



## Home - School Communication Policy

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<b>Status</b>	<b>Current Policy</b>
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<b>Published</b>	<b>September 2023</b>
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<b>Reviewed</b>	<b>February 2024</b>
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<b>Review Cycle</b>	<b>3 years</b>
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<b>Next Review</b>	<b>February 2027</b>
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Approved by: Jane Hatwell Date: Last reviewed on: 09/11/23

## Mission Statement

We accept all students **as they are** and believe that every one of them is **entitled** to the very **best education**, delivered in an **environment** that is **supportive, caring** and **safe**.

Our goal is to develop our students to become:

- **Successful** Learners.
- As **independent** as possible.
- **Confident** individuals and self-advocates.
- **Effective** communicators and **contributors**.
- **Responsible** citizens.

We will do this by working to **ensure we get every aspect of their provision just right**, helping them to achieve academically, personally, socially and morally.

## Rights Respecting Schools

The Unicef UK Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) is based on principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation. The RRSA seeks to put the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child at the heart of a school's ethos and culture to improve well-being and develop every child's talents and abilities to their full potential. A Rights Respecting School is a community where children's rights are learned, taught, practiced, respected, protected and promoted.

Stone Bay has achieved the Silver Award and is recognised as a Rights Committed School.

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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 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
- Helps to manage teacher workload, enabling them to fully focus on the varying needs of all pupils in their class groups

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 8.45am – 3.45pm 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.

Acceptable use of Technology policy can be viewed on the school website

### 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

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

Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school/Residential hours or during weekends and school holidays.

Parent code of conduct can be viewed on the school website.

## **2.4 IT Manager**

The IT manager is responsible for

- Ensuring school online communication systems are managed and maintained
- Implementing Acceptable use of Technology policy

## **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.

Our expectation is that Class Teachers/Residential Team Leaders will post on Class Dojo, Class story a minimum of twice a week, photos and an explanation of what activities pupils have taken part in.

We also expect Class Teachers/Team Leaders to communicate directly with families a minimum of once a week, either via email, phone call or directly messaging on Class dojo, to give an update on pupil learning and progress. The mode of communication will be agreed by Class Teacher/Team Leader and Parent/Carer.

In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary for teachers to give extra information to parents, for example; pupils' new medication records / health diaries, for an agreed period of time.

In this case a letter from the child's doctor or health professional, explaining the reason for the communication and what is expected to be recorded, should be shared by the parent, with the class teacher.

### **3.1 Evidence Me**

#### **From April 2024 we will commence a phased introduction of Parent Share on Evidence Me.**

Evidence Me (Parent Share) is used to share observations and comments on pupil progress, with parents, in all of our curriculum areas.

We expect teachers/team leaders to share a minimum of 3 observations (photos) a week.

Parents are encouraged to share photos on 'Evidence Me', of their child's progress at home, in regards to their Individual Learning Intentions, via Parent Share.

### **3.1 Email**

We also use email to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests

### **3.2 Text messages**

We will text parents about:

- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- Reminder of coffee mornings/school events
- Information regarding policy and procedures

### **3.3 School calendar**

Our school website and parent's newsletter include a school calendar for the school year.

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).

Any such event will be included in the school calendar.

### **3.4 Phone calls**

Telephone calls will be made where immediate contact with a family member is required i.e. for pupil injury or pupil incident. A member of staff will call the first named emergency contact as listed. Where no contact is made, a call will then be made to the second/third named contact. In the event that no live contact can be made, the member of staff will either leave an answer phone message (ascending order as before) or ensure that repeat calls continue to be made to the contact numbers, where possible.

### **3.5 Letters**

We may send the following letters home:

- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms

### **3.7 Reports**

Parents will receive an End of Year report from the school about their child's learning, including an overview

of the year and how well they are progressing in curriculum areas. The report will also document progress in Communication, Interaction and Engagement development, Outdoor Learning, ASDAN, Work Experience, Arts Awards, Business Enterprise (Secondary)

- Termly Learning Intentions progress reviews

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 3 parents' consultations per year. These meetings may be 1:1 with the class teacher or school presentations, where parent's will get the opportunity to meet with members of SLT and Class Teachers to talk over the school curriculum and their child's progress. 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.

