Yerbury Parent Communication Guide

Effective communication between home and school is essential to ensuring that every child at Yerbury is happy, safe and able to thrive. When parents and staff communicate constructively, we build a shared understanding of a child's needs, agree collaboratively on next steps, and resolve concerns in a timely and solution-focused manner. Our aim is to maintain open, respectful dialogue based on mutual trust, enabling everyone to focus on what matters most: each child's wellbeing and progress.

This guide explains how communication works at our school, the best ways for parents and carers to contact us, how the school will communicate with parents, and the standards of communication we expect from all members of our school community.

1. Contact Details & Arbor Account

When your child joins the school, you will be asked to provide your contact details, including your phone number and email address. Please be sure to update these via Arbor so we can always reach you. If you are unsure how to do this, please speak to the office who can help.

Arbor is the school's secure online communication and management system, used to help keep parents informed and connected with school life. Through Arbor, parents view attendance information, give consent, and make payments quickly and securely.

You will be invited to create an Arbor account once you join the school.

2. How to contact the School

General Contact Details

The school office is the first point of contact for all general enquiries, and includes:

- reporting absence/ lateness
- children's medical needs
- any questions linked to clubs

Parents can contact the office by both email and phone, with email being the preferred option, unless it is urgent or time-sensitive. Office staff will direct your query to the appropriate member of staff, and if your message is in email form, it can be forwarded to the correct person more quickly.

- **School Office Email:** admin@yerbury.islington.sch.uk
- **School Office Phone:** 0207 272 6580
- **Office Hours:** 8:00am – 4:30pm (Monday–Friday, term time)

You will receive an automated reply telling you that the school has received your email. It explains what happens next.

3. Who to contact when:

For Reporting absence or lateness

To report an absence or lateness on the day, please contact the office as soon as possible before 8.45am. This should be done preferably by email to admin@yerbury.islington.sch.uk or by leaving a message on the answerphone selecting option 1.

Be sure to give the name and class of your child, the reason for their absence, and if you are seeking medical advice. Please be sure to call every day they are absent, unless Public Health protocol or a medical note determine otherwise.

See Attendance Policy on the website for more information

Link: Attendance Policy

For child-related questions, comments or concerns

Your child's class teacher is the first point of contact for any questions, comments or concerns regarding learning, behaviour, friendships, pastoral or day-to-day issues relating to your child. Sometimes, the teacher may choose to involve or escalate it to another member of staff, but your primary contact is your child's class teacher first and foremost.

You can contact your child's class teacher by emailing them via the office at: admin@yerbury.islington.sch.uk

Please write a short email explaining the reason for contacting the teacher, giving the necessary detail for the teacher to get an understanding of the situation / concern. This means that teachers can ensure they have the information they need for the meeting for it to be as productive as possible.

The teacher will respond either via email, a phone call or offering to meet at a mutually convenient time.

Teachers also have weekly 'Parent-teacher' times where you can meet with the teacher for any reason, ranging from looking at your child's books to discussing something private; from sharing specific concerns to asking for advice on how to support your child at home. See class pages on our website for times and then contact the office to book your slot. In the event you need to meet at a different time, the teacher will find a mutually convenient time for you both.

Response timeframes:

Teachers will always endeavour to get back to you as soon as is reasonably possible, and usually within 2 school days. In the unlikely circumstance that you haven't heard back within 2 school days, please send a reminder, including your original message.

Some issues may require investigation or consultation with other staff, which may extend response times, but staff will send an email explaining that.

If you have requested a meeting in person, staff will endeavour to meet within 5 school days.

If you email is more general and not related to your child, e.g. you are making a general suggestion or have a more general query, or you are emailing with your professional hat on, staff will respond within 5 school days.

Please be mindful that teachers do not check their emails during teaching hours, that they may have meetings before and after school, and some staff work part-time. Please also note that staff do not work evenings, weekends or holidays.

For Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

For children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), your child's class teacher should usually be your first point of contact. Class teachers have day-to-day responsibility for the progress, learning and support of all children in their class, including those with SEND. They are best placed to discuss how your child is getting on, what support is in place, and any initial questions or concerns.

Where appropriate, the class teacher may involve the SENCo, for example if concerns are more complex, if provision needs to be reviewed, or if advice from external professionals may be needed. If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the SENCo may also liaise with you directly about reviews, statutory processes, provision and wider support. However, the class teacher will remain closely involved and will continue to be responsible for your child's day-to-day teaching, progress and classroom support.

For Behaviour or Pastoral concerns

For behaviour or pastoral concerns, your child's class teacher should usually be your first point of contact. Class teachers have day-to-day responsibility for supporting children's behaviour, wellbeing and relationships in school, and are best placed to discuss any initial concerns or patterns they may have noticed.

Depending on the nature or seriousness of the concern, the class teacher may involve a senior leader. Senior leaders may become involved where concerns are more complex, where additional support or advice is needed, or where behaviour is having a significant impact on the child or others. This may be Deputy Head Will Hann for EYFS, Assistant Head Natalie Ketchell for KS1 or Deputy Head Tony McMahon for KS2, who is also the Behaviour Lead for the whole school.

For Safeguarding Concerns

Please contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Will Hann, via the office email, putting 'Confidential for DSL' in the subject line. In the event the DSL is not available, it will be forwarded on to the Deputy Safeguarding Leads (Tony McMahon or Cassie Moss). They will get back to you as soon as possible, depending on the level of concern.

If you have safeguarding concerns during school holidays, you can contact:

Islington Children's Services Contact Team
Telephone: 020 7527 7400
CSCreferrals@islington.gov.uk

Principal Officer Safeguarding in Education
Telephone 020 7527 5845/5595

Islington Police - call 101.
If you believe a child to be at immediate risk of harm, please call 999.

4. How the school communicates with parents:

Weekly Update – This is our main channel of communication: a weekly email we send out and share weekly information, school news and events. We also share what each year group has been learning that week so you can keep up-to-date and talk to your child about it. **Please sign up to this at the bottom of the main website page, otherwise you will not receive it.**

Year-group meetings – At the beginning of every new academic year, teachers hold an in-person meeting where they introduce themselves to you, share what the children will be learning that year, how you can help your child, and key information for that year group. They also hold two further year-group meetings at the beginning of each term - online, sharing more details about that term and how parents can support their child. Please do attend all of these if you can.

Termly letter, topic map and knowledge organiser – In the first week of every term, you will receive a letter explaining what the children will be learning and key information about the term ahead. These are emailed to all parents as well as being on the Class Pages on the website.

Weekly Parent/ Teacher times – Every teacher has a 30min time slot every week where parents know they are available to talk on the phone or meet. The times of these are on the school website on the Class Pages. Please contact the office to book your slot. In the event you would like to meet or talk at a different time, the teacher will find a mutually convenient time for you both.

Termly Progress and Attainment updates - In the autumn and spring terms we have a Parents' Evening where you find out how your child is doing academically and socially. At the end of the summer term, you receive end-of-year reports.

If we have immediate concerns, we will contact you by phone - E.g. if an accident has happened, if there is a serious behaviour incident, if they need medical attention. Please ensure your contact details are always up-to-date.

If a child has banged their head, you will receive a 'Bumped-Head Slip' explaining how to keep an eye out on your child.

Sharing good news – We give out weekly Good As Gold certificates focused on effort, the teacher may talk to you at pick-up, or you may receive a phone call.

Additional needs – If your child is on the SEND register, you will have an opportunity to meet with your teacher to discuss your child's progress against their targets; this is in addition to the usual Parents' Evening meeting. If your child sees our literacy / dyslexia specialist teacher, Helen, you will also have an opportunity to meet with her separately at parents' evening.

