



Character Education Trust

Staff Communications Policy

December 2024

Review – Every 2 years

Next Review Date – 1/12/2026

Linked Policies:

- **GDPR/ DATA PROTECTION**
- **E SAFETY/ ACCEPTABLE USE**
- **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**
- **PARENT COMMUNICATON POLICY**

Introduction

Effective communication within our school community is essential to support a safe, respectful, and collaborative environment for students, staff, and families. This policy outlines the communication standards, expectations, and practices to ensure clear, professional, and respectful interactions among school staff and between staff and the wider school community.

The communications policy upholds the school and trust values of:

- Good character
- The best interests of our students, staff and the core purpose of the school to educate and safeguard children.
- The Nolan principles of selflessness, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- Equality and equity for all including the protected characteristics of gender, race, religion, disability and sexuality.
- Solutions focussed, reasonable, productive, considerate and respectful behaviours.

Equality Statement

The school is strongly committed to ensuring equity and equality of experience for all users and members of our community. In regards to the communication policy this relates to equal

opportunity to access communication with the school regardless of race, religion, gender, sexuality or disability. Where adaptations are required to enable equal and equitable access the school will listen and work hard to accommodate these.

Rationale

at Wrotham School, part of the Character Education Trust, we believe that every student can make excellent progress academically. We challenge and support all our students to achieve. We believe young people achieve their best in an environment where they feel secure, valued, and have high self-esteem. Additionally, we value working in partnership with parents and believe the mutual support we can give each other will be of great benefit to our students.

All communication at Wrotham School should keep staff, students, parents, Governors and other stakeholders well informed in a timely manner. Communication should be honest, ethical and professional and should use the channel of communication that is most appropriate to audience, message and context.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure that communication is respectful, professional, and consistent across all channels.
- Foster a positive, transparent, and effective communication culture within the school.
- Provide guidance on the appropriate use of communication tools and platforms.
- Outline responsibilities and expectations for staff communication to support student success and a cohesive school community.
- To ensure this policy supports a healthy work life balance in regard to communications at work.

Scope

this policy applies to all staff members, including teachers, administrators, support staff, and any individual representing the school in a professional capacity. It covers all forms of communication, including verbal, written, digital, and social media interactions.

Communications

The school uses the following methods of communication:

- Email
- Written Letter (Physical or electronic)
- Telephone
- Face to face

Staff are required to use their professional judgement on which method best suits the need of any specific communication. If in doubt please discuss with a line manager or appropriately experienced colleague.

Email

Email is our preferred and most efficient form of communication.

We recommend email use for most communications with the school.

- General communication and queries.
- Sharing information/ notices
- Requests for absence
- Contact with staff/ teams
- Information requests.

Telephone:

Communicating by telephone is best for notifying a parent/ child of an emergency issue that requires immediate attention or a complex issue best discussed sensitively.

Staff may arrange a telephone call to discuss a child's progress, behaviour, safeguarding or to follow up on concerns they may have. These arrangements are normally agreed by email.

Phone calls are not as efficient as email for contacting directly, raising concerns or booking a meeting/ appointment.

Telephone meetings are best for:

- Urgent communication to discuss an issue at length with a single person.
- Immediate safeguarding/ behaviour concerns.
- To catch up or discuss a low/ mid-level concern regarding a child.
- When location or work commitments or physical restrictions prevent meeting in person (see face to face).

Written Letter

In general, we strongly recommend email as the priority method of written communication. Emails will be/ are considered with the same level of importance and formality as hand written or printed communications and will often receive a quicker and more nuanced response.

Face to Face Appointments

- Face to face meetings take place at school events, open evenings, parent evenings and other review and reward evenings. These are an important part of our community relationship and can serve the best interests of the students well.
- Face to face meetings also include online video based meetings using TEAMS/ Zoom etc.
- We also meet with parents individually when agreed that meeting face to face is the best way to support a child.

