



SCHOOL COMMUNICATION POLICY

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Policy Owner:	Ms Rebecca Willmouth
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1. Introduction and aims

Our motto “Aiming for Excellence” and “Manners Matter” captures the essence of our school's key aims. We wish to provide the very best for your child in a disciplined, hardworking and, most importantly, happy environment.

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/carers has a positive impact on pupils’ learning because it:

- Gives parents/carers the information they need to support their child’s education
- Helps the school improve, through feedback and consultation with parents/carers
- Builds trust between home and school, which helps the school better support each child’s educational and pastoral needs

The aim of this policy is to promote clear and open communication by:

- Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers
- Setting clear standards and expectations for responding to communication from parents/carers
- Setting expectations from parents when visiting our school or communicating with staff at our school
- Helping parents/carers reach the member of school staff who is best placed to address their specific query or concern so they can get a response as quickly as possible

We acknowledge that sometimes there can be situations that can be emotional and challenging for parents and staff to work through. Nonetheless, we expect all our community to show mutual respect. We have clear expectations and guidelines on behaviour for all members of our community. This includes staff (through our Staff Code of Conduct Policy) and pupils (through

our Behaviour Policy). We also expect parents to engage constructively with school staff and to work together with them in the best interests of our children and through our Parent Code of Conduct.

In the following sections, we will use 'parents' to refer to both parents and carers.

We will only communicate with parents in respect of their own child at the school. Requests to raise a concern on behalf of another parent will be declined, as will be requests for information on another child. Should any correspondence be received from legal advisers then this will be shared with the school's legal advisers.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy
- Regularly reviewing this policy

2.2 Teachers and other staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's Acceptable User Policies (we have separate policies for pupils, staff and parents). These policies are on the website.
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)

Teachers will **aim** to respond to communication on the same day (if they have no evening meetings) during the core school hours (**08:00 – 17:00**), or their working hours (if they work part-time). In line with promoting staff wellbeing and helping our staff find a suitable work-life balance, staff may work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond outside of these hours, but they are **not expected** to do so.

2.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance
- Respond to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with our Parent Code of Conduct. Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours (**08:00 – 17:00**), or during school holidays. It should be noted that teachers are in staff meeting on a Monday until 17:00. The school office closes at 16:00 and on Friday our phones switch to answer machine at 15:30.

3. How we communicate with parents and carers

The sections below explain how we keep parents up-to-date with their child's education and what is happening in school.

Parents should monitor all of the following regularly to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child.

3.1 CHPS Weekly Noticeboard

We use the 'CHPS Weekly Noticeboard' to highlight what is happening in the week(s) ahead. On the Noticeboard you will find important reminders and community events along with site-specific details and links to letters on trips, Parents Evening, tournaments, Fundraising Friends events etc.

The CHPS Weekly Noticeboard communication aims to limit the number of emails being sent home every week by having everything in one email. If you think you have missed a Noticeboard communication please don't worry, you will still be able to find all the details and information you need on our website.

The Noticeboard link is sent out via email every Thursday at 14:00, except in the last week of each half term when the Newsletter is sent. The CHPS Weekly Noticeboard will contain information and links to the following things:

- Important reminders
- Class activities
- Letters about trips and visits
- Updates on school events e.g. Parents Evening or World Book Day
- Updates on Fundraising Friends events or initiatives
- Holiday clubs
- Local events of interest etc

3.2 Email

We use email to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Head bumps
- Inhaler use
- Payments
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Termly attendance updates
- CHPS Weekly Noticeboard
- Half termly Newsletter

3.3 Text messages

We will text parents about emergency or urgent changes/information:

- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)

3.4 Home-school communication app - Class Dojo

Teachers use Class Dojo to message parents about:

- Class activities or teacher requests and updates
- Teaching and learning updates/reminders
- Changes to normal routines, as required e.g. trips, visitors, parents' evenings
- Homework

3.5 School calendar

Our school website and newsletter include a full school calendar for the half-term/term. Events are subject to change if unexpected circumstances arise e.g. staff illness/absence, industrial action or date clashes with other schools

Where possible, we try to give parents at least 2 weeks' notice of any events or special occasions (including non-uniform days, special assemblies or visitors, or requests for pupils to bring in special items or materials).

Any such event will be included in the school calendar.

3.6 Phone calls

We will phone in order to

- check absence and attendance
- inform parents of an accident, injury e.g. head bump
- provide other medical updates

3.7 Letters

Where possible we try to be paperless and communicate electronically. All letters are on our website and these will be highlighted on the CHPS Weekly Noticeboard. Occasionally we may send letters home where this is deemed the most appropriate form of communication.

3.8 Home School Books

The home school books are to record homework completion e.g. TT Rockstar's and reading

3.9 Reports

Parents receive an annual report, towards the end of the summer term, from the school about their child's learning, including:

- An end-of-year report covering their child's effort and achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing
- A summary of their child's attendance
- A report on their child's Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2 SATs tests/ teacher assessments

We also arrange a termly Parent Evening (in autumn and spring term) where parents can speak to their child's teacher(s) about their achievement and progress.

3.10 Meetings

Face-to-face conversations are generally the best way of communicating with the school at drop off or pick up for quick, short messages. When a member of staff is not able to speak to you immediately face-to-face due to school commitments, or a longer conversation is deemed necessary or appropriate, then a request for an appointment can be made via email to the school office to discuss the matter either in person or by telephone, at a later date. Teachers will aim to arrange that meeting within 3 working days.

Outside of teaching hours, all staff have additional duties which they perform either before school, during break/lunch or after school so availability of staff outside of teaching hours should not be assumed.