Coffee-mornings – We host regular coffee-morning meetings for parents about a variety of themes/ services e.g. Curriculum, SEND, School Wellbeing Service etc. Please keep your eye out for dates in the Weekly Update.

Class Pages on Website – This is where you find out termly class information.

Website – Under 'Provision' you will find a wealth of information about how and what we teach, including year group expectations for English and Maths.

Non-official channels of communication – All classes have Whatsapp Groups where parents share class and school-related information, and the PTA communicates updates via the Class Reps. When parents join in Reception, we ask them to sign up if they want to. If you didn't and would like to, please speak to the office who can let the Class Rep know to add you on. There is a Code of Conduct for these groups which Class Reps share at the beginning of every academic year.

5. Escalating concerns

If you have raised your concerns with the class teacher and you feel they remain unresolved, please escalate them in the following order:

1) Contact the Key Stage Senior Leader:
   Will Hann for EYFS (Nursery & Reception)
   Natalie Ketchell for KS1 (Year 1 and 2)
   Tony McMahon for KS2 (Year 3,4,5 and 6)
2) If still unresolved, contact the Headteacher, Cassie Moss

If you have raised concerns with any office or premises staff and you feel they remain unresolved, please escalate these to our School Business Manager, Lorraine O'Keefe.

If you have concerns about how staff have managed a situation, please:

1) Contact the Key Stage Senior Leader:

Will Hann for EYFS (Nursery & Reception)
Natalie Ketchell for KS1 (Year 1 and 2)
Tony McMahon for KS2 (Year 3,4,5 and 6)

2) If unresolved, contact the Headteacher, Cassie Moss

If you have concerns about inappropriate staff conduct, please contact the Headteacher, Cassie Moss, directly via the office at admin@yerbury.islington.sch.uk putting 'Confidential FAO Cassie Moss' in the subject line.

Further escalation:

If you have been through all of the previous steps of escalation, and feel that your concerns continue to remain unresolved, then please follow the Complaints policy

The following guide for parents was put together by a collective of organisations, including the Department for Education and Ofsted:

https://www.parentkind.org.uk/parent-guide-to-raising-concerns-with-your-childs-school#

6. Constructive Communication:

At Yerbury, staff commit to:

- Treating all parents with respect
- Listening carefully with the intention to understand
- Communicating clearly and professionally
- Keeping children's wellbeing at the centre of decision-making
- Working in partnership with families in the child's best interest
- Being transparent about processes and decisions
- Endeavouring to bring about resolution
- Working within the policies and procedures of the school in the best interest of the children

We expect parents to work collaboratively and in partnership with the school, and ask that they:

- Share concerns early, before they escalate
- Communicate in a calm, respectful and constructive manner, endeavouring to bring about resolution
- Support school policies and values
- Raise and escalate concerns through the appropriate channels as above
- Discuss concerns with the school directly (not use social media or channels inappropriately)
- Trust the school to deal with the concerns, especially when they involve other parents or children

Unreasonable or inappropriate parental communication

All staff in Islington schools have the right to work in a safe and respectful work environment, and be communicated with in a constructive and calm manner.

If staff determine that communication is not constructive or helpful, they may:

a) Draw the meeting / call to a close and inform their line-manager
b) Offer to meet the parent another time
c) Request support from another colleague
d) Escalate it to the next person in line or the Headteacher

There are limits to what constitutes reasonable communication. Excessive volume, frequency or complexity of contact — or demands that go beyond what the school can reasonably provide — place an unsustainable burden on staff and divert attention from our core responsibility of educating pupils.

Where communication becomes persistent, disproportionate or obstructive, the headteacher may implement a Constructive Communication Protocol for a set period. Parents will be informed in writing when the protocol is applied. The protocol ensures that communication remains purposeful, manageable and respectful for all involved.

In the event that parental communication behaviour breaches our expectations, the school may:

- Issue a formal warning
- Restrict communication to specific channels
- Restrict access to the school premises
- In serious cases, involve external agencies

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