

Communication with SWCHS Parents: Protocol

Parents can expect to receive the following written/electronic communications:

- A regularly updated School and Trust website.
- A half termly Newsletter celebrating school life.
- Additional information letters as required.
- Key dates for each year group.
- A Student Planner with spaces in it for notes between home and school.
- A Handbook for parents.
- Progress checks.
- Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram updates.

In the case of emergency communication, parents can expect the following:

- An urgent phone call if the incident involves their child in particular.
- In case of an emergency school closure during the day, a parentmail home and a note on the school website.
- In case of an emergency school closure before the start of the school day, messages will go out to parents via parentmail, on the school website (www.swchs.net) and on the LA website (www.essex.gov.uk/education).
- An unexpected change of arrangements in clubs, fixtures or trips will be communicated to parents via parentmail/social media.

SWCHS can reasonably expect parents to:

- Sign and uphold the home/school agreement.
- Read and respond to letters sent home.
- Write messages in the Student Planner to Tutors and Teachers.
- Phone or email the school to arrange an appointment to meet a member of staff.
- Contact their child's Form Tutor or class teacher in the first instance and avoid the temptation to escalate a matter to more senior colleagues until other channels have been explored (see below for further guidance).
- Keep us informed of changes in contact information and personal circumstances which affect their child – this is particularly important.
- Send emails directly to staff members but be sensitive to the fact that the first priority of every teacher is to teach their classes and that frequent emailing can be disruptive and counterproductive.
- Respect the work/life balance of staff and restrict emails that require a response to a working day, avoiding contacting staff during evenings, weekends and holidays.
- Raise concerns with an appropriate member of staff, in a polite manner that is likely to achieve a better outcome for your child, rather than making comments about the school on social media.

We can reasonably expect staff to:

- Reply to emails, phone messages and notes in the planner within two working days. There is no expectation that a member of staff should reply to any message received during a weekend or holiday until the next working week begins.

- Reply using a holding message if more than two days is required to investigate the matter raised.
- Use an appropriately formal tone in emails and letters to parents.
- Not reply to any email or letter that is rude or aggressive in tone or content, or sent out of reasonable working hours, but pass the letter to their Area Coordinator/Year Achievement Coordinator to reply on their behalf. Area Coordinators/Year Achievement Coordinators may need to seek advice from the Senior Leadership Team on how to proceed.

We expect everyone to:

- Be calm, friendly and polite in all communications (including in writing, in face-to-face meetings, during parents' evenings, phone conversations and at school events).
- Have respect for each other.
- Set out to build and maintain a positive home/school relationship in the interests of the child.

General guidance for who to contact:

| | Who to contact | Examples might include: |
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| 1 | Form Tutor | Lost items, friendship issues within the Form, changes in personal circumstances. |
| 2 | Class/Subject Teacher | Questions or issues that relate to events that happen in the classroom or matters relating to a specific lesson or task, e.g. homework, behaviour sanctions etc. |
| 3 | Subject Area Coordinator | Matters relating to curriculum provision or longer-term concerns about content of lessons, or behaviour in a particular subject. |
| 4 | Year Achievement Coordinator (YAC) or Student Support Officer (SSO) | More serious concerns, e.g. the general progress of a child across a number of subjects, behaviour matters that are not specific to one subject area, to make the school aware of problems/situations arising out of school which may affect your child's learning etc. |
| 5 | Senior Leadership Team | If your query or concern has not been addressed by the staff member you have contacted (see 1-4 above) |

Polly Lankester

HEADTEACHER

Protocol adapted; June 2016

Reviewed and updated; June 2019, December 2023