

Brownhills Ormiston Academy

Communication Guidance Policy

We recognise the importance of communication between Brownhills Ormiston Academy and all stakeholders, including pupils, families, governors and the wider community. Communication between home and school is of vital importance to ensure the success of every pupil at Brownhills Ormiston Academy.

BOA uses different methods of communication and will always aim to use the most efficient and straightforward way to communicate. Our primary method of communication is Arbor.

Communication on issues that affect the safety of a pupil will be treated as a priority. The academy holds emergency contact details for all pupils. Families are asked to alert the academy immediately if contact information needs to be revised. We would like to thank the families who maintain respectful communication and relationships with the school. We are grateful to these families for their understanding of staff workload and for working with us in the best interests of their child.

**Please be aware of the following important points:**

- Arbor contains information about pupils, attendance, homework, rewards, sanctions and detentions, and other information about the academy. All key information is shared with families via announcements and notifications on the Arbor Parent and Students Apps.
- Teachers at BOA are in the classroom teaching for over 90% of the working week and will not access their emails during this time and during most of their working day.
- During the working day, our work with our pupils must be the priority and staff will not be available to meet parents and carers who do not have a pre-arranged appointment or agreement.
- The use of a parent, carer or staff members' first name is not appropriate; therefore, all communications will be to and from Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Dr etc.
- We thank families for updating us about pupils' attendance. We will not respond directly to absence notifications.

**Phone Calls**

- The academy has one Receptionist based in the main reception area, who manages a range of duties, including responding to calls and will triage to pass on messages between the hours of 8am and 4pm Monday-Thursday and 8am to 3:30pm on a Friday.

- **In most circumstances, the Receptionist will take messages only and will be unable to directly respond to your enquiry.**

- During the working day, there are high volumes of calls and only one phone line, so email may be an easier method to communicate with us.
- Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in an academy, where teachers are teaching full-time, running clubs or working with pupils at lunchtime or after academy.
- Families may be frustrated if they feel that a message does not get an immediate reply, when in fact there has been no available opportunity for the member of staff to reach a telephone to return a call.
- We do not permit the recording of any phone call under any circumstances.
- The Headteacher has directed Brownhills staff **not to respond** to abusive, demanding or inappropriate phone. Put simply, if communication to staff is unpleasant or unreasonable, the call will be ended.
- Abusive communications will not be tolerated. Senders of such messages will have action taken against them which will limit their communication options with the academy.

### **Email communication**

The primary method of communication is via Arbor, from which parents will receive emails and notifications in the app. Parents are welcome to and encouraged to communicate with BOA staff via replying to emails.

Whilst we hope that you will find this helpful, we must stress the following points to ensure that there are clear and shared expectations between school and families:

- Email should not be used to communicate with the school in the event of an emergency.
- During the day, BOA staff are fully occupied in teaching, planning and preparing lessons and dealing with the students. Staff will do their best to acknowledge your email **within 2 school days of its receipt wherever possible.**
- The first response to an email may simply be to acknowledge receipt and may not be to respond directly to the enquiry until further time has enabled answers and details to be found.
- If you have an enquiry or are unsure of who is best to address your enquiry to, please email [postbox@brownhillsoa.co.uk](mailto:postbox@brownhillsoa.co.uk) or you can contact the main reception on 01543 452886 where your enquiry can be directed to the most appropriate colleague.
- The recipient of your e-mail may well redirect it to more appropriate colleague who will assume responsibility for following up your enquiry.
- Emails will only be responded to during staff working hours. Emails received outside of school working hours will not be received until the next working day.

