



# Home School Communication

## Guidelines for Parents, Carers and Families



Positive communication is an essential element of the aims and vision of The Chiltern School. This enables our pupils and families to feel valued and listened to. Effective communication allows pupils to receive continuity of education, care, and support

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within the home and at school. We believe that clear, open communication between school and home has a positive impact on pupil's learning, by allowing information to be shared and fostering trust amongst important people in the pupils' life.

We recognise that many of our parents miss the opportunity to bring their child to school due to home/school transport. This is traditionally an opportunity for parents and staff to informally share information. We hope that by creating other opportunities for communication that we can eliminate this as a barrier so that parents and families still feel engaged in their child's learning.

### **The Chiltern School aims for our Parents, Carers and Families**

- To feel valued and involved as partners in their child's education
- To receive individual information about their child's needs in school
- To be well informed about school events, policies, practices and protocols

### **School Website**

- All information regarding school including; curriculum, pathways, calendar dates, policies and events will be available on the school website. [www.chiltern.beds.sch.uk](http://www.chiltern.beds.sch.uk)

### **General information**

- Parents, Carers and Families will be kept informed about the school and their child through: the school website, newsletters, Class Dojo, SIMs InTouch, SIMs ParentApp, parent progress review meetings, annual review meetings and Celebration of Learning journals.
- A texting service is also used to keep Parents/Carers informed, eg. reminders of events, school closures, etc. Text messages will also be used in the event that a parent has not been contactable via a telephone call.
- Letters and information sent home will also be available on the school's website.
- Parents/Carers will be informed well in advance of whole school closure days related to training.
- Parent/carers forums will be organised across the year to co-produce on topics/issues.
- School will consult regularly with Parents/Carers via online questionnaires and feedback will be provided.
- Arrangements are in place for separated parents to receive relevant information from school.

### **Telephone Communication**

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- There will be a member of staff available to take calls between 8.30am and 4.00pm, Monday to Friday.
  - If Parents/Carers are requesting to speak with a member of the teaching staff please be mindful that they will be teaching from 9am to 3pm and will endeavor to answer your call when possible, **outside of teaching hours**.
  - All calls will be recorded on the SIMs database. This will include logging the date and time of the call, who the call was with and a description of the conversation.
  - If a member of staff calls about a pupil, they will always say how the pupil is first, before talking about why they have phoned.

### Parent/Carer Responsibilities

- Inform the school, by telephone, or email [attendance@chiltern.beds.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@chiltern.beds.sch.uk) of a child's absence. This should be done in addition to any messages sent to the teacher regarding absence.
- Inform the school, by telephone or email, if a pupil is to be collected before the end of day.
- Inform the school, by telephone or email, if a pupil is to be collected by another adult (not with parental responsibility) this person should be given a password by Parents/Carers which they will share when collecting the pupil. The school should be made aware of the password in advance.
- Parents/Carers will be asked yearly to provide updated contact information. It is Parents/Carers responsibility to ensure that school has the most current telephone numbers, especially if a mobile phone number has changed.
- Ensure that school has the contact telephone number for at least one emergency contact.
- Parents/Carers should not contact teachers directly via their email address, but instead use Class Dojo to send messages.
- If a parent/carer has several matters to discuss with a member of staff, or were they have sensitive information to share, such as that pertaining to safeguarding, then please email [school@chiltern.beds.sch.uk](mailto:school@chiltern.beds.sch.uk) and arrange to meet with/speak to the most appropriate member of staff.
- Parents/Carers should complete all online questionnaires that are submitted.
- Parents/Carers should always be respectful when communicating with school staff. Abusive or personal comments will not be tolerated and may lead to further action taken.

