

# Marketing and Communications Policy



<b>Approved by:</b>	<b>Neil Gage</b>	<b>Date: 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025</b>
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## **Statement of intent**

Dovecote School is committed to maintaining effective communication and relationships between parents, students, and the school.

This policy sets out the aims of the school about internal and external communication, and the responsibilities of the school, its staff members, and parents. The policy also outlines the school's marketing strategy and how this will be used to build positive relationships with parents and the wider community.

The school aims to promote effective communication between students, members of staff, parents, stakeholders, and all members of the school community through the following means:

- Having a clear and professional communication strategy in place to keep parents well-informed about their child's educational progress and any other matters related to their child's overall wellbeing.
- Improving the quality of education by ensuring there is a robust process in place for consultation between the school, parents, staff members and students on key areas.
- Monitoring and evaluating communication issues through regular meetings with staff, parents and members of the school community.
- Developing a strong marketing presence in order to build a positive reputation for the school within the wider community.

## **1. Legal framework**

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

- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Education Act 2002
- The Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Data Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Adverse Weather Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Staff Handbook

## **2. Roles and responsibilities**

The Senior Leadership Group (SLG) is responsible for:

- Placing key policies, documents and procedures in areas that maximise their accessibility and usefulness to the entire school community, e.g., on the school website.
- Communicating important information, e.g., 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 on students, 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, and students where appropriate, regarding the processing of personal data is freely given, specific, informed, and an unambiguous indication of the individual's wishes.

- 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.
- Ensuring classroom staff can make effective use of their time to be able to teach and support the children they oversee.

Staff members are responsible for:

- Ensuring the principles and procedures of this policy are followed.
- Communicating proactively with parents; ensuring appropriate and proportionate communication about student progress.
- Ensuring that their internal communication with other staff is strong, e.g., passing on relevant information to supply teachers and updating classroom planning files with specific student information.
- Being involved in the school's marketing communication as required.
- Communication with parents and carers will maintain a focus on the best interests of the child.

Parents are responsible for:

- Reading the key communications circulated by the school and responding or acting on these communications where required, e.g., by attending meetings.
- Logging on to the school website for detailed information about the school calendar, term dates, exam details, monitoring and assessments, school achievements and other useful downloads.
- Informing the school of important information related to their child, such as:
  - Medical conditions or allergies, supported by medical documentation relating to these conditions.
  - Any further SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) or other needs their child has.
  - Child protection matters, legal issues or relevant duties with appropriate documentation.
  - Any changes to domestic situation that could affect their child's attendance at school or barriers to learning.
- Raising any issues or concerns they may have with the appropriate contact, e.g., contacting the class teacher with education-related issues.

### **3. Respectful and Professional Communication**

Dovecote School is committed to open, respectful and professional communication with parents, carers and external partners. Positive communication is essential to maintaining trust, supporting pupils effectively and protecting staff wellbeing.

All communication with staff is expected to remain courteous, respectful and proportionate, even where views differ or concerns are being raised.

In line with Department for Education guidance, the school operates a zero-tolerance approach to abusive, intimidating or unreasonable behaviour towards staff. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Aggressive, threatening or accusatory language
- Personal attacks on staff
- Repeated or excessive correspondence that places unreasonable demands on staff time
- Attempts to pressure staff outside agreed processes
- Repeated re-raising of issues that have been formally addressed

This approach does not prevent parents or carers from raising concerns or complaints. Where communication becomes unreasonable or falls outside expected standards of conduct, the school may take proportionate steps to manage how communication is conducted, including limiting communication to specific channels or requiring concerns to be raised through formal procedures.

### **4. Internal communication**

#### **Communication between members of staff**

Staff will ensure their internal communication, i.e., within the school with other members of staff, is strong, effective, and abides by the procedures outlined in the Staff Handbook and Staff Code of Conduct.

Staff will maintain a timetable outlining weekly activities, which will be shared via PPT on the shared drive each morning. Written communications to specific staff members are delivered via email.

Staff will ensure they are responsible for checking school communication systems to keep up to date with developments daily.

For transparency all verbal communication, either face to face or over the phone, will be followed up in an email from the staff member to their colleague, outlining details of their discussion and any actions agreed.

### **Communication between members of staff and students**

Staff will not engage in personal correspondence with students. Where students do need to be contacted, staff will do so by proxy via external communication with parents, rather than to students directly.

