



Communication Policy

Including SchoolPost

**Dolphin School Trust
inc. Noah's Ark Nurseries**

Reviewed by:	Lucy Price (Headteacher)
Last reviewed:	August 2025
Next review:	August 2026

This policy has been written with reference to the following statutory and regulatory frameworks:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (Part 6: Provision of Information)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, 2025)
- UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010 (with regard to accessibility of information)

The Dolphin School Trust is committed to ensuring that all communication with parents is compliant with these frameworks, safeguarding in nature, accessible to all, and subject to appropriate monitoring and record-keeping.

For the absence of doubt, the term 'School' refers to Dolphin School and the Noah's Ark Nurseries.

Aims of the policy

- To ensure the smooth and effective communication of Dolphin School Trust to its community;
- To collate a variety of email messages from different sources into one single email to parents;
- To provide a consistent messaging system for parents, which allows them to access and retrieve messages with ease in the context of their busy lives;
- To create a 2-way communication system between staff and parents, without providing their direct email addresses;
- To provide a branded experience to the School in its email messaging;
- To provide an effective emergency messaging system through email and text message from the School's Senior Team and School office;
- To provide a streamlined process for parents, ensuring all communication falls within professional and appropriate channels from across the School which can be clearly stored and retrieved by all parties.
- This policy also underpins the School's statutory duties to keep parents informed, safeguard children, and ensure communication is conducted in line with regulatory requirements.

Systems used

Dolphin School will only post messages to its current enrolled parents through the SchoolPost system. Outbound messages will be collated by the system from any member of staff who has submitted a 'publication' and sent out at a scheduled time each day, i.e. at noon and at 5pm. This ensures parents receive only one email each time, which is clearly itemised by each child, and contains only the information relevant to them in a series of embedded messages. All communication systems are managed in compliance with data protection legislation, ensuring that personal data is securely processed, stored, and retained only for as long as necessary.

Types of messages received by a parent (not exclusively)

- Notification from the School office i.e. bumped head (which requires acknowledgement);
- Response to an email from a parent from a particular member of staff;
- Homework announcement or request for a particular resource for a project;
- Notice that a booking system will be available i.e. for parent:teacher meetings;
- Sports fixture notice;

- Concert reminder;
- School trip notification and permission slip (parents can now directly reply);
- The weekly newsletter, Word on the Street;
- A club notice;
- Arrival on a residential trip;
- Finance or admission related emails after enrolment.

How it works

Members of staff create a new message and select which parents will receive the publication, through established groups such as classes or houses, bespoke groups or selecting individual children. The publication can be simple text, contain a link or attachments, or even require a response form from the parent. These forms can be pre-built, i.e. for trips, or for an ad-hoc use. The publications can be set to allow parents to respond directly to the person sending the publication, at the discretion of the creator.

The messages are then held in a queue and sent out to parents at time slots configured by the Senior Team, such as at noon or 5pm every day. This allows parents to know that any general communications will be sent at specific times every day, Monday to Sunday.

The School office can schedule reminders for a Sunday afternoon for example, to remind parents of a Monday activity which requires their attention.

Moderation of Content

Dolphin School operates on a trust based relationship with staff when communicating with parents both verbally and in written form, except for school reports which are thoroughly checked by the Senior Team before publication. There is a facility to moderate or approve publications created by staff by the Senior Team before being sent out. This feature will be used by Mrs Dilger and Mrs Akinremi in the first instance, unless a member of staff feels that they want their communications to be checked by a Senior Team colleague for assurance purposes. The Senior Team will carry out periodic audits of staff communication to ensure compliance with professional standards and safeguarding expectations. Staff will receive annual training on professional communication and data protection.

Quality of Writing

The quality of our written and verbal communication is part of the fabric of Dolphin School. Whilst there is a place for informal verbal communication, there is an expectation that any information which is written, whether in an email or a Word on the Street article, should be both formal and high in quality. For example, slang words such as 'gotten' are not acceptable. Text should be concise, meaningful and appropriately placed for the message being conveyed.

If you are unsure about a piece of text you have written, you are encouraged to share it with a colleague or a member of the Senior Team for advice.

Our written communication is very much part of the marketing and representation of Dolphin School trust as a forward-thinking, high-quality independent prep school.

Internal communication through email, notices on Engage or on any platform including Google Classroom must always be professional and appropriate to a child's needs. Whilst it is extremely rare,

we must remember that anyone could request to see this communication at a later point through a freedom of information request.

