



Communications Policy

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1. Purpose

It is very important to us that we work closely in partnership with parents and carers, and communication between home and school is key. We recognise however that it can often be difficult communicating with teachers because they have a very full timetable; and we recognise that parents and carers also have very busy lives.

The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidance on the best means of communicating with us to ensure we can efficiently deal with any matters whilst maintaining positive relationships.

Please be assured that your communication with the school is important and we will endeavour to provide you with a response within the same working day where possible. Where this is not possible we will aim to respond to you within no more than 2 working days.

2. Definition of communication

Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications and needs to recognise that the quality of their communications reflect on the school's reputation. Parents and carers, Trustees and Students also have a part to play in reflecting the school's reputation. We strive to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and effective in their purpose.

3. Principles

The Corsham School (TCS) uses a number of different methods to maintain effective communication with parents and carers, other schools the wider community and outside agencies. Depending on the nature of the communication, the school will use the most practicable means to contact the recipient.

Communication on issues that affect the safety and wellbeing of a pupil will be treated as a priority. The school holds emergency contact details for all Students; families are asked to alert the school immediately if contact information needs to be revised.

Staff will always seek to establish friendly relationships with parents and carers but they will ensure relationships are professional and parents will be addressed in a formal manner. Staff are to avoid developing close relationships with parents and carers. The use of a parent, carer or staff member's first name is not appropriate, therefore all communications will be to and from Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Dr etc.

The Communications Policy embraces the principles of the Equalities Policy and e-Safety Policy.

4. Introduction

TCS recognises the importance of clear and effective communications with all stakeholders (Students, parents and carers, staff, Trustees, the local and wider community outside agencies, etc), and is committed to being open and accessible for all who have an interest in the school.

The key stakeholders for a school are parents, carers and Students and this Policy addresses the main ways in which the school will ensure there is effective two-way communication between home and school.

5. Parents and carers as partners in their child's education

Parents and carers have a key role to play in their child's education. The school will make every effort to encourage and make arrangements for parents and carers to contribute to creating a shared view of their child's needs.

6. Aims of the policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that effective communication and consultation takes place between the school, parents, carers, Students and other stakeholders and that there are robust processes to facilitate this.

The school recognises that engaging and working with parents and carers is a vital key in providing their child with an excellent education. Parents and carers are offered opportunities throughout the year to convey to us what they expect from and think of the school. Our wish is to involve as many parents and carers in their child's education as possible.

Our aims include the following:

- To make the school as welcoming and inclusive as possible, signage will be clear, informative and positive. All written and telephone enquiries will be dealt with promptly and parents and carers can expect an acknowledgement within 2 working days. A variety of forms of communication with parents and carers are available, for example, telephone contact, e-mail, post and text.
- Parents and carers are contacted for positive as well as negative reasons.
- Information is given to parents and carers on what Students will be taught and tips for helping their child will be provided.
- Parents and carers will be encouraged to help or support their child's learning at school and at home. Information will be provided in a timely way to enable this support to be effective.

7. Communication with parents and carers

7.1 Choosing the correct member of staff to address a query

Please see Appendix A which details who to contact and how to progress any query that is not successfully resolved.

How to Contact the School

7.2 Student Planner

- Communication by student planner is the preferred method:
- Notes in student planners are by far the best way to get a message to a teacher promptly and should be used for the majority of everyday communication;
- The student is responsible for showing the note to the correct teacher. This is the best way to ask them to contact you if you require a more detailed conversation.

7.3 Telephone

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school, where teachers may be teaching full-time and running clubs or working with Students at lunchtime or after school. Parents and carers may be frustrated if they feel that a message elicits no immediate reply, when in fact there has been no available opportunity for the member of staff to reach a telephone to return a call.

In a nonemergency a **return call will be made within 2 working days, with any follow up action from the outline of the request /query/problem being dealt with within 10 working days.** Staff will make a file note recording details of any telephone conversations with a parent, carer.

- Please use the main reception number to leave a message for a teacher or Tutor to contact you:
- Reception staff will relay messages to school staff as soon as possible.
- If a call is urgent, please inform the receptionist who will attempt to find a senior member of staff to speak to you.
- Please note lessons will never be interrupted for teachers to take calls.