## **5. External communication**

### **Communication from the school to parents**

Parents will be contacted through the following methods:

- Letters home
- Phone calls
- The school website
- School newsletters
- In-person meetings

In line with the Policy, staff will not communicate or interact with parents or students via social networking sites, except in the case of blogs or social media pages set up specifically for the purpose of teaching and learning and parent/family engagement.

School will not communicate via social media or engage in communication on social media about any children or matters affecting children who attend Dovecote School.

Parents will be given the opportunity to sign up to newsletters and other marketing communication via email.

The school subscribes to an electronic communication system, ENGAGE which is used to achieve effective and consistent communication with parents. The school will ensure that:

- Only the headteacher, and other staff authorised by the headteacher, can access, and use the messaging system.
- Parents are asked to provide their consent and details for the use of the system at the beginning of each academic year.
- 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.

Where possible the headteacher or a representative of the headteacher will hold meetings for new parents prior to their child's entry to the school.

If a student is absent from school and the school has no indication of the reason for the absence, the school will contact the student's parent via **telephone** on the first day of absence to find out the reason for the absence. If no contact can be made with any named parent, the school will mark the child as 'unauthorised absence' and has the right to contact the education welfare officer to ensure the student's wellbeing and safety.

School will contact parents via phone-call, when Physical Intervention has been used during the day and to handover of any relevant information to support de-brief of the incident/s.

The child's teacher or a member of the Senior Leadership group will contact parent/carer via phone-call, when situations have arisen during the day which necessitate a change of plan for a child's timetable. Where possible, but not in every case, parents/carers and a child will be given notice of changes to allow for processing time and support for managing change. However, parents/carers are aware that, where necessary, this may need to be short notice to manage potential risks.

### **Communication from parents to the school**

For general and urgent enquiries, parents will be required to ring the school office, which is open from **Monday to Friday** between **8:45am and 4:30pm**, on **01458 333127**. For non-urgent enquiries, parents will be required to **email** the school using **reception@dovecoteschool.co.uk**. All emails to the school need to specify one 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. A Auto reply email message will be sent to you with the following information;

*"Please note that the school's core working hours are **8:00am to 5:00pm**, Monday to Friday. Outside of these hours, communication will only take place where this has been **agreed in advance**, as we are committed to maintaining clear boundaries to support staff well-being. Between the hours of **8.45-3.15pm** all staff will be supporting teaching or learning and therefore are unable to respond immediately to your email.*

*While we aim to respond to all communication as promptly as possible, please be aware that some replies may take up to **five working days**.*

*If your enquiry is **urgent**, please call the school directly on **01458 333127**. For messages outside of school working hours, you are welcome to leave a brief voicemail, and we will return your call the following working day. Alternatively, please contact us again during our usual operational hours.”*

Family, Inclusion and Wellbeing practitioners will oversee communication not relating to academic support.

Parents will inform their child’s class teacher, in the first instance, or SENCO/Family Liaison, where there have been any significant changes to their home routine or any pending, to ensure school can best support a child and better understand behaviours. This includes (but is not exclusive of) changes in family circumstances, significant adults being absent for periods of time and changes in medication.

### **Communication between teachers and parents**

Teachers update parents of students’ progress and engagement at the end of each day. Where appropriate and agreed in advance, this will include the curriculum content being covered, and how they can support students’ development and progress through activities to be completed at home.

Teachers will be available to discuss students’ progress and any concerns with parents outside of the school hours and when pre-arranged, where appropriate.

Parents are asked to be sensitive to the working hours of teachers and other staff; communicating within the time parameter of ‘normal’ working hours of **8:00am to 5:00pm**. Teachers and other staff will not be available for communication with parents outside of these hours, unless agreed in advance. Some communication may not be responded to for a maximum of 5 days.

For transparency all verbal communication, either face to face or over the phone, will be followed up in an email from the staff member to the parent/carer, outlining details of their discussion and any actions agreed.

Staff will log communication with parents and carers on internal school recording systems (CPOMS and Family, Inclusion and Wellbeing records) for clarity and to support communication trail.

## 6. 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 student is seriously ill or injured, the school will attempt to contact the student's emergency contacts 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** with information on how the school will be operating, e.g., reduced hours or closure. If the school is closed for more than **one day** due to adverse weather or similar problem, an update will be posted on the school website at least **once** a day.

## 7. Email communication

Email and internet access will be used in line with the school's Data Protection Policy.

All staff will have their own email account, which will be used to conduct all school-related communication – staff will not use their personal email addresses. Emails will not be used as a substitute for face-to-face communication. Staff will consider the best way to communicate according to each individual situation.

