



HEADLANDS SCHOOL
SINCE 1965

Emergency Contacts Priority Policy for Schools

Written by	Executive Headteacher		
Creation date	Summer 2026		
Adopted by Governors	Summer 2026		
Reviewed by		Date	
Next Review Date	Summer 2029		

Headlands School

Emergency Contacts Priority Policy for Schools

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure timely and appropriate communication with authorised individuals during student emergencies while safeguarding student welfare and privacy.

1. Primary Contact

The school will first attempt to contact the student's designated primary parent or legal guardian using all available contact methods (phone call, text message, or email where applicable).

2. Secondary Contact(s)

If the primary contact cannot be reached within a reasonable period based on the urgency of the situation, the school will contact the designated secondary parent, legal guardian or other authorised individual as determined on the child's Application Form. It is possible that the secondary contact(s) can be two authorised individuals. They would be contacted using all available contact methods at the same time.

3. Additional Emergency Contacts

If neither parent nor legal guardian can be reached, the school will contact the additional emergency contacts listed by the parent / guardian in the order specified on the student's emergency contact form (detailed on the child's Application Form).

4. Medical Emergencies

In life-threatening or serious medical emergencies:

- Emergency medical services will be contacted immediately.
- School staff will not delay calling emergency services while attempting to reach parents or guardians.
- Parents, guardians, and emergency contacts will be notified as soon as practicable after emergency services have been contacted.

5. Student Release

Students will only be released to:

- A parent or legal guardian.
- Individuals specifically authorised in writing by the parent or legal guardian.
- Individuals who provide satisfactory identification when requested.

6. Contact Information

Parents and guardians are responsible for:

- Providing accurate emergency contact information.
- Updating the school promptly whenever phone numbers, addresses, or authorised contacts change.
- Ensuring emergency contacts are aware they have been listed and are willing to act on the student's behalf if needed.

7. Documentation

School staff will document:

- The time and method of each contact attempt.
- The person contacted.
- The outcome of each attempt.
- Any actions taken.

8. Confidentiality

Emergency contact information will be:

- Used solely for school-related purposes.
- Maintained securely in accordance with applicable privacy and data protection laws.
- Accessible only to authorized school personnel.

9. Annual Review

Emergency contact information should be reviewed and confirmed by parents or guardians at least once each school year and whenever significant family or contact changes occur.

10. Separated Parents

Where a student has separated, divorced, or otherwise living-apart parents or legal guardians, the school requires that the order of emergency contact priority be agreed between those individuals who have parental responsibility, unless a court order or other legal direction states otherwise. The details of agreed Emergency Contacts will then be added to the child's Application Form.

The school is not responsible for determining which parent or guardian should be listed as the first, second, or subsequent emergency contact. Decisions regarding emergency contact priority are a family matter and must be resolved by the parents or legal guardians. The school will expect this to have been discussed and agreed in advance of the child's Application Form being completed and submitted to school.

Parents or legal guardians are expected to:

- Provide the school with a jointly agreed emergency contact priority order.
- Notify the school promptly of any agreed changes.
- Provide copies of any relevant court orders, parenting orders, or other legal documents that affect communication, collection arrangements, or parental responsibility.

Where parents or legal guardians provide conflicting instructions regarding emergency contact priority and there is no applicable court order or legal direction, the school may:

- Continue using the existing emergency contact information until the matter is resolved by the parents or legal guardians; or
- Require written agreement from all parties with parental responsibility before making changes.

The school will not mediate, arbitrate, or become involved in parental disputes regarding emergency contact priority. Its responsibility is to maintain accurate records based on the information and lawful documentation provided.

Nothing in this policy prevents the school from contacting emergency services immediately where required or from taking any action necessary to protect the health, safety, or welfare of a student.

Exceptions

The school may depart from the standard contact order when:

- A court order, custody agreement, or legal restriction requires a different procedure.
- There is a reasonable concern that contacting a particular individual could place the student at risk.
- Emergency responders or child protection authorities provide alternate instructions.

Responsibility

The Executive Head is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently and that staff receive appropriate training on emergency communication procedures.