All pupils will have an EHCP annual review, where progress towards outcomes is discussed.

### **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
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

### **3.10 Home-school communications app**

Our school uses Class Dojo to communicate with parents, regarding pupil participation in activities, in the classroom and Residential flats or whole school.

Families are asked to sign up to Class Dojo, to receive this information.

Our school office communicates with parents using the text messaging service 'Parentmail'

## **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 office, or the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within 5 working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 10 working days.

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

## 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 5 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 5 days of your request.

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

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues
- Health emergencies

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 try to schedule all meetings within 5 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

## 4.4 Home-school communications app

We use Class Dojo across the school to inform parents/carers of their child's learning, engagement, well-being and personal needs whilst in school.

Class Dojo will also inform parents of whole school events and parent workshops through the class and school stories.

There is a direct messaging facility on Class Dojo, teachers/team leaders use this to communicate with individual parents on a daily basis (if required). This is not instant communication, rather this is one daily update message that will be sent at the end of each school day or during the evening. Teachers/team leaders are not able to respond to messages instantly as they are busy with the children.

Please telephone or email the school office for all pupil absence, medical appointments and medication changes. Dojo is purely for pupil progress and learning updates.

Please see our Dojo terms of use agreement form that you signed on admission to the school. A summary of the agreement is as follows:

Parents/Carers must agree to the following in order to be invited to join Stone Bay School's ClassDojo account.

- I agree with the school posting positive comments about my child on ClassDojo, which could be viewed by other members.
- I am aware that all images posted on ClassDojo remain the property of Stone Bay School and

should not be reproduced. I agree not to copy or reproduce images, e.g. as screenshots, or post them on social media.

- I agree that any messages or information I send to the school will be positive, respectful and in keeping with the positive spirit of ClassDojo and the school.
- I agree not to post unauthorised commercial communications (such as spam or advertisements) on or through the app.
- I agree not to post negative messages or raise concerns on the ClassDojo site. Should I have any complaints or concerns related to my child's education or care, I agree to raise the issue using the stages identified in the school's Complaints Procedure and Policy.
- I consent to photographs of my child being posted on the class dojo platform which can be viewed by other parents of students attending Stone Bay School.
- I agree not to use ClassDojo to conduct anything unlawful, deceptive, misleading, illegal, unethical, malicious, or discriminatory.
- I agree not to share my password with anyone other than immediate family members, e.g. spouse.
- If I have any concerns, queries or questions regarding ClassDojo or any content posted on the site, I will raise them with the online safety coordinator or the Headteacher.

When using ClassDojo you will be subject to the Privacy Policy and any posted guidelines, policies or rules applicable to specific features of the ClassDojo Website or ClassDojo App. Details of the policy can be found on <https://www.classdojo.com/en-gb/terms/>

## 5. Inclusion

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

Class DoJo has a facility for parents to translate any information posted into their preferred language. Parents who need help communicating with the school can request the following support:

- Interpreters for meetings or phone calls

We can make 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 3 years.

## 7. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- Acceptable use of technology
- Parent code of conduct
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints Policy & Process
- Staff wellbeing
- Dojo Acceptable Use Agreement

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 on office@stone-bay.kent.sch.uk
- 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 5 working days

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT... WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO	
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's class teacher
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your child's class teacher
Payments	School office
School trips	Your child's class teacher
Uniform/lost and found	School office
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, call: the school office on 01843 863421.
Bullying and behaviour	Lucy Taylor
Safeguarding	Martyn Nash
School events/the school calendar	School office
Before and after-school clubs	Child's class teacher
Hiring the school premises	Finance Office
Governing board	School office/Website
Catering/meals	School office
Parent feedback / fundraising ideas	Parent Governors (Rachel Lucey, Alex Krutnik)

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

complaints policy.[Complaints Policy - School website](#)