The school aim to respond to all email enquiries 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. Part-time staff will not be available to answer communications outside of their scheduled working hours, unless previously agreed.

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.

The following processes will be implemented to assist with the management of email communication:

### 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 handle 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 forwarded to appropriate member of staff.
- Parents will only use staff-specific email addresses if they need to contact a specific member of staff directly.

### **Implementing set times for responding to emails**

- The school has a set window of time that staff can be expected to respond to emails, which will be communicated to the school community. This is between **08:00 – 17:00**. Teachers and other staff will not be available for communication with parents outside of these hours or within school hours (9-3), unless agreed in advance.
- Parents will be made aware that staff are not able to check emails consistently throughout the day. If there are urgent enquires, these must come through the school office, where they can be directed to the most appropriate person available at that time.
- The school community will be encouraged to only send emails during this window and informed that if emails are sent outside of this window, they should not expect an immediate response in most cases.
- Classroom based staff will have an 'out of office' notification set for any emails received during school hours of 9am-3pm.
- The school will not expect work emails to be checked and/or responded to outside of working hours.

### **Providing support to staff**

- Guidance will be provided to staff regarding email good practice, including in relation to prioritising emails, using filters, and carrying out regular inbox house-keeping.
- 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, to reduce emails received.

## 8. Meetings with staff and parents

### Meetings between members of staff

A programme of regular staff meetings will be set out in the school calendar at the beginning of each academic year. Additional meetings will be added to the calendar as required, with appropriate notice to prepare. 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.

For all formal meetings, attendees will be invited to contribute to the agenda at least one day in advance, minutes will be taken, action points will be progressed, and feedback will be given to relevant staff. Minutes of meetings will be copied to staff members as appropriate, as well as the SLG, and a copy will be saved in a clearly marked folder on the staff shared drive.

When parents wish to organise meetings with members of staff, they will first contact the **school office** before communicating with the appropriate member of staff directly. Parents will be required to organise meetings with members of staff with adequate preparation time, i.e., at least **two working days** before the meeting. Lessons will not be interrupted to accommodate parents needing to speak to a teacher.

If parents urgently need to meet with a member of staff, they will phone the **school office** as soon as possible – the **office staff** will aim to find a senior member of staff to see parents **before the end of the day**. For non-urgent meetings between parents and staff, the school will aim to meet parents within **four working days**. The school will determine the level of urgency in requests for meetings.

### Recording of Meetings and Conversations

Dovecote School may record meetings and conversations with parents and carers as part of normal professional practice, in order to support accurate record-keeping, safeguarding, and clarity of agreed actions. This applies to face-to-face meetings, telephone calls, and online meetings.

Recording is undertaken in accordance with the UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, and ICO guidance. Parents and carers will be informed in advance where reasonably practicable and reminded at the start of meetings or calls. Recordings are stored securely, retained only as long as necessary, and not shared externally without a lawful basis.

Parents and carers are expected not to record meetings or conversations independently without prior agreement. Any unauthorised recording will be managed in line with school procedures.

## **9. Data protection and consent**

The school will abide by its Data Protection Policy and related documentation in all of its communication and when carrying out marketing activities.

Staff members' personal details will not be shared with other members of staff or external agencies without a lawful basis for data processing as outlined in the UK GDPR. Under no circumstances will staff members' personal details be shared with parents.

### **Consent**

The school will ensure its consent mechanisms meet the standards of the UK GDPR in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy. The school will only accept consent where:

- It has been positively indicated – consent will not be inferred from silence, inactivity or pre-ticked boxes.
- It is given freely, specific, informed, and an unambiguous indication of the individual's wishes.

The DPO (Data Protection Officer) and marketing officer will ensure a record of consent is kept, documenting how and when consent was given. The DPO will manage all requests to withdraw consent.

Where the school requests consent for marketing purposes, the request will clearly outline and explain that consent can be withdrawn by the individual at any time. The DPO will vet all consent requests relating to marketing before they are sent out to ensure they comply with the UK GDPR.

Individual's consent will always be sought for the following:

- Written marketing material, including emails, text messages, and letters home.
- Direct social media marketing material, e.g., tagging individuals in posts.
- The use of images and/or videos of students, e.g., in the school prospectus, website, and other promotional material.

The school reserves the right to use any data, e.g., photos, that was processed before consent was withdrawn, as consent was given at the point of processing; however, the

school will take all reasonable measures to remove any data for which consent was provided before the consent was withdrawn, e.g., photos on social media.

