

8<sup>th</sup> January 2026

Dear Families,

Welcome back to what has been a very cold and wet start to the term! Please remember that, in the case of extreme weather and potential changes to the school day or school openings, that information will be placed in a pop up on the website. This will be as early as possible (by 7am) to enable the coach company to be informed and so prevent students starting their journeys.

If the weather changes during the school day, communication will be sent out via SchoolComms, as well as placed on the website, and students will be looked after until parents are able to be contacted or clarification given that they can start their journeys home.

To ensure easy communication, please can you check that the school has your latest contact information and at least two points of contact.

Here at Altwood we pride ourselves on working closely with parents and families to build constructive relationships between school and home. We believe that the vast majority of students and families have a really positive experience at Altwood and recognise the 'deeply compassionate community' that we have created, as recognised by our recent SIAMS inspection. If however, there are worries or concerns please get in touch with us early and briefly outline what the problem is so we can help.

We have noticed that a growing proportion of communication into school has been generated by AI and is unnecessarily complex, often citing legislation from America and archaic British laws, delaying our response times as we have to wade through complex legal jargon to get to the underlying issue.

We have also found that, after replying to these very long emails, we often get no response back until the next concern, which again doesn't help us build a constructive relationship around your child. Whilst AI can be helpful and is becoming an increasingly common part of modern day life, we'd like our communication with you to be simple, open and honest and feel this is the best way to ensure the correct support is quickly provided as needed.

Can I reiterate that we want to help – I would always rather meet parents to discuss concerns before it gets to the stage of a complaint. We do have a communication policy and stress that valuing staff wellbeing means that we will '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.' Please note, we do not expect staff to respond to communications outside their working hours and during weekends and school holidays.

If you have any questions about how we communicate with you, or want to raise a concern, please contact me through my PA, Mrs Walker: [nwalker@altwoodschool.co.uk](mailto:nwalker@altwoodschool.co.uk)

With very best wishes for a Happy 2026.



Mrs Cath Harden  
Headteacher