

Communication Policy

Adopted by Governors: 23rd February 2023

Reviewed: June 2025

Next review: Summer 2027

Kings Mill School & Residence



LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 2002
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Freedom of Information Act 2000

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Data Protection Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Data and E-Security Breach Prevention and Management Plan
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Adverse Weather Procedures
- Emergency Plan
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Placing key policies, documents and procedures in areas that maximise their accessibility and usefulness to the entire school community.
- Communicating the curriculum clearly to parents.
- Informing parents of all school events within appropriate timelines.
- Regularly keeping parents informed of their child's progress.
- Informing parents about the types of data that the school holds concerning pupils, who controls the data, why that data is held and who it may be shared with. This information will be concise, transparent and easily accessible; written in a clear and plain language; and free of charge.
- Ensuring that parents understand their right to access information about their child that is held by the school.
- Ensuring that parents also understand their rights to rectification, to erasure, to restrict processing, to data portability and to object to processing.
- Ensuring that consent obtained from parents, or pupils, regarding the processing of personal data, is freely given, specific, informed and an unambiguous indication of the individual's wishes. Consent cannot be inferred from silence, pre-ticked boxes or inactivity.
- Ensuring that individuals are informed of their rights to withdraw consent and are provided with easy ways to do so.
- Ensuring that information regarding staff pay and conditions of service is made available to all who are employed at the school.
- Taking steps to ensure parents who do not have access to the internet can still access the information that is included on the school website.

Staff members are responsible for:

- Ensuring the principles and procedures of this policy are followed.
- Communicating proactively with parents about pupil progress and achievements and helping parents to support their child's learning.
- Ensuring that relevant information is passed on to supply staff.
- Ensuring that specific pupil information is updated i.e. Individual risk assessments, one page plans, care plans, behaviour plans etc.

Parents are responsible for:

- Reading the key communications circulated by the school and responding and/or acting on communications, e.g. by attending meetings.
- Engaging with verbal communications, so that they understand the information being communicated to them.
- Viewing the school website for detailed information about the school calendar, term dates, school achievements, policy information and other useful downloads.
- Informing the school of medical conditions or allergies their child has, along with medical documentation relating to these conditions and that these are updated promptly as required.
- Informing the school of child protection matters, legal issues or relevant duties with appropriate documentation.
- Informing the school of pupil absence, on the first day and changes to pick up arrangements.
- Raising any issues or concerns they may have with the class teacher.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

A calendar of events is maintained on SharePoint – Kings Mill Communicate. A staff briefing is held with at least one team member every Monday morning. Written communications to staff members are delivered via class pouches or by email.

All staff members are aware of the Staff Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Policy, which details a variety of school procedures in relation to communication.

Staff members' personal details will not be shared with other members of staff or external agencies if the reason for sharing does not fall under a lawful basis for processing as outlined in the UK GDPR. Under no circumstance will staff members' personal details be shared with parents.

Staff members will not communicate with parents or pupils via social networking sites, or accept 'friend' requests, except in the case of blogs or social media pages set up specifically for the purpose of teaching and learning.

Parents will be contacted through the following methods:

- Class Dojo
- Arbor in app messaging
- Email
- Text messages
- Phone calls
- Letters in school bag
- The school website
- Parents' meetings

Parents are encouraged to sign up to Arbor, for which a registration link can be obtained from the school office.

For general enquiries, parents are required to ring the school office, which is open from Monday to Friday between 8:00am and 4:00pm, on 01377 253375. The phone will connect to voice mail, when out of hours.

For non-urgent enquiries, parents are required to email the school using kingsmill.specialschool@eastriding.gov.uk.

The Headteacher can be contacted directly using kingsmill.head.specialschool@eastriding.gov.uk.

All emails to the school will specify the member of staff that the query is addressed to. All emails to the school will be treated as confidential, unless there is a specific reason not to do so.

ON GOING HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Class teachers will inform parents of the termly topic and the work that will be taught in the forthcoming term.

The school updates parents of ways in which they can support pupils' development and progress through activities to be completed at home.