Commitment to Parents/ Stakeholders

The school is committed to excellent communication with parents and therefore ensure that our parents receive the following:

- A 24/48 hour (Mon- Fri) response to all communications with the school.
- A polite and helpful communication expectation to support children to achieve and succeed.
- A fully monitored safeguarding email address – safeguarding@wrotham.kent.sch.uk
- A fully monitored “report bullying” email address – reportbullying@wrotham.kent.sch.uk
- A clear communications list to help reach the best person to resolve concerns.

<https://www.wrothamschool.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Communication-for-Parents-Website.2024.2025-1.pdf>

- Regular parent surveys/ staff / student surveys.
- A robust complaints policy to ensure any complaints are handled appropriately and efficiently.
- Regular parent evenings, open events and celebrations for parents to visit the school and meet staff to discuss and celebrate student’s achievements.
- Dedicated and well-staffed progress, pastoral and leadership teams to manage concerns quickly.
- A regularly updated website, parent mail, SIMS parent and school WhatsApp channel to keep you with what is going on at the school and to share important messages.
- 3 X school newsletters per year.
- Regular communications regarding events/ trips/ visits etc. via parent mail.

Availability

- **The school has a policy of replying to all communications within 48 hours between the office hours of 08:00- 17:00, Monday to Friday. Often you will receive a reply sooner.**
- **Staff are not expected to reply to emails out of hours (9-5), weekends or during school holidays unless they wish to do so.**
- **Staff should use delayed send on emails outside of school hours unless urgent.**
- **When emails are sent out of hours, from time to time, then there is no requirement to check/ respond.**
- **Staff who communicate with others electronically outside of school hours should be aware and be respectful of others private/ personal time.**
- **All efforts should be made to minimise excessive emails/ communications where possible.**
- Face to face meetings and telephone calls with parents/ staff should take place between the working hours of 08:00- 17:00 Monday to Friday.
- Correctly addressed safeguarding concerns will always be prioritised and where there immediate risk to the safety of a child that relates to the school you will receive a rapid response, as soon as possible using our safeguarding@wrotham.kent.sch.uk email address which is monitored throughout the week/ weekend/ during holidays. If you have a concern relating to the immediate safety of a child you should contact **999**.

Communication Conduct and Protocol

- All communications to and from the school should be **polite and respectful at all times**.
- Communications should always be clear, succinct and to the point.

- The school does not tolerate racist, misogynist, homophobic or other recognised discriminatory views or language. Extreme personal opinions, views or beliefs may not be recognised by the school or acted on when they do not represent British values, the majority view or ethos of the school, its staff, its parents, students and the wider community.
- Communications received out of office hours (08:00- 17:00) will be answered the following school working day (or sooner- at staff discretion).
- Communications should be clear and well written/ checked for SPAG.
- As per our E safety/ Acceptable use policy – personal social media accounts must never be used to communicate with students or parents.
- Staff should not post information or opinion about the school using personal social media pages.
- Staff must not communicate in any way that could bring the school into disrepute other than when acting responsibly and following the whistleblowing policy.
- All communications with parents and students or on behalf of the school should be made through the school system.
- Staff must not store student or parent numbers in their personal phones.
- Staff must not use personal email addresses.
- Staff may communicate socially via WhatsApp and other messaging services but must be aware that behaviour online with colleagues that is inappropriate or not line with our school values could result in disciplinary action. The same applies to all social media.
- Care must be taken to secure access to personal devices that are used to communicate on school business. For example a mobile phone with emails on it or a family computer that is used for work. It is the individual member of staff's responsibility for appropriate security and management of those devices including for privacy and GDPR.
- If you are requesting a formal letter be sent on headed paper then please ensure this is correctly checked for SPAG and that it is proof read in full. If not it may be sent back/ rejected.
- Only the Headteacher can approve the use of headed paper for communications.

This is not a limited or exhaustive list of communication expectations – staff should ensure they follow the teacher's standards and other related policies to ensure communications are professional and appropriate at all times.

The school robustly support staff to protect them from malicious, threatening or rude communications and asks that when this is experienced it reported to the headteacher immediately.

Expectations of communications are regularly made clear to parents and other stakeholders.

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