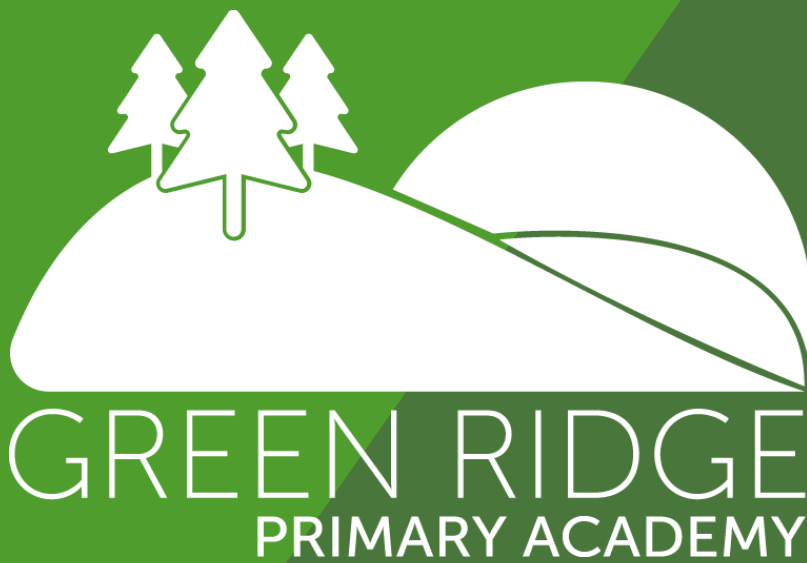


# Communication Policy



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| <b>On behalf of:</b> |                             |

# An Overview of Communication at Green Ridge Primary Academy

## Aim

To ensure that Green Ridge Primary Academy is a thriving and successful educational setting, we must communicate effectively with each other, with our pupils, with their parents and carers, and with other members of the wider community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

## Definition of communication

- Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It is through effective and interactive communication that information is transmitted, understanding is developed and shared, trust is built, confidentiality respected and action coordinated.
- We should also remember the importance of listening.
- Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications and needs to recognise that the quality of their communications reflects on the school's reputation.
- Communication includes not only the message but also how that message is communicated; not only the responsibility for communication but also how effectively that responsibility has been carried out.

## Principles

All communications at Green Ridge Primary Academy should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents/carers, governors and other stakeholders well informed.
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional.
- Use jargon free, plain English and be easily understood by all.
- Be actioned within a reasonable time.
- Use the methods of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience.
- Ensure that staff are fully informed of all relevant school activity to enable them to be as effective as possible in their role.
- Take account of relevant academy policies.
- Be compatible with our academy values.
- Comply with agreed practice for written communications with parents/carers and other external contacts.
- Ensure that consultation issues, plans and changes which may affect the work of the academy are inclusive of all appropriate stakeholder groups.

## Responsibilities

This section details the responsibilities of the different groups within the school.

### Senior Leadership

- To ensure information is made available to staff in a timely manner and via appropriate channels, where practicable face to face.
- To ensure that staff have the relevant information available to communicate with colleagues effectively.

- To maintain open channels of two-way communication and to listen to feedback and comments from all staff.
- To keep governors informed of developments and concerns.

#### All Staff

- To communicate regularly with each other, preferably face to face, to ensure information is available and understood within the context of the classroom and working environment.
- To ensure they are informed and have access to information to be as effective as possible in their role and to support their work within the school.
- To use open channels of two-way communication to keep the leadership team and colleagues informed.

#### Parents/Carers

- Read the key communications issued by the academy, including the weekly newsletter and where a response is required (e.g. school trip letter), reply within the established time-frame.
- Raise issues or concerns at the earliest opportunity with the academy in the appropriate manner.
- Act on the communication (e.g. attending special meetings).
- Communicate with respect and courtesy.

## Communications with parents and carers

It is very important to us that we work closely in partnership with parents and carers, and communication between home and school is key. We recognise however that it can often be difficult communicating with teachers because they have a very full timetable; and we recognise that parents and carers also have very busy lives.

Teachers 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.

Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents and carers, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional. To this end, parents and carers should always be addressed in an appropriate manner, e.g., Mr/Miss/Mrs etc. We will try to make written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of racial discrimination. We wish to recognise and celebrate the contributions to our society by all cultural groups represented in our school.

### Telephone calls (incoming)

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school, where teachers may be teaching full time and running clubs or otherwise working with pupils at lunchtime or after school. Parents/carers may be exasperated if they feel that a message elicits no immediate reply, when in fact there has been no available opportunity for the member of staff to reach a telephone to return a call.

Telephone calls are appropriate to notify us that your child will be absent from school, to communicate brief information about your child that the school needs to know or in an emergency, such as e.g. to let us know that you will be late collecting your child. We ask parents/carers to telephone the school on 01296 326320, or if reporting your child absent from school, you are able to leave a message by selecting option 1 or via email to [absence@greenridgeacademy.co.uk](mailto:absence@greenridgeacademy.co.uk). We ask you to notify the nursery and school offices if your child will be absent by 8.40am at the latest. If a child is absent from school, and we have had no indication of the reason, we will contact a parent/carer (by telephone, if possible) to find out the reason for the absence. If we are unable to get in contact with you and do not hear back, your child's absence will be marked as unauthorised. The school office is open between 8.15am-4.00pm, Monday-Friday during term-time. At all other times, there is an answering service available to take your message.

Any messages which are for school staff are taken by the office team and then passed on to the appropriate member of staff. Office staff will take note of the necessary details of the call. Office staff should not interrupt teaching for staff to answer a telephone call.

Where a parent or carer does call to speak to their child's class teacher, the office will liaise with the class teacher to arrange a mutually convenient time for this, within two days. As a result, it may be that a member of staff is unable to call back on the same day that the call was made.

### Letters (incoming)

Staff will respond to parents/carers letters within 48 hours (2 school days). Letters can be given to your child, to give to his or her class teacher, given to the school office or posted. As with emails, letters will be treated with appropriate confidentiality. Where the letter is in relation to a complaint made by the parent/carer, the complaints policy should be followed to ensure that the appropriate procedure is followed. Any letters which are sent to parents/carers by the

academy must be checked by the Headteacher before they are sent. Copies of all correspondence to individual parents/carers will be placed in pupil files.

### Letters (outgoing)

We send other letters of a general nature out on a Tuesday and Thursday, or on any day if necessary, and place copies of all communication (including newsletters) on the academy's website. We limit the communication to particular days so that parents/carers know what to expect and are not bombarded with communication and letters each day where possible.

### Email (incoming)

The school has an electronic mailing system it uses to communicate with parents and carers (Arbor). Any communication that needs to be sent to parents using this system must be approved by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

These days, most people are communicating regularly by email and it has become one of the primary routes for establishing communication. That said, except for the office staff, our members of staff on the teaching and learning team are not office or computer based and therefore do not have the same level of access to email. It is not our policy to provide parents/carers with email addresses for teaching staff. This is also one of our strategies for reducing the unnecessary and excessive workload of teachers and we request that parents/carers do not ask teachers for them. Teaching staff are asked not to respond to any emails which come directly to them, without going through the appropriate channel below.

For the purposes of administration, parents and carers are asked to use the main school address for all email correspondence: [admin@greenridgeacademy.co.uk](mailto:admin@greenridgeacademy.co.uk) and [nursery@greenridgeacademy.co.uk](mailto:nursery@greenridgeacademy.co.uk) for all nursery correspondence. All emails will be treated with appropriate confidentiality. Please note all emails should specify the member of staff to whom the query is addressed. In the first instance, this is usually your child's class teacher. Parents/carers should be aware that any emails which are sent to the academy may not be opened immediately, and as such if your message or query is urgent, we ask that you call the school office to ensure that the school receives this timely information. Any email which is sent to school will be acknowledged and responded to within two school days of the date it was delivered. The school office will ensure that your email is directed to the relevant person/persons.

Where necessary, a hard copy of an email sent to a parent/carer or received by staff from a parent/carer will be filed on the child's personal file in the school office. All emails requiring an answer should be responded to within 48 hours (two school days).

