# WIMBLEDON CHASE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Empowering individuals to thrive and contribute positively in a diverse and ever-changing world

## Home-School Communication Policy

**October 2023**

***At Wimbledon Chase Primary School, policies are designed to ensure that the child is at the centre of all our decision-making. All staff are aware that whole school and class systems are established to ensure that every child is able to share and express their concerns in a safe and confidential manner. We constantly strive to ensure that all children know their worries and views will be taken seriously by all staff and that every child will be treated with respect.***

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# 1. Introduction and aims

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

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents has a positive impact on pupils' learning because it:

- Gives parents the information they need to support their child's education
- Helps the school improve, through feedback and consultation with parents
- 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 the school communicates with parents
- Setting clear standards and expectations for responding to communication from parents
- Helping parents 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
- Our rights respecting school ethos sits at the core of everything we do. We are a school that values, promotes and protects positive relationships and to do that children, staff, governors and parents need to work together to maintain our rights respecting values and responsibilities.

# 2. Roles and responsibilities

## 2.1 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- 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:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's Online Safety Policy (Electronic Communication section)
- 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 8am-4pm 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:

- Making every reasonable effort to address communications via the school office marked to the attention of the appropriate member of staff in the first instance
- Respond to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Downloading the school Parent App and checking all communications from the school
- Ensuring that communication with the school is positive and respectful at all times.

Parents should not expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours (8am-4pm), or during school holidays.

# 3. How we communicate with parents

The sections below explain how we keep parents up-to-date with their child's education and what is happening in school. Please see appendix 2 for a calendar of communication between school and parents.

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 Home-school communications app

Our main way of communicating to parents is through the school Parent App (Reach More Parents- WEDUC). Through the app we share information that includes newsletters, events, the school calendar, school absence notification and for sending the children's annual reports to parents. The Parent App includes:

- School calendar
- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- Links to Payments
- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- Newsletters
- School surveys or consultations

## 3.2 School calendar

The school calendar can be found on the Parent App as well as on our school website. Annual term dates are also on the school website. https://www.wimbledonchaseschool.co.uk/news-events/dates/

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 events will be included in the school calendar which is also linked from the school newsletters.

## 3.3 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
- Latest newsletters and school letters
- Information or slides from parent meetings or workshops

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

## 3.4 Letters

We send the following letters home regularly via the Parent App:

- Half termly year group information letters
- Fortnightly Headteacher's newsletter
- Curriculum newsletters
- Information about educational trips
- Information about parent workshops

## 3.5 Email

Staff may use email to contact parents to discuss pupils' wellbeing or behaviour or to respond to a parent enquiry. Parents who wish to contact the SENDCO should send an email to the school office for the attention of the SENDCO.

## 3.6 Phone calls

Staff may call parents to discuss pupils' wellbeing or behaviour or to respond to a parent enquiry.

## 3.7 Annual Welcome and Class Information Meeting for parents

This will include important information such as: sharing school values and Cornerstone rules, timetables, expectations of behaviour, homework expectations. Information from *Meet the Teacher* meetings are subsequently posted on the school website.

## 3.8 Tapestry for EYFS (Nursery and Reception)

Tapestry is our secure online Learning Journal where we can share with parents photos, videos and observations of the children achieving at school. This is a two way communication system between the school and parents.

## 3.9 Home and School Communication Books (Years 1 and 2)/ Homework Diaries (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6)

Staff can record messages for parents about behaviour or class information, including homework, which parents can respond to. The children with Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) have a communication book so support staff and parents are able to communicate about things relevant to that child – e.g. a bad night's sleep, feedback on the child's day at school.

## 3.10 Information about Pupils' Learning and Progress

### ➢ Parent Consultations

We hold two Pupil Progress Consultations across the year. These are held in the Autumn and Spring Term. During these meetings parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievements and progress, their learning targets, their wellbeing and any areas of concern. The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings at other times across the year if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing.

We offer a third optional parent consultation in the Summer term if there is a specific area to be discussed following the annual report.

We hold three meetings across the year (one each term) for parents of children who have an Individual Education Support Plan (IESP) or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). At these meetings, the child's IESP is discussed and specific targets agreed. These meetings are longer in time than the Parent Consultations above because of the specific nature of the discussions.

Parents of children who have an EHCP will also have an Annual Review meeting with the school Inclusion leads as well as any relevant outside agencies.

Parents book their Parent Consultation meetings using the school's online booking system which can be accessed through the Parent App or on the school website.

Parents are welcome to contact the school in between these consultation meetings if they are concerned about their child's progress.