### Class Staff Responsibilities

- To ensure that Parents/Carers are given information regarding the **learning** that their child has accessed that day.
- Ensure that messages Parents/Carers have sent are answered in a timely manner, this may not be immediate as their priority is to be present for teaching.
- Staff should always use professional and courteous language when

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- communicating with Parents/Carers and maintain professional boundaries.
  - All written communication from school will be free from jargon and acronyms.
  - Staff will not make contact with Parents/Carers via the school social media pages.
  - Class teachers/HLTAs/LSA 3s have responsibility for communicating via Class Dojo.
  - Phone calls will be made to parents by teachers, of pupils new to the school for the first week of school.
  - If there has been a significant incident parents should be informed by telephone on the same day.

## Class Dojo

The Class Dojo App is the primary method of communication between teaching staff and Parents/Carers.

- Each Parent/Carer will be provided with login information to set up the Class Dojo app.
- Where parents are separated each parent with parental responsibility will be given access to the app.
- As with all communication, class staff are not expected to read or respond to messages during teaching time.
- Teachers will respond to messages on Class Dojo and send updates and information between **8am and 9am/ 3.00pm and 6.00pm**.
- Staff will aim to reply to messages from parents **within 24 hours**.
- There is no expectation for staff to respond to messages at weekends.
- Class Dojo pages will be made available to visiting professionals, e.g. physiotherapist/speech and language therapist/occupational therapist etc. should they need to write a message home.
- Class staff will write a message in class Dojo at least **3 times a week**.
- The focus on information shared by the class staff will be on what the child/young person has been **learning**, the **progress** they have made and how Parents/Carers can support and **extend** learning at home.
- Entries in Class Dojo to Parents/Carers should include:
  - ❖ The learning the pupil has engaged in that day. Lessons/activities/themes etc.
  - ❖ The personal learning goals and outcomes have you focused on.
  - ❖ Description of how teachers and staff have supported that learning. What was implemented?
  - ❖ Description of how parents can support the learning at home.
- Parents can share photos of pupils learning at home, and are encouraged to do so, so this can be uploaded to the Evidence for Learning platform.

## Emails and Electronic Information

- All letters will be sent via SIMs Parent App.

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- Whole School letters will also be shared via Class Dojo.
  - Parents/Carers are expected to respond or make contact via these apps.

## **Social Media Sites**

The Chiltern School has a Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn page and will share news and information about the school via these platforms. This might include news on the learning that has taken place, or a special event that the school wishes to share and celebrate. Our social media pages are designed to highlight positive aspects of our school only. Any negative or inappropriate comments will be removed and may result in further action taken.

Parents must not post pictures of pupils other than their own children on social networking sites where these photographs have been taken at a school event.

## **Dealing with incidents of online bullying / inappropriate use of social networking sites.**

The school's Anti-Bullying Policy sets out the processes and sanctions regarding any type of bullying by a child on the school roll.

In the case of inappropriate use of social networking by parents, the Governing Body will contact the parent asking them to remove such comments and seek redress through the appropriate channels such as the Complaints Policy.

The Governing Body understands that there are circumstances in which policy involvement is appropriate. These include where postings have a racist or discriminatory element or where violence is threatened or encouraged. Furthermore, laws of defamation and privacy still apply to the web and it is unlawful for statements to be written which:

- Expose (an individual) to hatred, ridicule or contempt
- Cause (an individual) to be shunned or avoided
- Lower (an individual's) standing in the estimation of right-thinking member of society
- Disparage (an individual in their) business, trade, office or profession

*(National Association of Headteachers)*

## **Disciplinary action**

Any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action under the school's disciplinary policy. Serious breaches of this policy, such as incidents of bullying or of

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social media activity causing damage to the organisation, may constitute gross misconduct and lead to dismissal.

## Microsoft Teams

Where necessary meetings with families including; pupil progress meetings, annual reviews etc will be held via Microsoft Teams. Families can request technical support and advice if they have not used this platform before.

## Complaints

Any concerns or complaints received by Parents/Carers will aim to be resolved efficiently and sensitively following the school's complaints procedure. More information on this procedure is on the school website.

## Requests for Information

Parents/Carers should refer to our Data Protection and GDPR Policy for copies of children's records, freedom of information and Subject Access Requests. This will detail procedure and protocols, including timings.