Parents will be encouraged to communicate with class teachers. The school subscribes to DoJo an electronic communication system which is utilised to achieve effective and consistent communication with parents. It provides a regular channel for communication between parents, their child and the class teacher.

The school will ensure that:

- By signing up to DoJo parents are providing their consent and details for the use of the system.
- If any changes are made to the service, or manner in which data is processed on the system, parents are informed and consent is renewed.
- Any parents who cannot be contacted via the messaging system are contacted via another method set out in this policy.

Parents are asked to:

- report something that the teacher may need to be aware of e.g. your child didn't sleep well last night, their pet died, they have not had time to have any breakfast.
- Report absence before 9am
- consider carefully the time that messages are sent. The response may not be immediate but will be by the next working day at the latest.

Class teachers are available to discuss pupils' progress and any concerns with parents, via a phone call before the start and end of each school day, or via their work email.

Transition meetings will be held by key staff for new parents prior to their child's entry to the school. This is supported by a class transition and admissions pack.

If a pupil is absent from school, and the school has no indication of the reason for the absence, the school will contact a parent via telephone or Dojo on the first day of absence,

in order to find out the reason for the absence. If no contact can be made with any named parent, the school has the right to contact the education welfare officer to ensure the pupil's wellbeing and safety.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION

Email and internet access will be used in line with the school's Data and E-Security Breach Prevention and Management Plan and Acceptable Use Agreement. All members of staff will have their own email account.

Emails will not be used as a substitute for face-to-face communication. Staff members will consider the best way to communicate according to each individual situation.

Staff members will not engage in personal correspondence with pupils. Communication between pupils and parents with staff members will be carried out via the school email address, and not via staff members' personal email addresses. School will not share staff personal phone numbers with parents or pupils.

Chain emails will not be allowed. Staff will ensure that the sending of attachments is limited to only work-related emails. Under no circumstances will adverts be embedded into emails.

One or more of the following processes will be implemented to assist with managing the influx of email communications:

Using a centralised email address

- Parents will be provided with one email address to use as a main point of contact for general home-school communication, e.g. informing the school that their child is ill.
- Office staff will track communication sent to this email address and ensure emails are dealt with promptly and consistently.
- Office staff will first seek to deal with the enquiry themselves (e.g. if the email is in relation to dates of upcoming trips, uniform queries, sickness).
- If the message requires more specific support, it will be sent to appropriate member of staff.
- Parents will only use staff email addresses if they need to contact a specific member of staff directly.

Implementing set emails times

- An email window highlighting times staff will respond to emails will be established and communicated to the school community.
- Parents will be made aware that staff are not in a position to check emails consistently throughout the day.
- The school community will be encouraged to only send emails during this window and that if emails are sent outside of this window, they should not expect an immediate response in most cases.
- The school will not expect work emails to be checked during staff members' personal time.

Providing support to staff

- Guidance will be provided to staff regarding email best practice, including in relation to prioritising emails, utilising filters, and carrying out regular inbox housekeeping.
- Staff will be provided with training in the email systems used by the school, so they are able to implement time saving functions such as Rules, Quick Parts, and view by conversation thread.
- Staff members will be advised not to subscribe to any junk type email chains, in order to reduce emails received.

The school will aim to respond to all email enquiries as promptly as possible within five working days. Staff and parents will be made aware that part-time staff may take longer to reply due to the nature of their work schedule.

MEETINGS

A programme of all staff meetings will be set out in a school calendar and shared with staff at the start of every term.

Time will be set aside for structured opportunities for staff to engage in team working and to contribute to the school's reflection on priorities, activities and future plans.

All formal meetings will be minuted and members invited to contribute to the agenda. For all formal meetings, minutes will be taken, action points progressed, and feedback given to staff members. Minutes of meetings will be copied to relevant staff members, as well as the SLT, and a copy will be saved on the server.

Where possible meetings with parents will take place face to face, however where necessary to allow a scheduled meeting to go ahead attendees will be given the opportunity to attend virtually via conferencing software (TEAMS). Parents will be expected to behave respectfully during meetings.