Should a meeting be requested the decision of which staff member will attend will rest with the Headteacher.

We hold two Parents' Evenings per year in Autumn and Spring Term. During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum or schemes of work, their child's wellbeing, or any other area of concern.

The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings between parents' evenings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing.

Parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these additional needs.

3.11 School website

Key information about the school is posted on our website, including but not limited to:

- School times and term dates
- Important events and announcements
- School trips
- Parent Evenings & how to book
- Curriculum information
- Statutory policies and procedures
- Contact information
- Information about before and after-school provision

We work hard to keep the content on the school website relevant and up-to-date and encourage parents to check www.castlehillprimary.net before contacting the school.

4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

Parents should use the list in Appendix 1 to identify the most appropriate person to contact about a query or issue, including the school office number and email address.

4.1 Email

Parents should always email the school office, marking it for the attention of the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

During term time we aim to acknowledge all emails within 1-2 working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 1-2 working days.

If a query or concern is urgent, and parents need a response sooner than this, they should call the school.

4.2 Phone calls

If parents need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should email the school office marking it for the attention of the relevant member of staff as outline above. Alternatively, parents can use the Class Dojo communication tool to contact their child's teacher directly.

If it is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), a member of staff will respond to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. During term time we aim to make sure parents have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within 2 working days of your request.

If the issue is **urgent**, parents should call the school office.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

For more general enquiries, please call the school office. If an admin team member cannot answer your query then they will pass your enquiry to a relevant member of staff.

4.3 Meetings

If parents would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the school office or contact the teachers directly via Class Dojo (see appendix 1), or call the school office to book an appointment.

Teachers try to schedule all meetings within 3 working days of the request. Senior Leaders within 5 days of request

While teachers are available at the beginning or end of the school day if parents need to speak to them urgently, we recommend they book appointments to discuss:

- Any concerns they have about their child's learning
- Updates related to pastoral support, their child's home environment, or their wellbeing

In addition, our SENDCO holds a parent phone in clinic, for you to discuss your child's special educational needs in person. This is bookable via the school office.

4.4 Home-school communications app - Class Dojo

The main school communication tool is Class Dojo and we encourage all parents to have a login. Teachers will pick up messages during the day but will not respond if they are teaching. We ask parents to respect the teachers work life balance and contact them within school working hours, between **08:00 and 17:00**.

5. Inclusion

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school.

We aim to make communications accessible to all. We have taken the following steps to achieve this:

- All communications are written as clearly and concisely as possible
- Consideration is given when designing and updating the school website

We currently make whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) available in English but in the past, we have also created documents the following languages:

- Russian
- Polish
- Arabic
- Spanish

Parents who need help communicating with the school can request the following support:

- School announcements and communications translated into additional languages
- Interpreters for meetings or phone calls

We can make additional arrangements if necessary. Please contact the school office to discuss these.

6. Monitoring and review

The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every 2 years.

The policy will be approved by the governing board.

7. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- Acceptable user policies
- Parent code of conduct
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints policy
- Behaviour policy
- SEND Policy

8. Appendix 1: School Contact List

Who should I contact?

Remember: Please check our website first, much of the information you need is posted there www.castlehillprimary.net

If you have questions about any of the topics in the table below, or would like to speak to a member of staff:

- Email or call the school office on admin@chjs.net
- Put the subject and the name of the relevant member of staff in the subject line (for emails)
- We will forward your request on to the relevant member of staff
- Call the school on (01256) 473 777

Please note that our school office closes at 16:00 and on a Friday our phones switch to answer machine at 15:30. The teachers are encouraged not to look at emails after 17:00.

Disclaimer: *Castle Hill Primary School respects the privacy and work-life balance of its staff. We do not expect our staff to check or respond to emails or Class Dojo when they are not at work, on weekends, or during holidays. Teaching staff will prioritise teaching activities and we cannot guarantee your email / Class Dojo will be read the same day you send it. Office staff emails will only be read on working days and if an email has been sent after noon on any working day, then it will most likely be actioned the following working day.*

I need to communicate with the school about...	Who you need to contact....
My child's learning/class/activities/lessons/homework	Your child's class teacher via Class Dojo
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your child's class teacher via Class Dojo
Payments	School Office via email – admin@chjs.net
School trips	School Office via email – admin@chjs.net
Uniform/lost and found	Your child's class teacher via Class Dojo or check in lost property (please ask at the school office to direct you to lost property at each school)
Attendance and absence requests	<p>To report your child's absence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Call the School Office on 01256 473 777 2. Select your child's school site <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Option 1 for Greenbank b. Option 2 for Rooksdawn 3. Then select Option 1 to leave an absence message. <p>If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact the School office. Alternatively, you can find the '<i>Request to Authorise Exceptional Absence from School Form</i>' on our website www.castlehillprimary.net/our-school/attendance</p>
Bullying and behaviour	Your child's class teacher either in person or via Class Dojo
School events/the school calendar	School website www.castlehillprimary.net
Special educational needs (SEN)	Your child's class teacher and/or the SENDCo (Mrs Lund)
Before and after-school clubs	School Office via email for internal clubs. For clubs run by external providers please contact them directly.
Hiring the school premises	School Office via email for the attention of Finance Officer - Mrs Shorey Site Manager – Mr Tutton
Fundraising Friends	Please contact Fundraising Friends directly: Greenbank Friends email: gfff@chjs.net Rooksdawn Friends email: rdff@chjs.net
Governing board	Clerk to Governors - Mrs Toobe: mt@chjs.net
Catering/meals	School Office via email Lunchtime Leads Mrs Arnold (Rooksdawn) and Mrs Goddard (Greenbank)

Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our [Complaints Policy](#).