### Social Networking Sites (e.g., Twitter/Facebook)

Staff will not communicate individually with parents, carers or pupils via social networking sites or accept them as "friends". Staff are instructed to report any such requests or interactions to the Headteacher.

The academy uses Twitter and Facebook as a way of posting reminders to parents/carers and sharing/celebrating the pupils' learning at Green Ridge. Where this method of communication is used, a professional manner will continue to be used at all times, as it would be for any communication within the academy.

### Written Reports

Once a year, we provide a full written report to each child's parents/carers on their progress in each area of learning. This report identifies areas of strengths and areas for future development. Pupils are also given an opportunity to comment on their progress.

### Pupil Learning Reviews

Parents/carers are invited to meet with their child's class teacher twice during the year, in the Autumn and Spring terms for parent-teacher consultations, which we call 'Learning Reviews'. These are usually held within the first two weeks after the half-term holiday. There is also an option to meet for a third time following the end of year report.

You will be advised of the date through an individual letter and asked to sign up for a specific day/time to meet with your child's teacher via our online booking system. If you are unable to use the online system you will be able to telephone or email the school office who will assist you in making an appointment. We would encourage all parents/carers to take up this opportunity. If you are unable to attend on the designated days, you can request to make an alternative arrangement directly with your child's teacher, or via the school office at a mutually convenient time.

### SEND Reviews

Parents/carers of children with SEND will meet with their class teacher three times a year, in addition to the Pupil Learning Reviews. This gives them the opportunity to celebrate their child's successes, and to support their child in areas where there is a need for support. We encourage parents/carers to contact the school if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or wellbeing. When children have educational needs, or if they are making less than expected progress, parents/carers will be invited to meet with their child's teacher more regularly.

We will also make reasonable adjustments to our arrangements if this will enable a parent/carer with a disability to participate fully in a meeting at our academy, or to receive and understand communication.

### Academy Prospectus

The academy prospectus contains a range of specified information to give parent/carers a full picture of provision at Green Ridge. This is updated every year and placed on the website.

### Academy Website

The website provides information about the academy, as well as latest news and information and is an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience.

### Home-school Visits

Home visits take place either at the end of the term before a child starts at the academy, or during the first two weeks of the term in which they start for those families with children in Nursery or Reception.

Several meetings for new parents/carers are organised at an appropriate time for them to receive information prior to their child starting at the school.

### Weekly Round-Up

The academy weekly newsletter is sent to parents/carers via the electronic mailing system, with paper copies available on request or sent to parents/carers who are not able to access it online. It contains general details of school events and activities, as well as sharing and celebrating the learning throughout the academy in that week. It is published every Friday during term-time. Parents/carers are asked to ensure that the academy has the correct email address on its system for communication. A calendar of forthcoming school events is at the end of each newsletter.

### Meet the Teacher Meetings

At the beginning of each academic year, you are invited to a Class Induction Meeting. At this meeting, you will be given information about the class. This will include: what your child will be learning, home learning expectations, expectations of behaviour, planned activities and events etc. This information will also be posted on the individual year/class pages on the school website.

### Reading Records

Children in all classes have a reading diary/record. This enables parents/carers to record a wide range of information about their child's reading.

### Individual Meetings

Parents/carers are welcome to visit the academy to discuss their child's progress, ask questions, and gain support or talk about their child/home issues with the child's class staff. Meetings should always be pre-arranged with members of staff.

If you urgently need to see someone, for instance if there is a serious family emergency or a child protection issue, please phone ahead and the reception staff will do their best to find a senior member of staff to see you.

For non-urgent meetings we will aim to meet with you within five working days. The school will determine the level of urgency at its discretion, to enable it to manage multiple demands. The day-to-day care, welfare and safety of your child is managed by the person who is placed closest to them (normally your child's class teacher). For all other queries, the school office will direct you to the appropriate member of staff, to deal with your query and arrange any appointments for you.