7.4 Email

Please use staff email addresses if you need to contact staff directly:

- Teachers are not in a position to check emails consistently throughout the day and the school does not expect work email to be checked during a teacher's personal time.
- There is no expectation for our staff to read or answer emails sent between 6pm and 8am in the week or any time at weekends or during school holidays.
- Parents and carers may wish to contact the school via E-mail for a general enquiry as an alternative to telephone or letter. The school E-mail address is: reception@corsham.wilts.sch.uk
- Under no circumstances should staff contact Students or parents and carers using their own personal e-mail address.

In a non-emergency a return email will be made within 2 working days, with any follow up action from the outline of the request /query/problem being dealt with within 10 working days.

7.5 Postcards

Students will on occasions receive praise postcards from members of staff in recognition of a particular achievement, success or positive contribution to school life.

7.6 Texts

Parents and carers may also be contacted by text, in a non-emergency, to inform or remind them of a particular event e.g. parents evening, or late arrival. Texts may also be used in the event of emergency closure.

7.7 Absence

If a child is absent, parents and carers are asked to contact the school as soon as possible on the morning of the absence. In the event of failure to notify the school on the first day of any absence a text will be sent or telephone call will be made requesting that the parent/carer contacts the school to confirm the pupil's absence.

The preferred method of contacting the school to notify of student absence is

- by email to attendance@corsham.wilts.sch.uk
- or via School Gateway

7.8 Meeting with Parents and carers

All meetings need to be pre-arranged and all visitors to the school will be expected to sign in at Main Reception and wait for the relevant member of staff. In accordance with our safeguarding procedures all visitors to the school must wear a Visitor lanyard. Any person seen walking around the site without the appropriate lanyard will be challenged as to their identity, this enables us to ensure the safety of our students and staff.

- Meetings should always be pre-arranged with members of staff.
- A member of staff may ask a senior colleague to accompany them.
- If you urgently need to see someone, for instance if there is a serious family emergency or a child protection issue, please phone ahead and the reception staff will do their best to find a senior member of staff to see you.
- For non-urgent meetings we will aim to meet with you within five working days. The school will determine the level of urgency at its discretion, to enable it to manage multiple demands.
- Arriving at Main Reception and demanding to see a member of staff is not recommended and may lead to disappointment when the member of staff is unavailable.
- Teachers want to respond to parental queries at the earliest opportunity and will do their best to do so, however, the majority of teachers' time is taken up teaching and preparing for lessons.
- Teachers' responsibilities extend beyond the classroom, and they may be unable to respond to you on the day a query is made. We have also agreed with staff that there is no expectation to respond to queries during their personal/family time.

Staff should call a meeting to a close in the event of the parents or carers becoming angry or abusive. This should be reported immediately to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

7.9 Social Media

We use our social media channels to promote student achievements, subject information and generic educational information. You can find these by searching <https://www.facebook.com/CorshamSchool/> and <https://twitter.com/corshamschool>

Although social media and networking sites may appear to be the quickest and easiest way for parents/carers to air concerns or frustrations with the school (and those associated with it), it is rarely appropriate for them to do so. Other channels, such as face to face meetings, confidential emails or the school's formal complaints procedure are far more likely to achieve a positive resolution for all involved.

Parents and carers should also be aware that posting vexatious, inflammatory or defaming material online (including photos and video clips) may become a safeguarding concern and lead to referral to child protection authorities.

7.10 Reports and Progress

Parents and carers receive an interim progress report and a full annual report to provide information about their child's progress in each academic year. These reports are emailed via the School's communication platform, School Comms.

In addition, parents and carers have the opportunity to meet their child's subject teachers once a year, at parents evening. Parents and carers should contact the school if issues arise about their child's progress or wellbeing. **The first point of contact should be the child's Tutor.**

We welcome the presence of any other adult a parent or carer wishes to invite to a school meeting for support or to act as an interpreter. We will endeavor to make any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary to enable a parent or carer with a disability to participate fully in a meeting or to receive and understand a communication.

7.11 School Website

The school website provides a range of information about the school, including:

- Curriculum Information
- Inclusion information
- Pupil Premium information
- Homework
- Uniform list
- School events
- Holiday dates
- School prospectus
- Key policies

It is used to promote the school to a wider audience and is updated regularly.

7.12 Communication between Students and staff

Two way communication between Students and staff is an important aspect of school life. The school welcomes and encourages Students to engage in conversation with all members of staff within the school. When communicating with a member of staff Students should:

- Stand in front of the member of staff they are speaking with and make eye contact;
- Address the member of staff using their formal name e.g. Mrs Smith, never referring to a member of staff by their first name;
- Be respectful, do not talk over, raise voice or walk away before the conversation has ended.

