

Little Kingshill Combined School



COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

This policy was adopted in Spring 2025

Communication with Our Parents and Carers: A Protocol

Contact with parents and carers is welcomed by all who work at Little Kingshill Combined School. Effective communication fosters mutual understanding and support which has a positive effect on the well-being of our pupils.

To achieve the most effective balance for pupils, parents/ carers and teachers, we follow these principles:

- Welcoming contact from parents and carers
- Responding as quickly and fully as possible to parents and carers, using the most appropriate form of communication for each context within agreed time scales
- Involving parents in our work with children
- Sharing information as often and as fully as possible with parents and carers.

Contacting the school

If parents/ carers have something they wish to discuss regarding their child, the class teacher or another teacher who was taking the class should be the first point of contact. More serious matters may subsequently be referred to a more senior member of staff if necessary. Please call in at the office or telephone to arrange an appointment.

Should you need to pass a message to a class teacher, please do so via a note sent in with your child. Please do not contact individual teachers directly on email.

Illness should be reported before 8.30 in the morning, by dialling the main school number, selecting option 1 and leaving a message including brief details of the symptoms. Absences known about in advance should be advised to the office directly, in person or by email.

Parents and carers can expect to receive the following written/electronic communications providing they have opted into said school communications, following the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR):

- A regularly updated school website with important information (e.g. school policies, school calendar of events, documents relating to school clubs, weekly newsletters).
- Weekly newsletters (excluding the final week of term), giving details of forthcoming events.
- Termly updates on the class pages (on website) from the class teacher.
- Weekly updates from EYFS and class teachers that detail activities for the forthcoming week on the class pages (on the website).
- Additional information letters and/or parent mails as required to groups or individuals (e.g. letters relating to sports fixtures and educational visits).
- An annual written report in the summer term.
- Informal notes in home/school reading diary for EYFS and Key Stage 1.
- SEN updates from the Inclusion Co-ordinator will be placed on the main page of the class pages (on the website).
- A letter from the Headteacher in response to more serious matters.

In case of the need for emergency communication, parents/ carers can expect the following:

- A phone call if the incident involves your child in particular
- In case of an emergency school closure during the day a ParentMail message will be sent out and then individual parents contacted if they have not responded to the original message.

- In case of an emergency school closure before the start of the school day, messages will go out on local radio, through ParentMail and the **Local Authority** website.
- In case of an unexpected change of arrangements in clubs, fixtures or trips, parents/carers will be notified by ParentMail.
- In case of head bumps, you will receive an advisory ParentMail message. If it is a serious bump the school will make contact by telephone.

We can reasonably expect parents and carers to:

- Speak to all staff in a polite and respectful manner.
- Appreciate that staff will end conversations which are conducted in an aggressive tone.
- Keep us informed of changes in contact information and personal circumstances via SIMSParent App which affect your child.
- Sign the Home/School Agreement.
- Read and respond to letters/ParentMail messages sent home.
- Send non-urgent messages directly to the teacher.
- Phone or e-mail the school to arrange an appointment with your child's teacher if you wish to discuss an issue.
- Appreciate that teachers have a duty of care towards their class from 8.45 a.m. and, therefore, are not available to speak to parents **prior to the start of the school day unless an appointment has been made.**
- Check homework diaries and home/ school reading diary for messages from staff.
- Ensure that other adults responsible for your child are notified of any relevant messages conveyed from the school (e.g. verbal messages, emails, text messages, via letters or reading/ homework diaries).
- Send all e-mails (including those for the attention of the Headteacher) to the office e-mail address.

We can reasonably expect staff to:

- Speak to parents and carers in a polite and respectful manner.
- End conversations which are conducted in an aggressive tone.
- Reply to informal letters, e-mails sent via the school office and phone messages. There should be no expectation that a member of staff should reply to any message received during a weekend, holiday or outside of school working hours, until the next working day begins. **However, we will commit to staff responding within 48 hours (during the working week).**
- Reply to parent notes written in the reading or homework diaries when they are next checked. (We ask that parents do not use these for urgent communications).
- Use an appropriately formal tone in letters sent to parents.
- Not send out a letter or email unless it has been checked by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.
- Not reply to any letter or e-mail received that is rude or aggressive in tone or content but pass the letter to the Headteacher to reply on their behalf.
- When requesting a meeting with parents the topic for discussion to be part of the invite to come in for the meeting.

We expect everyone to:

- Be calm, friendly and polite in all communications
- Have respect for each other

- When meeting, allow enough time to ensure that everyone feels listened to
- Make every effort to build and retain a positive home/school relationship in the interests of the child.

Communication on Social Networks and Private Communication Systems (for example WhatsApp):

We understand in the society that we live in social and communication networks such as Facebook and other and WhatsApp are used extensively by the school community to discuss matters relating to the school. The following are recommendations that the school can make for any parent who is communicating on any such platforms.

- The Class WhatsApp groups or other sub groups are an excellent way for parents to gain clarity from other parents if they don't understand something to do with school (for example homework set), to remind others of events coming up and to support each other. However, please remember that you can gain clarity from the school directly.
- Parents/carers need to be aware that others on the groups may have differing opinions to themselves. If a parent is concerned with something that has been posted with regards to the school they are within their rights to contact the school to alert them to the way an individual is coming across on the group or if they are concerned with the content an individual or group of parents is posting. If the school does have a concern raised the Head Teacher may invite the individual whom the concern is regarding to discuss the issue and alert them to how others on the group are concerned with the way they are conducting themselves.
- Before posting all parents should ask themselves 'Is this something I could raise with the school before posting?'