Consent will be reviewed at least **annually**. Where necessary, the school will request that individuals refresh their consent considering any changes to data processing.

### **Right to object**

In accordance with the UK GDPR, all individuals have the right to object to receiving direct marketing correspondence. The school will make the individual's right to object clear when requesting consent.

Where an individual exercises their right to object, the school will stop processing personal data for direct marketing purposes as soon as the objection is received. The school will not refuse an individual's objection regarding personal data that is being processed for direct marketing purposes.

### **Right to erasure**

In accordance with the UK GDPR, all individuals have the right to request the deletion or removal of personal data where there is no compelling reason for its continued processing, e.g., where a parent's child has left the school.

In requests for consent, the marketing officer and DPO will ensure the reasons for processing are clear, e.g., by ensuring they are not obscured by lengthy procedures or small print. In its requests for consent, the school will make it clear all individuals have the right to erasure in the following circumstances:

- Where the personal data is no longer necessary in relation to the purpose for which it was originally collected or processed.
- When the individual withdraws their consent.
- When the individual objects to the processing and there is no overriding legitimate interest for continuing the processing.
- The personal data was unlawfully processed.
- The personal data is required to be erased in order to comply with a legal obligation.
- The personal data is processed in relation to the offer of information society services to a child.

## **Right of access and SARs (Subject Access Requests)**

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

The procedure below will be followed for SARs:

- The requests will be made in writing to the governing board and will be responded to within one month of receipt.
- A 'reasonable fee' may be charged for the administrative costs of complying with a request if it is manifestly unfounded or excessive, or if an individual requests further copies of their data.
- 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 student, or the parent of a student, will have the right to access the information that the school holds about the student 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.

## **Freedom of information requests**

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, and 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.

## **10. Marketing**

Individuals will not receive any marketing materials until after the school has received their consent, in line with the school's Data Protection Policy.

Marketing correspondence sent by the school will solely pertain to school-run or school-assisted events and causes. The school will not pass any personal data on to its suppliers or third parties for marketing purposes.

The marketing officer is responsible for creating suitable marketing materials which fit the needs and aims of the school. Marketing materials will be targeted at parents and LAs, and be used to communicate the school's ethos, values, and vision, with a clear link to the local area and wider community.

All marketing materials will receive approval from the headteacher prior to publication. The governing board will set a marketing budget at the beginning of each academic year that the marketing officer must work within.

For the purposes of this policy, "**direct marketing**" is defined as the communication of any advertising or marketing material which is directed to particular individuals. The school will only directly market to parents through written correspondence, e.g., emails and letters home, and only where explicit consent has been provided for the school to do so. Only the parents of current and prospective students will receive direct marketing.

### **The school website**

The website will be used to communicate information regarding the following:

- Clubs and activities
- School hours
- School uniform
- Term dates
- The school calendar.
- Ofsted reports
- Exam information
- Additional information helpful and relevant to parents and carers, including Dovecote Family Support Committee

The school website will be updated each term. The content of the website will complement the work of the school and contain information about the most recent activities and successes of the school, including progress, priorities, and performance.

### **The school website and social media**

In accordance with the School Website Policy, the school will ensure its website meets the requirements of the UK GDPR.

The marketing officer is responsible for creating and uploading the content of the school's website and any social media accounts. The marketing officer will routinely monitor and review the use of school social media accounts, developing the school's social media presence to achieve maximum optimisation.

Social media presence will be monitored and managed by the school lead. Parents can request to join and/or post on social media via the approval process. The school lead reserves the right to deny approval for any post requests when they have malicious intent or could implicate or damage the school's reputation or are not relevant to the needs of the whole school family community.

Parents will conduct their communication on social media with respect and consideration for UK GDPR. Names of staff and students cannot be shared on social media without express consent from those implicated.

Parents are encouraged to raise concerns directly with the school rather than on public platforms and will seek to resolve any concerns with the school leadership team, then via the School Complaints Policy. Staff will comply with the School Code of Conduct Policy (DC11) when communicating with parents, each other, and outside agencies.

All school news, press releases and announcements will be regularly uploaded to the school website, posted on social media, and, where necessary, sent to local news outlets. The school's website and relevant social media accounts will also be used to connect with the wider community, for example through advertising enrichment activities.

## **11. Monitoring and review**

The efficiency of this policy will be continually monitored throughout the year by the headteacher and governing board. This policy will be reviewed **annually**. The next scheduled review date for this policy is 01/08/2026.