



Altwood
Church of England School

Home-School Communication Policy

John 10:10: 'I have come that they may have life and live it in all its fullness'

Approved by:	Cath Harden	Date: Nov 2024
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Contents

1. Introduction and aims	3
2. Roles and responsibilities	3
3. How we communicate with parents and carers	4
4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school	6
5. Accessibility	7
6. Monitoring and review.....	7
7. Links with other policies.....	7
Appendix 1: school contact list	8

1. Introduction and aims

As a Church of England school we are driven by our values of Truth and Forgiveness and our mission to ensure that every child is 'known, valued and supported to succeed'. To enable every child to flourish we believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/carers is vital and that it 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 school communicates with parents/carers
- › Setting clear standards and expectations for responding to communication from parents/carers
- › 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

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

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- › Creating and communicating a clear vision that ensures every child can flourish
- › Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- › Monitoring the implementation of this policy
- › Regularly reviewing this policy

2.2 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- › Communicating and delivering on our promise to ensure every student is 'known, valued and supported to succeed' and so able to 'live life in all its fullness'.
- › Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy.
- › Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)

Staff will **aim** to respond to communication during core school hours (8.30am -3.10pm), 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:

- Upholding our values and vision through their communication with the school
- 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
- Regularly checking for all communications from the school (by voicemail, email, text or through classcharts).

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be passed to a member of our Senior Leadership Team who will determine if and how further communication takes place. Harassment, including sexual or racial harassment, of our staff is unacceptable and will be treated and responded to very seriously. This may mean restrictions on parents contacting staff or coming onto site and/or a report being made to the Police.

Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours (8.30am-3.10pm), or during school holidays.

2.4 Office/ Finance / IT Staff

Office / Finance / IT staff are responsible for:

- Upholding our values and vision through their communication with all stakeholders
- Sending out details for ClassCharts and how to download and use the parent app.
- Sending out details for Sims Parent and how to download and use this app
- Sending out information about school payment systems and how to set them up
- Supporting parents with queries about school communication systems and their usage

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 Email

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

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests

3.2 Text messages

We will text parents about:

- Payments
- Short-notice changes to the school day

- › Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)

3.3 School calendar

Our school website includes a full school calendar for the academic year

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.

3.4 Phone calls

We encourage staff to phone parents to discuss both positive and negative incidents in school. This may be to inform them about their child receiving a detention or being put on report or to celebrate excellent work or improved attitude to learning. If phone calls are not answered, we would always try to leave a short message to explain the reason for the call and follow up with an email.

3.5 Letters

We send the following letters home regularly:

- › Letters about trips and visits
- › Consent forms
- › Relevant newsletters or updates from the Headteacher

3.6 School planners and ClassCharts

Planners are used to support our students with their timetables and homework. We also use ClassCharts, which parents can access through the parent app, and students can access through the student app. This system enables parents and students to track their positive and negative behaviour points, access their homework and timetable and see any report cards or detentions that have been set.

3.7 Reports

Parents receive reports from the school about their child's learning, including:

- › A 'progress' and a 'full report' each academic year covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, and their attendance
- › A report on the results of public examinations
- › Information about vocational qualifications gained (or credits gained towards these)

We also arrange regular meetings where parents can speak to their child's teacher(s) about their achievement and progress (see the section below).

3.8 Meetings

We hold year group face to face parents' evening(s) each academic year. 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 individual meetings 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.

3.9 School website

Key information about the school is posted on our website, including:

- › School times and term dates
- › Important events and announcements
- › Curriculum information
- › Important policies and procedures
- › Important contact information
- › Information about before and after-school provision

Parents should check the website 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, or the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within 2 working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 5 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, and the relevant member of staff will aim to contact them within 2 working days.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will respond to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure parents have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within 5 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.

4.3 Meetings

If parents would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the appropriate email address (see appendix 1) or call the school to book an appointment.

We try to schedule all meetings within 5 working days of the request.

Parents are reminded that they should not turn up at reception asking to see particular members of staff. Appointments need to be made. If a concern is urgent, the school office should be informed of this via phone, and they will do what they can to accommodate requests as soon as possible.

5. Accessibility

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

5.1 Parents with additional communication needs

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

- › All whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) are made available in multiple formats
- › All communications are written as clearly and concisely as possible
- › Staff are trained in accessibility and will try to provide information in an accessible format

Parents who need help communicating with the school can request reasonable adjustments, such as:

- › School announcements and communications in accessible formats

Please contact the school office to discuss these.

5.2 Parents with English as an additional language (EAL)

Parents who need help communicating with the school should contact the school office to discuss what we can do to support them (or ask someone to raise any concerns on their behalf).

6. Monitoring and review

The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every 3 years.

7. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- › Staff code of conduct
- › Complaints
- › Home-school agreement

Appendix 1: school contact list

Who should I contact?

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

- Email the most appropriate address
- Include your child's full name in the subject line and year group

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

We try to respond to all emails within 2 working days

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's subject teacher. If you don't know their email address, please include the teacher's name in the subject heading and email the school office who will forward it for you. Altwood@altwoodschoo.co.uk
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your child's form tutor in the first instance. If you don't know their email address, please include the teacher's name in the subject heading and email the school office who will forward it for you. Altwood@altwoodschoo.co.uk
Payments	Finance@altwoodschoo.co.uk
School trips	Altwood@altwoodschoo.co.uk
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, call: 01628 622236 and then option 2 If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact Attendance@Altwoodschoo.co.uk
School events/the school calendar	Altwood@altwoodschoo.co.uk
Special educational needs (SEN)	SENDSCO – gprince@altwoodschoo.co.uk
After-school clubs	Altwood@altwoodschoo.co.uk
Hiring the school premises	lettings@altwoodschoo.co.uk
Governing board	Clerk to the governors: jhargreaves@altwoodschoo.co.uk
Catering/meals	Altwood@altwoodschoo.co.uk

Concerns:

1st point of call	Contact your child's form tutor for general concerns or the specific subject teacher if the concern is regarding one subject area.
2nd point of call	If any concerns remain unresolved, email or make an appointment with the relevant Head of House or Head of Department
3rd point of call	If the issues have still not been rectified to your satisfaction, then contact the SLT lead for that subject area or House

Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy.

[Altwood School Complaints Procedure](#)