It is sometimes possible to speak with the class teacher or Headteacher, very briefly, at the beginning or end of the school day. For longer discussions, you will need to make an appointment. We would advise you not to arrive at the school with the expectation that you can be seen straight away, as this may not be possible.

Some parents/carers, especially of the younger children, can have a brief word with a member of academy staff before and after school. Parents/carers should be mindful that teachers have limited time in the mornings as they need to register the children and begin the days learning.

### Residential Meetings

Meetings are held prior to any residential trip to inform parents/carers of planning, content and arrangements.

### Open Afternoons/ Evenings

At the end of the Summer term, parents/carers are invited to our open afternoon/evening, when you can look at your child's work that they have completed during the year, as well as meet your child's new class teacher. Other open afternoons and evenings take place throughout the year where specific whole-school or year-group events have taken place, e.g. during global diversity week.

### The Academy Office

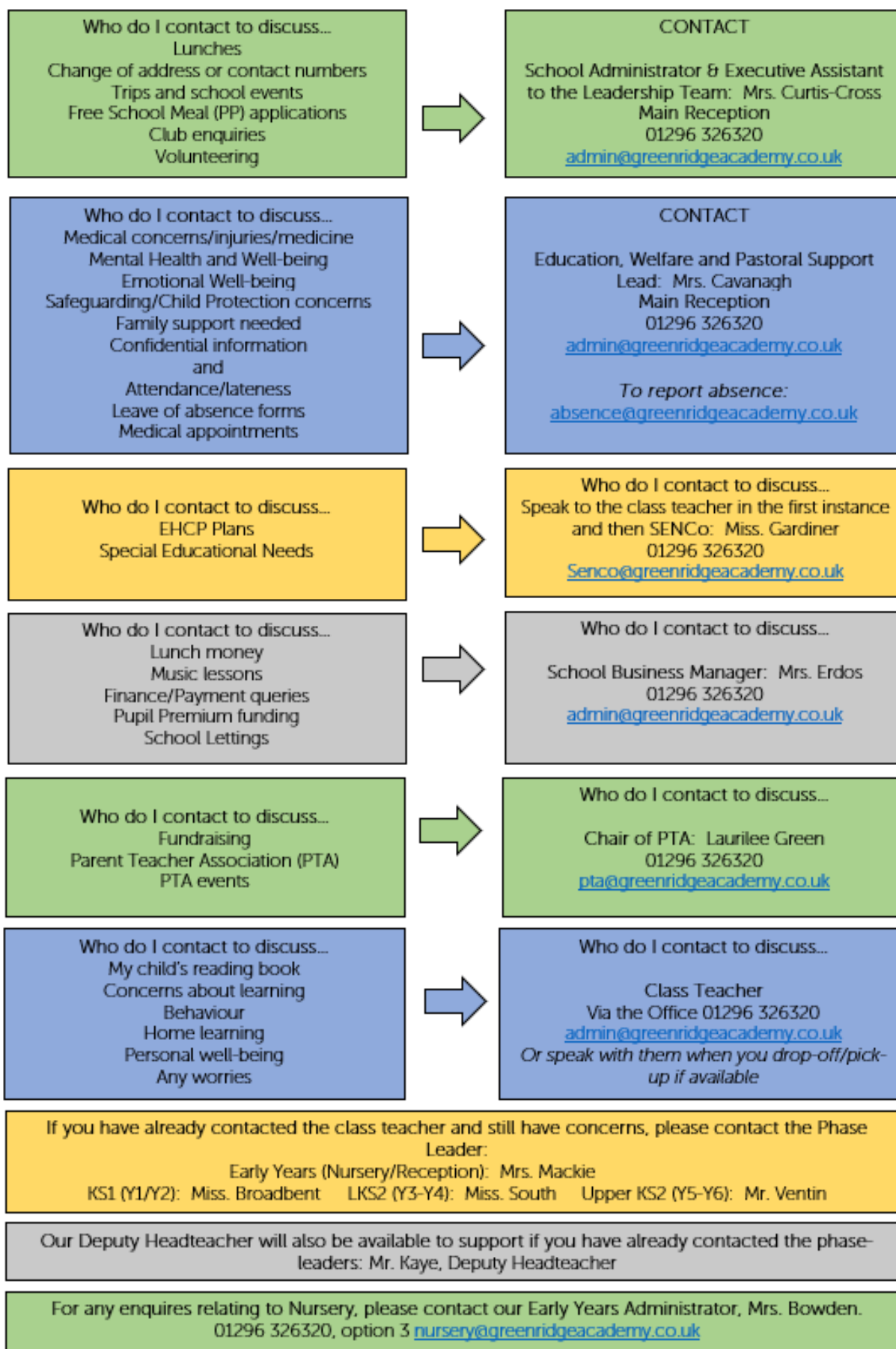
The office is open between 8.15am and 4.00pm, Monday-Friday during term-time. We would strongly encourage you to use one of the methods detailed above to get in contact with the school, however should you wish to pass on a brief message, you may do so at the school office. Your message will be written down and given to the appropriate member of staff at the earliest opportunity.