Students may also email staff on their school accounts. All Students are taught email protocol:

- Complete the subject line
- Use Ms/Mrs/Mr and Surname as salutation
- Use Standard English
- Avoid abbreviations
- Sign off with Thank you or Kind Regards.

Correspondence is to remain professional at all times.

Staff are never permitted to use personal email accounts when communicating with Students.

7.13 School trips, visits and activities

The school will endeavor to publish all proposed trips, visits and activities on the school calendar at the start of each academic year. Parents and carers will be notified by letter of trips, visits and activities that their child/children may wish to participate in as early as possible, and within at least six weeks of the proposed trip, visit or activity. Occasionally opportunities arise during the academic

year to offer Students additional trips, visits or activities that were not known or available when the school calendar was published. The school will always ensure parents and carers are notified of any additional opportunities for their child as soon as possible to ensure parents and carers have adequate time to plan for such events.

7.14 Severe weather and emergency closure

In the event of emergency closure communication will be made to parents and carers via the school website. Parents and carers should also tune in to local radio and check the school's social media channels (e.g. Twitter).

7.15 Prospective parents/carers

The school prospectus is published on the website. Prospective parents and carers may request a printed copy.

Prospective parents and carers are invited to an Open Evening in Term 6 of the year preceding their child's year of entry to the school and to attend open mornings to enable them to see the school operating.

Prospective parents and carers are also invited, along with their child, to an induction evening in June where the main channels of communication are outlined, and important information will be shared.

8. Supporting parents and carers of Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The school recognises the importance of positive relationships with parents and carers of all Students with additional needs. The revised SEND Code of Practice emphasises the importance of positive, supportive attitudes to parents and carers and user-friendly information and procedures. All staff will make every effort to ensure effective communication with parents and carers.

All staff within the school are expected to help parents and carers understand how to contribute effectively to their child's education and will make every effort to ensure that parents understand their rights and responsibilities. All relevant information will be provided in a way for all to understand and respond to.

When Students who have special educational needs are making less than the expected progress or if they are experiencing behavioral difficulties, we would expect to meet with parents and carers more regularly. Parents and carers are encouraged to communicate immediately where they have a concern about their child's needs being met.

9. Communication with other Schools and outside agencies

Prior to Students joining Year 7, Students are visited in their primary schools to gain further information about them to help and support their transition to TCS. We recognise that children have diverse needs, and we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed on the best ways to meet these needs, so that children may participate more fully. Support comes from medical services (such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy), from educational psychologists, from health professionals and specialists.

It also comes from various welfare-focused services, such as Educational Welfare, Social Services and Child Protection Units. We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from

harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our school should provide a safe and secure environment (see the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy).

We hold information on all Students in our school and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. Details will be sent to parents about the types of data we hold, why we hold that data, and who we may pass it on to. This is a requirement under the Data Protection Act 2018.

Parents and carers have a right to view the information we hold and we have contact details of the agencies to which our information is passed.

10. Investigating incidents

When investigating an incident involving Students, school members of staff interview all Students involved and ask them to complete a written account. The school is not permitted (under Data Protection) to share any information that would identify any Students. However, we fully co-operate with any police investigation and provide information to the police upon request.

11. Monitoring, evaluation and review

A member of the senior leadership team and the The Corsham School Academy Group Trust will review this Policy at least every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The Policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

Appendix A – To whom should my query or concern be addressed?

If you have a general query or concern, not specific to your child, please contact Reception on 01249 713284 or email your child's Tutor.

My query is about my child's learning:

Please contact the relevant member of staff in the following order:

Teacher

Subject Lead

Assistant Headteacher

Headteacher

If, following the communications route above you are still dissatisfied with the response you may complain to the school, please refer to the school's Complaints Procedure which can be obtained from the School's website www.corsham.wilts.sch.uk

My query is about my child's wellbeing, behaviour or non-compliance:

Please contact the relevant member of staff in the following order:

Tutor

Head of House

Assistant Headteacher – Care and Guidance

Headteacher

If, following the communications route above you are still dissatisfied with the response you may complain to the school, please refer to the school's Complaints Procedure which can be obtained from the School's website www.corsham.wilts.sch.uk