When parents wish to organise meetings with members of staff, they will first contact their child's class teacher (if the query is relevant to a specific subject). Parents will be required to organise meetings with members of staff prior to conducting a meeting. If parents urgently need to have a meeting with a member of staff, they will phone the school office and the office staff will do their best to find a senior member of staff to see parents.

Lessons will not be interrupted to accommodate parents needing to speak to a teacher. For non-urgent meetings between parents and members of staff, the school will aim to meet parents within five working days.

The school will determine the level of urgency in requests for meetings, which will aid in managing multiple demands.

RECORDING MEETINGS

If parents and/or other individuals wish to record a virtual and/or face-to-face meeting, they will discuss their intentions beforehand with the school no less than 24 hours before the meeting commences. The school will decide if recording requests are appropriate, in consideration of the meeting's subject matter and the school's Data Protection Policy. The school will accept all recording requests in exceptional circumstances, e.g. if parents are hard of hearing and/or have a memory-related disability.

For virtual meetings and/or face-to-face meetings to be recorded, consent will need to be obtained from all participants. The final decision to permit any individual and/or parental recording of meetings will reside with the school.

If parents and/or other individuals fail to obtain the school's permission to record before the meeting begins, and insist on recording without permission, the school will be permitted to suspend the meeting.

Any complaints surrounding the school's rejection of a parent's request to record a meeting, or the school's suspension of a meeting due to permission not being granted, will be dealt in line with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

SCHOOL WEBSITE

The school website will be utilised to communicate information regarding the following:

- Clubs and activities
- School hours
- School uniform
- Term dates
- Pupil safety
- The school calendar
- Ofsted reports
- Special achievements
- Newsletters

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION

All parents will ensure that the school has their latest contact details, including their address, telephone number and email address, so that they can be contacted in the event of an emergency.

If a pupil is seriously ill or injured, the school will attempt to contact the pupil's emergency contact(s) via telephone.

Where an incident affects the whole-school community, such as power failure or snow, the school will send all parents an email or text message directing them to a special message posted onto the school's website and app (Jotter)

If the school is closed for more than one day due to adverse weather or similar problem, an update will be posted via the website, Jotter or DoJo at least once a day. The local radio station, Radio Humberside will broadcast a closure announcement in the event of the school closing due to adverse weather or another emergency situation, in accordance with the Adverse Weather Policy.

In the event of a serious incident, the school will follow its Invacuation, Lockdown and Evacuation Policy.

ACCESSING INFORMATION

In accordance with an individual's right of access under the UK GDPR, personal information (such as educational records), confirmation of data processing, and other supplementary information will be shared with individuals who request access.

The procedure below will be followed in terms of SARs:

- The requests will be made in writing to the governing board and will be responded to within one month of receipt.
- The period of compliance may be extended by a further two months where the requests are complex or numerous. If this is the case, individuals will be informed within one month of receipt of the request, with an explanation of why an extension is required.
- A pupil, or the parent of a pupil, will have the right to access the information that the school holds about the child in question.
- Individuals have the right to access their personal data free of charge.
- Where requests are manifestly unfounded or excessive, a reasonable charge for the administrative costs of providing the information will be applied, or the request will be refused.
- If any request is refused, the individual will be informed of their right to complain to the supervisory authority and to a judicial remedy without delay within one month.

Under the UK GDPR, remote access to a secure self-service system will be given to provide individuals with direct access to their personal information.

In line with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, private data and public records can potentially be accessed through lodging a Freedom of Information (FOI) request. The procedure below will be followed in terms of FOI requests:

- The requests will be made in writing to the school, stating the name and address of the requester, as well as a description of the information requested.
- Successful FOI requests will be responded to within 20 working days from receipt of the request, unless the request does not comply with the procedure set out in the school's Freedom of Information Policy.
- The school holds the right to charge the requester a fee, if complying with the request would cost the school an excess of £450.
- Certain information will not be shared, such as that explained in Part 2 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The efficiency of this policy will be continuously monitored throughout the year by the headteacher and governing board. This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the governing body. The next scheduled review date for this policy is Spring 2027.

Record of review/amendment

Review Date:	June 2025	Page No (Other info):	Various
Original:	References to Parent Pay removed		
Amendment:	Replaced with Arbor, following MIS contract change		