- **Year Group Newsletters, Curriculum Webs and Progression Maps**

Parents receive Year Group Newsletters every half term informing them of the learning that will be happening that term. The Curriculum Webs are published on the school website and offer more detail about each term's subjects and topics.

Progression Maps for each curriculum area which show what is taught in each subject from Early Years through to Year 6 are published on the school website. The Subjects area for each curriculum area on the website explains how each area is taught.

- **Sharing children's learning**

Teachers share relevant pieces of children's work with parents at the Parent Consultation meetings, in regard to setting learning targets for the child. There are also termly *Share My Learning* evenings where parents are invited in, with their child, to look at the child's work and exercise books.

## 3.12 Annual Report

Parents receive an Annual Report from the school about their child's learning, covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, targets for the following year and their attendance. The Annual Report is sent through the Parent App.

## 3.13 Safeguarding

The school has a statutory responsibility to share concerns it might have about a child in need of protection with other agencies and in particular the police, Health and Social Care and Children's Services. Schools are not able to investigate child protection concerns, but have a legal duty to refer them to the above team. In most instances the school will be able to inform the parents/carer of its need to make a referral. However, sometimes the school is advised by Children's Services or the police that the parent/carer cannot be informed whilst they investigate the matter.

The school will always seek to work in partnership with parents and other agencies to ensure the best possible outcomes for the child and family.

# 4. How parents 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 the same working day, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within a maximum of five working days.

If a query or concern is urgent, and parents need a response sooner than this, parents should call the school.

All enquiry emails to go to a central email address and will be treated with appropriate confidentiality. WCPS@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk

## 4.2 Home-school communications app

Parents are asked to inform the school if their child will be absent from school, via the Parent App (or the absence email address (absence@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk) including the reason for the absence and by 9.00am on each day of absence.

If a child is absent from school, and we have had no indication of the reason, we will attempt to contact the parent and then the second/third nominated emergency contact by telephone to find out the reason for the absence.

Parents can also use the Parent App to apply for a leave of absence during term time (such as for medical appointments, examinations etc.).

## 4.3 Messages, Appointments and Meetings

Parents can visit the school to ask questions, gain support or to have the opportunity to talk about issues affecting their child with either the class teacher or a member of the School Leadership Team. If parents wish to share information or discuss an issue affecting their child they can telephone the school office on 020 8542 1413 or email parentsupportadvisor@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk, or WCPS@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk to make an appointment.

The day-to-day care, welfare and safety of each child is managed by the person who is placed closest to them. In the first instance, parents should contact the members of staff who are responsible for their child in the following order:

1. Class teacher/s
2. Phase Lead
3. Deputy Headteacher
4. Headteacher

The first point of contact in the school is always the child's class teacher. For all other queries, the school office will direct the parent to the appropriate member of staff, to deal with their query and arrange any appointments. Meetings should always be pre-arranged with members of staff. We would advise that parents should not arrive at the school with the expectation that they can be seen without an appointment as this is unlikely to be possible.

If parents urgently need to see someone, for instance if there is a serious family emergency or a child protection issue, they should phone ahead or email parentsupportadvisor@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk and the office staff will do their best to find a senior member of staff. For non-urgent meetings the school will aim to meet with parents within five working days. The school will determine the level of emergency at its discretion, to enable it to manage multiple demands.

Parents who have not received a response from the school within three working days should contact the school by emailing parentsupportadvisor@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk and a member of staff will follow up their enquiry.

### 4.4 Tapestry for EYFS (Nursery and Reception)

Parents can upload and share with EYFS staff, photos or videos of their child's learning at home via the Tapestry app. For more information on Tapestry https://www.wimbledonchaseschool.co.uk/our-curriculum/early-years/

### 4.5 Home and School Communication Books (Years 1 and 2) / Homework Diaries (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6)

Parents can record messages for staff regarding their child. Checked daily by a member of staff/ It is the responsibility of the child to share and show the message to the class teacher.

## 5. How parents can share their views about the school

### 5.1 Surveys

We welcome and value feedback from parents about the school's policies and practices. We will invite parents to contribute to a formal annual survey and report back on the outcomes.

The school will also send out feedback surveys after Parent Consultations to get feedback on the process.

Occasionally surveys are sent to parents to ask for parent opinions, for example on a new policy or initiative.

### 5.2 What should parents do if they want to make a complaint?

There are times when parents may feel that they would like to say something about the service or treatment that they receive. In such a case parents should follow the procedure outlined here:

In the first instance speak to your child's class teacher.

If still dissatisfied, please contact the Headteacher to make an appointment.

If the matter cannot be resolved, the school's Complaints Policy should be followed, which is set out on the school website.