Accessibility & Inclusion

Dolphin School Trust is committed to ensuring communication is accessible to all parents, including those with disabilities, English as an Additional Language (EAL), or specific communication needs. Alternative formats (translations, large print, or digital accessibility tools) will be provided where reasonably required.

Record-Keeping

All communications through SchoolPost and other official channels will be retained securely for a minimum of six years in line with data protection guidance and the School's retention schedule. Communications relevant to a pupil's welfare or academic progress will be copied or linked to their pupil record.

Complaints

Where communication from a parent raises a concern or complaint, staff will direct parents to follow the School's Complaints Policy. This ensures that all concerns are handled transparently and in line with ISI regulatory requirements.

How do parents receive the publications?

Parents will receive the branded email into the inbox of the email account which is registered at Dolphin School Trust. However, they will also be asked to set up an account with SchoolPost which will allow them to see all of their messages in one place via a web interface. They will be able to search for previous messages or use the calendar to scroll through previous communications in a very user-friendly manner, preventing them from having to look back through busy inboxes for School communications.

Word on the Street

The Word on the Street will remain the focus of our communication of forthcoming events, news, reminders or updates and will be the primary source of information for the forthcoming week/s. Any mid-week reminders, sign-up requests or further information that needs addressing outside of the newsletter will be sent via SchoolPost as is currently the case.

Nursery & Early Years Communications

Children in our nurseries or Reception class will continue to receive observations and learning feedback through Tapestry, as part of our ongoing commitment to providing regular and informative feedback of a child's progress. Any communications around events or organisation notices will now be communicated through SchoolPost.

How do parents contact the School?

Parents wishing to contact the School, either to update on a pastoral matter, or to inform the office of a matter, should email Mrs Dilger at receptionist@dolphinschool.org.uk. It is likely that the response (unless urgent) will be collated back through the SchoolPost system in the next scheduled time slot alongside other messages.

All existing forms, such as After School care, applying for absence, or siblings club forms will continue to be available on the School website under the parents section.

Otherwise parents can continue to contact the School via telephone during office hours.

Engage Portal

The Engage Parent Portal exists to provide access to School reports, attendance information, timetables, dietary and medical information, parent:teacher booking systems and other general information relating to parent's children.

Late returning trips and sports fixtures

We send parents a text with details if we are running significantly later than an advertised time. Any further updates will either be sent via text message and/or email to keep parents informed of the group's progress.

POD Communication

The SchoolPost system removes the need to send out messages from School via the POD and its WhatsApp groups. There may be, on occasion, the need for the School to brief POD reps of a forthcoming important announcement prior to a School-wide message to warn them of the pending publication. This will be done in advance via SchoolPost directly to POD reps and the heads of POD.

The POD WhatsApp groups are designed for reminders, POD notices and other social or community group content, and are not a primary communication method for the School, unless in the rare event that a computer system is not functional.

Emergency Messages

If a child has a serious accident or incident which requires the parent's immediate attention, we will phone parents in the first instance. If we are not successful, we will also contact them via direct email and continue to try to phone them or other contacts listed on their child's School file.

If there is a School-wide emergency which requires immediate collection or notification for them as a family, they will receive a text message from the School, and a copy via email with instructions.

Timely Communication

Dolphin School Trust is committed to providing timely, concise and high-quality information in formats which is both accessible and realistic to its community. This will change and vary, depending on the busy nature of a working School, in different parts of the School. We will endeavour to refine and

develop our communication to fit the nature of the School Trust. School trip letters, for example, must be sent a week prior to the trip taking place and is the responsibility of the person organising the trip.

The School will also review communication practice as part of annual safeguarding and compliance audits to ensure policies remain effective and aligned with the latest ISI and DfE requirements.

Google Classroom

Upper School pupils (Year 3+) will continue to receive links, content and information through their Google classroom and Google accounts. They will know their username, passwords and email addresses as part of the computing curriculum. They can simply access their Google account by logging in through the Google homepage.

Contacting Staff/parents Directly via Mobile Phones, Personal Email or use of Social Media

It is strictly forbidden for staff to liaise with parents or pupils directly through mobile phone messaging, WhatsApp, personal email or social media direct messaging. We therefore ask that you do not contact any parent through these channels and ask the parents not to either. We recognise that some staff have separate relationships with parents for activities such as babysitting purposes. Any communications around these external relationships should only be referenced to that specific role and not to Dolphin School related matters.

Staff should not discuss work matters through the use of messaging or WhatsApp unless on a school approved group by the Senior Team. Children's/Family names should not be used.

This is in line with **KCSIE** and safer working practice guidance, ensuring staff maintain professional boundaries at all times.