

Making a positive difference today to achieve a better tomorrow

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## **PRENTON HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

### **COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

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## CONTENTS

1	Introduction and aims .....	3
2	Roles and responsibilities .....	3
3	How we communicate with parents and carers .....	4
3.1	Arbor .....	4
3.2	Text messages .....	4
3.3	School calendar .....	4
3.4	Phone calls .....	4
3.5	Letters .....	4
3.6	School planners .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.7	Reporting on Progress .....	5
3.8	Meetings .....	5
3.9	School website .....	5
4	How parents and carers can communicate with the school .....	5
4.1	Email .....	5
4.2	Phone calls .....	5
4.3	Meetings .....	6
4.4	Arbor .....	6
5	Inclusion .....	6
6	Monitoring and review .....	6
7	Links with other policies .....	6

Reviewed:	Autumn 2025
Ratified:	Autumn 2025
Next Review:	Autumn 2025

## 1 INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

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

### 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

### 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 of 8am to 4pm Monday-Friday, 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.

### 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

Reviewed:	Autumn 2025
Ratified:	Autumn 2025
Next Review:	Autumn 2025

- Checking all communications from the school

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with our home school agreement.

Staff are not expected or required to respond to communication **w**ith parents outside of core school hours of 8am – 4pm, 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 Arbor**

We use Arbor to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures
- School surveys or consultations

#### **3.2 Text messages**

We will text parents about:

- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures

#### **3.3 School calendar**

Where possible, we try to give parents at least 2 weeks' notice of any events or special occasions (including non-uniform days, school trips and other events).

Any such event will be communicated via Arbor.

#### **3.4 Phone calls**

Teachers/staff want to respond to parental queries at the earliest opportunity and will do their best to do so, however, the majority of teachers' time is taken up teaching and preparing for lessons. Teachers' responsibilities extend beyond the classroom, and they may be unable to respond to you on the day a query is made. We have also agreed with staff that there is no expectation to respond to queries during their personal/family time.

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 endeavor to contact them within 3 working days.

If this is not possible (due to staff working patterns), 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 3 days of your request.

Staff will aim to leave a voicemail where calls are not answered. Parents should check voicemails before contacting school.

If the issue is urgent, parents should call the school office on 0151 644 8113.

#### **3.5 Letters**

We send the following information via Arbor:

- Letters about trips and visits

Reviewed:	Autumn 2025
Ratified:	Autumn 2025
Next Review:	Autumn 2025

- Consent forms

### 3.6 Reporting on Progress

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 reports
- Annual Progress Evenings using School Cloud

### 3.7 Meetings

The school may contact parents to arrange meetings 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 invited to attend further meetings to address these additional needs.

### 3.8 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 check the website before contacting the school.

## 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 3 working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 3 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 3 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 3 days of your request.

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

Urgent issues might include things like:

Reviewed:	Autumn 2025
Ratified:	Autumn 2025
Next Review:	Autumn 2025

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

For more general enquiries, please email or 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, 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 Arbor**

We use Arbor to issue key communications via email and/or text.

Parents should regularly check their Arbor account where they can access:

- School lunch accounts
- Make payment for items/trips
- Communicate an absence
- Complete online consents as appropriate

### **5 INCLUSION**

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

We currently make whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) available in English.

Parents who need help communicating with the school can request the following support:

- School announcements and communications translated into additional languages
- 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 year.

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
- Complaints
- Home-school agreement
- Staff wellbeing

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