### No Response

If you have not received a response from the school within three working days, please contact the school by emailing [admin@greenridgeacademy.co.uk](mailto:admin@greenridgeacademy.co.uk) and we will chase up your enquiry. Communication with parents and carers is important to us, and we will continue to monitor this policy and our approach to improve the process further.



To ensure there are clear lines of communication within the academy, please find below a range of ways that parents/carers can get in touch so that they know who to approach to ensure their query is dealt with effectively.





## Internal staff communication protocols

- All staff receive a Staff Handbook, updated annually, providing them with important information about organisation and procedures within the school.
- The diary dates sheet which has key dates, events and meetings for the coming academic year is published by the start of each autumn term, to enable staff to plan accordingly. This then forms the list of key dates which is given to parents and carers.
- All formal meetings should be structured and minuted using the agreed academy minute formats (either staff meeting, child discussion, staff discussion or parent discussion or outside agency/visitor discussion form) and where possible, members invited to contribute to the agenda.
- Information and notification of initiatives are communicated through face-to-face discussion, and where necessary, the use of Teams to follow up with. Teams is a quick, effective way of communicating information however it should not replace face to face meetings where discussion is required.
- Written communications should be sent electronically to reduce printing costs, but where hard copies are necessary, they should be placed in pigeonholes, in the staffroom, which staff must check daily or handed to staff personally.
- Where emails or Teams is used for internal staff communication, they should not require specific action to be taken, unless this has already been discussed in a face-to-face situation to clarify any points staff may have about what is expected.
- Teaching staff are expected to check their emails and Teams messages and notifications at least twice a day (typically at the start and end of the day), and all other support staff at least once during their working day.
- Staff are not expected to read or respond to emails or Teams messages/notifications when it is their personal time. If staff choose to do so, this is their own choice and responsibility but there is no expectation to.
- Staff are discouraged from sending emails or Teams messages outside of the school working hours (between 7.00am-6.00pm), however, if it suits an individual they can do so, although they must bear in mind that their communication will not be read or acted upon, and nor can it be expected to be.
- Staff professional development meetings take place every week on a Monday from 3.45-5.30pm (either as a whole-school or in phases). The minutes of each meeting are emailed to all relevant staff and placed on the staff notice board, as well as saved on the main server.
- A full staff briefing is held every Friday morning at 8.25am in the staffroom which is led by a member of the senior leadership team. All staff are expected to attend. Information shared, along with other useful information including the diary for the following week is subsequently sent out on Teams to all staff in the form of a bulletin to ensure all staff have the necessary information. The bulletin is co-created all week and any member of staff can access and add information they wish for all staff to see/share/act upon. It is not the responsibility of the senior leadership to add notices for other members of staff.
- The school calendar/diary is accessible online and all members of staff can access it. Staff must take their own responsibility for checking events and times each week. Events are discussed in advance at meetings, but staff also have the responsibility to check future actions.
- The whiteboard in the staffroom is used for ad-hoc notices and well-being notices only.
- Within each individual class, class teachers organise their own methods of communicating information to the children. This may be a news board or another type of notice board, as appropriate for each year-group.