- Families should not email staff in the evenings during their personal and family time.
- Email correspondence, although convenient, can sometimes be unsuitable for a staff member to respond to your enquiry, so colleagues may well contact you via phone or by arranging a meeting if this is preferable to responding at length via e-mail.
- With over 750 students in the school, you will appreciate the volume of e-mail traffic that might be generated by sharing these e-mail addresses. Brownhills staff main responsibility is to the working operations of the school and responding to emails is not an urgent priority for managing the day-to-day life of the school.
- During evenings, weekends and holiday periods staff will not be accessing their email, so will not be able to respond until they return.
- Security settings mean that inappropriate or spam like e-mails will likely be held in quarantine and never reach the recipient, so reaching out via telephone in the event an e-mail goes unacknowledged after two school days would be advised.
- The Headteacher has directed Brownhills staff **not to respond** to abusive, demanding or inappropriate e-mails. Put simply, if communication to staff is unpleasant or unreasonable, it will not be responded to.
- Abusive and/or malicious communications will not be tolerated. Senders of such messages can and will be traced and action will follow.

All of the Brownhills team appreciate that it will be your children who will benefit from a coordinated team approach between students and teachers, and school and families, so we hope that improved communication lines will assist with this teamwork.

General Enquiries	postbox@brownhillsoa.co.uk
Attendance	attendance@brownhillsoa.co.uk
Safeguarding	safeguarding@brownhillsoa.co.uk
SEND	SEND@brownhillsoa.co.uk
Finance / Coaches	finance@brownhillsoa.co.uk
Complaints	Please follow the policy on our website

Student concerns: e.g. pastoral, behaviour, attendance, student support, academic progress will be dealt with on a year group basis. Concerns regarding individual subjects can be sent to year group email addresses and these will be forwarded to the relevant department.

Year 7	Year7@brownhillsoa.co.uk
Year 8	Year8@brownhillsoa.co.uk
Year 9	Year9@brownhillsoa.co.uk
Year 10	Year10@brownhillsoa.co.uk
Year 11	Year11@brownhillsoa.co.uk

## Requesting a meeting

Parents and carers wishing to meet a member of staff must contact the academy to make an appointment and should be aware of the following key points:

- The academy will always aim to acknowledge a request from parents and carers on working days only, in term time only, and with the best aim of within 48 hours. Please be aware that staff will not be expected to respond outside of normal working hours. If you send a message or communication outside of our academy hours, it is very unlikely to be accessed.
- Staff may contact families to see if a query can be answered without the need for an appointment. An appointment will be made with the most relevant member of staff, which is likely to be a member of the pastoral support team, a Head of Year or a Head of Department.
- Please be aware that Heads of Years and Heads of Department are teachers and therefore will be unlikely to be able to meet you during the school day without significant advance notice.
- Due to the size of secondary schools, it is unlikely that your meeting will be with the Headteacher, who may choose to delegate to a member of staff who is able to respond as required, e.g. to a Head Year, a Head of Subject or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- **We cannot and will not accommodate unarranged appointments.** Therefore, if a parent/carer comes into the academy and asks to see a member of staff, it is most likely that this member of staff will be following their work schedule and will be supporting the pupils of the academy.
- Parents and carers who arrive to the academy requesting an unarranged appointment will be directed to leave the site and book an appointment for a mutually convenient time.
- Time is precious to both parents/carers and staff, so the meeting will aim to be productive and efficient.
- Meetings will not take place with pupils who are not in full academy uniform. Pupils and families will be asked to leave the site and re-book an appointment for a future date.
- We do not permit the recording of any meetings under any circumstances.
- Staff will end a meeting immediately in the event of the parents or carers becoming angry or abusive. This will be reported immediately to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. If a visitor has been abusive or aggressive, the police are likely to be contacted. Any unacceptable behaviour may lead to a warning or ban from the premise; both will be communicated by letter.

- If a parent or carer wishes to bring another adult to an academy meeting for support or to act as an interpreter, they must notify the academy that they are bringing this adult to the meeting in advance and who they are, or they will not be granted access to the meeting room. We will not accept solicitors or legal professionals, acting for clients as an accompanying adult.

### **Estranged / separated parents**

- All communication is accessible by both parents via Arbor if they are both listed as legal guardians. This means that both parents can see key information about their child.
- Please be aware that staff do not have the capacity to ring two sets of parents to repeat messages, to meet with two parents separately about a concern, or to see two sets of parents separately at parents' evening.

### **Thank you**

- We thank all families for their ongoing and continued support.