and text remain the main methods of communication to ensure timely and effective engagement.

3.5 Letters

We do not usually send letters home by post. If parents do not have access to email, we can make arrangement for letters to be posted, including copies of reports where parents are living at separate addresses, and one parent does not have email. Parents are required to notify the school if they need this facility.

3.6 Homework books/school planners

Students are issued with planners where they can note home learning, carry a copy of their timetable and parents can write notes to staff in these too. However, all home learning is indicated in the student's Bromcom app and parents have access to the information in MCAS.

3.7 Reports

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

- An end-of-year report covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, and their attendance
- Termly progress and assessment reports
- A report on the results of public examinations
- Information about vocational qualifications gained (or credits gained towards these)

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

3.8 Meetings

We hold an annual Parent Progress Meeting for each year group (two for Year 11). During these meetings, parents can talk in person 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, behaviour, or wellbeing.

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

3.9 School website

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

- School times and term dates
- Important events and announcements
- Curriculum information
- School policies and procedures
- School contact information
- Information about extracurricular provision

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

3.10 Home-school communications app

Thamesmead School uses the Bromcom app - My Child At School (MCAS). Parents are given log in codes for this when their child joins and they can use this app to see:

- Student timetables
- Attendance
- Home Learning
- Behaviour and achievement points (and any detention details)
- Announcements
- School reports
- Book Progress Review meeting appointments
- Academic Calendar
- Give consent (relating to GDPR)
- Clubs & Trips

4. How parents and carers 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, including the school office number and email address.

4.1 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 two working days and aim to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within five working days.

If a query or concern is urgent, and parents need a response sooner than this, they should call the school.

Parents should note that staff receive a high volume of emails daily and where they

4.2 Phone calls

If parents need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should email the school office, and the relevant member of staff will contact them within two working days.

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 two working days of your request.

If the issue is urgent, parents should call the school office.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Attendance
- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

For more general enquiries, please call the school office.

4.3 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 the school to book an appointment.

We aim to schedule all meetings within five working days of the request.

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

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

5. Accessibility

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

5.1 Parents with additional communication needs or English as an Additional Language (EAL)

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

- All whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) can be made available in alternative formats where requested or in a family's first language through Bromcom / MCAS.
- All communications are written as clearly and concisely as possible
- Accessibility is considered when designing/updating the school website, e.g. 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 interpreters for meetings or phone calls

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

6. Monitoring and review

The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every two years.

The policy will be approved by the governing board.

7. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- ICT and internet acceptable use
- Home School Expectations
- Complaints Policy

Appendix 1: school contact list

Who should I contact?

Option 1:

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 on info@thamesmead.surrey.sch.uk or 01932 219400
- Put the subject and the name of the relevant member of staff (from the list below) in the subject line (for emails)
- We will forward your request on to the relevant member of staff

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

We try to respond to all emails within two working days

Option 2:

If you have questions about any of the topics in the table below, or would like to speak to a member of staff:

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

We try to respond to all emails within two working days.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's tutor or subject teacher https://www.thamesmead.surrey.sch.uk/about-us/staff/
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Their Head of Year/Pastoral Manager https://www.thamesmead.surrey.sch.uk/parents/year-groups/
Payments	finance@thamesmead.surrey.sch.uk
School trips	info@thamesmead.surrey.sch.uk
Uniform/lost and found	info@thamesmead.surrey.sch.uk
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, call or email: 01932 219400 attendance@thamesmead.surrey.sch.uk

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
	If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact attendance@thamesmead.surrey.sch.uk or complete and return the Request for Absence Form
Bullying and behaviour	Their Head of Year/Pastoral Manager/Tutor https://www.thamesmead.surrey.sch.uk/parents/year-groups/
School events/the school calendar	info@thamesmead.surrey.sch.uk https://www.thamesmead.surrey.sch.uk/about-us/term-dates/ https://www.thamesmead.surrey.sch.uk/about-us/school-calendar-2/
Special educational needs (SEN)	senco@thamesmead.surrey.sch.uk
After-school clubs	https://www.thamesmead.surrey.sch.uk/parents/tasc/
PTA	thamesmeadpta@hotmail.co.uk
Governing board	Governor Support Officer l.kennard@thamesmead.surrey.sch.uk

Complaints

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

<https://www.thamesmead.surrey.sch.uk/about-us/policies/>