## 6. Inclusion

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

- Our website has a Google Translate button that allows parents to select a preferred language to view the contents of the website.

Parents who need help communicating with the school can request the following support:

- School announcements and communications translated into additional languages
- Interpreters for meetings or phone calls

We can make additional arrangements if necessary. Please contact the school office to discuss these.

## 7. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every two years.

The policy will be approved by the Governing Body.

## 8. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- Parent Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Home-school agreement
- Online Safety Policy

**School Development Area Leader: Keith Ellis**

**Linked Governor: Kunal Patel**

**Signed: Keith Ellis** _____

**Signed: Kunal Patel** _____

**Date agreed: December 2023** _____

**Review date: December 2025**

# 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 or call the school office on WCPS@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk 020 8542 1413
- Put the subject and the name of the relevant member of staff (from the list below) in the subject line (for emails)
- We will forward your request on to the relevant member of staff

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

We try to respond to all emails within the same working day.

- Office hours are between 8am and 4.30pm.

| I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT… | WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO |
|---|---|
| Safeguarding<br>https://www.wimbledonchaseschool.co.uk/key-information/safeguarding/ | Contact the Parent Support Advisor or the office and ask for a member of the Safeguarding Team.<br>parentsupportadvisor@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk<br>WCPS@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk |
| My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework/ wellbeing | Your child's<br>1) Class teacher<br>2) Phase Leader<br>3) Mrs Dotchin (Parent Support Advisor).<br>Through the school office or by contacting the Parent Support Advisor directly.<br>WCPS@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk<br>parentsupportadvisor@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk |
| Payments | School office<br>WCPS@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk |
| School trips | School office<br>WCPS@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk |
| Uniform/lost and found | 1)Class teacher<br>2) School office<br>WCPS@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk |

| I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT… | WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO |
|---|---|
| Attendance and absence requests | If you need to report your child's absence - via the School Parent App or the absence email absence@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk<br>If you want to request approval for term-time absence - via the School Parent App or via the website https://www.wimbledonchaseschool.co.uk/parent-information/attendance/ |
| Bullying and behaviour | Your child's<br>1) Class teacher<br>2) Phase Leader<br>3) Deputy Head<br>4) Headteacher<br>via the office<br>WCPS@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk |
| School events | The calendar on the Parent App.<br>The Dates section on the school website.<br>https://www.wimbledonchaseschool.co.uk/news-events/dates/<br>School office<br>WCPS@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk |
| Special educational needs (SEND) | Inclusion Lead via the office WCPS@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk<br>Confidential enquiries can be handed into the office or emailed to the Parent Support Advisor to be forwarded to the Inclusion Lead.<br>parentsupportadvisor@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk |
| Before and after-school clubs | School office WCPS@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk |
| Hiring the school premises | School office for the attention of the School Business Manager<br>WCPS@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk |

| I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT… | WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO |
|---|---|
| Friends | fowccharity@gmail.com |
| Governing Body | Chair of Governors<br>chair@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk |
| Catering/meals | School office<br>WCPS@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk |

**Complaints**

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy which can be found on the school website.

## Appendix 2: Calendar of communication

| TERM | EVENTS |
|---|---|
| Autumn 1 | Nursery & Reception Parent Meetings<br>Meet the Teacher Meetings - all Year Groups<br>Year Group Newsletters<br>Individual Education and Support Plan (IESP) Meetings<br>Parent Consultations<br>Fortnightly Headteacher Newsletters<br>Parent Reps Meeting<br>Parent Workshops<br>Secondary School Application Information meeting<br>Year 5 Residential Parent Meeting<br>Year 6 Residential Parent Meeting<br>Friends' AGM |
| Autumn 2 | Year Group Newsletters<br>Fortnightly Headteacher Newsletters<br>Parent Workshops<br>Share My Learning Evening |
| Spring 1 | Year Group Newsletters<br>IESP Meetings<br>Fortnightly Headteacher Newsletters<br>Parent Workshops<br>Parent Reps Meeting |
| Spring 2 | Year Group Newsletters<br>Parent Consultations<br>Fortnightly Headteacher Newsletters<br>Parent Workshops |
| Summer 1 | Year Group Newsletters<br>IESP Meetings |

| TERM | EVENTS |
| --- | --- |
| | Fortnightly Headteacher Newsletters<br>Parent Workshops<br>Parent Reps Meeting |
| Summer 2 | Year Group Newsletters<br>Fortnightly Headteacher Newsletters<br>Parent Workshops<br>Pupil Annual Report<br>Optional Parent Consultations (Annual Report) |