

SCHOOL COMMUNICATION POLICY

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Policy Owner:	Mrs Louise Riordan
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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 for 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 some situations 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 behaviour guidelines 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 work with them in our children's best interests, as set out in 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 about their own child at the school. We will decline requests to raise a concern on behalf of another parent, as well as requests for information about another child. If we receive any correspondence from legal advisers, we will share it 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)

Due to the high volume of emails we receive, we cannot guarantee a same-day response, but we will endeavour to respond within 48 hours. If your query is urgent, please phone the school office on 01256 473 777

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

2.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

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

We will treat any communication considered disrespectful, abusive, or threatening in line with our Parent Code of Conduct. Parents should **not** expect staff to respond outside core school hours (**08:00 – 17:00**) or during school holidays. Teachers attend staff meetings on Mondays until at least 17:00. The school office closes at 16:00, and on Friday our phones switch to the answering machine at 15:30.

3. How we communicate with parents

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

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

3.1 School website

Castle Hill Primary School have a 'drive to web' communication strategy. Our school website is our main communication device. We work hard to keep the content on the school website relevant and up to date, and we encourage parents to check www.castlehillprimary.net before contacting the school. 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

3.2 CHPS Weekly Noticeboard

The CHPS Weekly Noticeboard highlights what is happening in the week(s) ahead in a single email sent every Thursday at 2:00 PM (except during the last week of a half term, when it is replaced by the Newsletter).

If you miss an email, you can find all information on the school website.

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

3.3 Email

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

- Head bumps
- Inhaler use
- Payments
- School surveys or consultations

- Termly attendance updates
- CHPS Weekly Noticeboard
- Half-termly Newsletter

3.4 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).

We will include these events in the school calendar.

3.5 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)

3.6 Class Dojo

Class Stories: A secure feed where teachers can post updates, announcements, and reminders about daily classroom life or school events. Teachers use them to send a weekly message to 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

Please Note: While messaging is available on ClassDojo, **teachers do not monitor or respond to messages on the platform;** please contact the school office by phone or email to pass along any messages.

3.7 Phone calls

We will phone to:

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

3.8 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 when this is the most appropriate form of communication.

3.9 Reading Records

We use Reading Record books in KS1 to track home reading (Years R, 1 and 2).

3.10 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, and 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.

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

If a meeting is requested, the Headteacher will decide which staff member will attend.

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 other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these needs.

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. We ask parents not to email teachers directly.

During term time, we aim to acknowledge all emails within 48 hours and respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call, if appropriate) within 3-4 working days.

If a query or **concern is urgent** and parents need a response sooner, 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 and mark it for the attention of the relevant member of staff, as outlined above.

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, they will pass it 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 will respond within 5 working days of the 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

5. Inclusion

We want everyone in our community to 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 in 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 implementation of this policy and reviews it through the governing body every 2 years.

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

Please refer to the website to access the school policies <https://www.castlehillprimary.net/policies>

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 Fridays our phones switch to the answer machine at 15:30.

Teachers are encouraged not to look at emails after 17:00.

Disclaimer: Castle Hill Primary School respects its staff's privacy and work-life balance. We do not expect our staff to check or respond to emails when they are not at work, on weekends, or during holidays. Teaching staff will prioritise teaching activities, and we cannot guarantee we will read your email the same day you send it. Office staff will only read emails on working days, and if an email is sent after noon on any working day, 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, either in person or via email to Admin@chjs.net
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your child's class teacher, either in person or via email to Admin@chjs.net
Payments	School Office via an email to Admin@chjs.net
School trips	School Office via an email to Admin@chjs.net
Uniform/lost and found	Your child's class teacher or check in lost property (please ask at the school office to direct you to lost property at each school)

School events/the school calendar	School website www.castlehillprimary.net
Attendance and absence requests	To report your child's absence: 1. Call the School Office on 01256 473777 2. Select your child's school site a. Option 1 for Greenbank b. Option 2 for Rooksdown 3. Then select Option 1 to leave an absence message. If you need to request approval for term-time absence, contact the School Office and ask for the following form: <i>'Request to Authorise Exceptional Absence from School Form'</i>.
Before and after-school clubs	Email the School Office for internal clubs. For clubs run by external providers, please contact them directly.
Bullying and behaviour	Your child's class teacher, either in person or via email to Admin@chjs.net
Catering/meals	School Office via an email to Admin@chjs.net for attention of Lunchtime Leads: Mrs Arnold (Rooksdown), Mrs Goddard (Greenbank)
Fundraising Friends	Please contact Fundraising Friends directly: Rooksdown: Rooksdown Friends email: rdff@chjs.net Greenbank: There is not currently an active Fundraising Friends group at Greenbank
Governing board	Clerk to Governors - Mrs Toobe: mt@chjs.net
Hiring the school premises	School Office via an email to Admin@chjs.net for the attention of Finance Officer - Mrs Shorey, Senior Site Manager - Mr Vincent
Parental concern (that has not been solved by class teacher/Head of Year (HoY))	Miss N Harding deals with longer-running concerns, worries, or issues.
Parental Complaints	Raise complaints with the class teacher or Head of Year in the first instance. If your complaint remains unresolved or is not teaching and learning linked, please email complaints@castlehillprimary.net, where it will be triaged, in line with Complaints Policy
Special educational needs (SEN)	Your child's class teacher and/or SENDCo's: Mrs Cook (Rooksdown), Miss Mould (Greenbank)