



# Crowdys Hill School

Crowdys Hill School - Communication Guidance

School to home

Home to school

School to external agencies

School staff

Other stakeholders

Compiled by:

Governors and staff

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## 1. Introduction and aims

### For parents PART 1:

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

- Gives parents/carers the information they need to support their child's education.
- Helps the school improve, through feedback and consultation with parents/carers.
- Builds trust between home and school, which helps the school better support each child's educational and pastoral needs.

The aim of this guidance is to promote clear and open communication by:

- Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers.
- Setting clear standards and expectations for responding to communication from parents/carers.
- Helping parents/carers 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.

### For staff PART 2:

We believe that Crowdys Hill staff should have a good work life balance. It is easy and common for school staff to work above and beyond their contracted hours. Their sense of duty to the care and support for pupils and parents can often override their own need for time and space to strengthen their own wellbeing.

The aim of this guidance is to clarify expectations for staff, in terms of communicating with colleagues, external agencies, and parents/ carers.

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

## Roles and responsibilities

### a. Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate.
- Monitoring and regularly reviewing this guidance.

### b. Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this guidance and the school's ICT and internet acceptable use policy.
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves).
- All communications from staff will be professional and courteous.

Staff will aim to respond to communication during core school hours, 8.45-3.30pm 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.

If a member of staff feels they are being contacted excessively by a parent they should report this to the headteacher in the first instance.

If a member of staff feels that a parent is being threatening, abusive or unreasonable in requests, this should be reported to the headteacher. This may result in the parent being blocked from contacting that member of staff.



## Guidance for parents

### c. Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times.
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance.
- Respond to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner.
- Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be passed to the headteacher and chair of governors, and further action may then be taken.

Parents should not expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours 8.45-3.30pm, or during school holidays. Teachers are often teaching throughout the day and unable to have discussions over the phone during the school day. Please allow a few days for a teacher to respond to you.

If a parent has an urgent message to convey, this should be disclosed to a member of the leadership team, via reception.

If a parent feels that they have not received communications as expected, or they have not received a response from the school to a previous communication as requested, then they should contact the headteacher in the first instance.

If a parent feels that a member of staff has responded to them in an unprofessional manner, then please discuss this with the headteacher.

### 3. How we communicate with parents and carers

Parents should monitor all of the following regularly to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child. The following methods to communicate with parents.

#### a. Email

We use email to keep parents informed about the following things:

- School surveys or consultations.
- Class activities or teacher requests.
- School letters.
- Correspondence from tutors, subject teachers and leadership team.
- Information about your child.
- Annual review paperwork.
- Emails may be sent to parents out of school hours. We would not expect a response at unreasonable times.

### **b. Text messages**

We will text parents about:

- Immediate changes such as short-notice changes to the school day or emergency school closures.
- Reminders about upcoming events.
- Reminders about opportunities and signposting events.
- Other information which is targeted to a group.
- Text messages may be sent at any time, dependent upon need to inform. You can respond, via text, to text messages from the school and these will be passed on if necessary.

### **c. School website**

The website has information about school policies, curriculum, and other useful information including class timetables and links to ParentPay.

The website has latest information, such as newsletters and events.

There is a contact link on the website. This is sent to admin staff and they can forward to relevant staff.

### **d. Phone calls**

School may call parents for the following reasons including but not limited to:

- Your child is absent from school.
- There has been a safeguarding incident which involves your child.
- Your child has been injured or ill whilst at school.
- Your child has no lunch or PE kit provided.
- Your child's tutor may contact for positive feedback.
- Your child's subject teacher may contact for positive feedback.
- Attendance checks.
- Safeguarding checks.

Other school staff may call you to discuss your child, inform you of trips or events, or for a general catch up.

Phone calls are our preferred method of communication about personal issues regarding your child.

Please ensure that school has an up to date phone number which can be answered during the day.

Staff will only call you from the school number 01793 332(400), or extension of this number.

School staff will only call you between 8am - 6 pm, Monday to Friday.

#### **e. Post**

We send the following letters home regularly and can include:

- Letters about trips and visits, consent forms.
- Our newsletter.
- Information which is too long to put in a text message.
- School reports.
- Interim reports.
- Annual review paperwork if requested.
- Exam certificates.
- Attendance letters.

We can send out paper versions of email attachments and annual review paperwork on request.

**We can send out correspondence in different language formats as requested.**

#### **f. Face to face meetings**

We hold 1 parents' evening per year for each year group from year 7-14 and one per term for years R-6. During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum or schemes of work, their child's wellbeing, or any other area of concern.

Each child is entitled to one annual review meeting each school year (two for early years). The paperwork for this meeting is sent, via email, at least two weeks before the meeting date. If you would like paper copies then please contact Mrs Backhouse, [sbackhouse@crowdyhill.swindon.sch.uk](mailto:sbackhouse@crowdyhill.swindon.sch.uk).

You must inform Mrs Backhouse if you want external agencies to attend your child's review. Invites must be sent at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings between parents' evenings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, attendance or wellbeing. We will try to accommodate parents for these meetings, as we are aware that they may not be able to take time off work.

We can have Teams meeting with parents at their request for non-scheduled meetings. For parent evenings and annual reviews, we would prefer parents to attend in person.

#### **g. Teams meetings**

School can arrange Teams meetings for parents if this is easier, to allow attendance.

#### **h. Home-school communications app and Facebook**

The school has a Facebook page for parents and a separate one for staff. We will not communicate with parents through this medium. Only events or signposting support for parents is posted on this site.



## Guidance for external agencies:

### 4. How parents and external agencies 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.

No members of school staff are obliged to check their emails, make or take phone calls, or attend meetings on behalf of the school during school holidays, with the following exceptions:

- Safeguarding issues - staff on a rota. Contact through email to DSL or safeguarding number on website).
- School business manager and admin team work through some of the school holidays.
- The leadership team check only emails, fortnightly.

#### a. Email

Parents and external agencies should always email the school, or the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance. See Appendix 1 to ensure the most appropriate member of staff is contacted.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within 2 working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 3 working days. Please note that external emails are often redirected to 'junk email' on first issue. If you do not receive a response from the reciprocate then please call the school reception.

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

Staff will read emails during term time. Emails will not be monitored by most staff in holiday time.

The leadership team, school business manager and admin team will monitor their emails more frequently, generally fortnightly, in holiday periods.

#### b. Phone calls

Parents can leave a message through reception for a member of staff to call them back. It is useful if the topic can be disclosed to reception to ensure they speak to the most suitable member of staff.

It is unlikely that staff are available at the time of calling so please expect to leave a number to call back.

External agencies can call reception and request a call back. We do not respond to 'cold callers' or promotional representatives. Please email the finance manager if you are representing a commercial company.

The reception is open term time daily from 8.15am-3.30pm. Messages can be left on the answer machine outside of these times. This is checked daily in term time, and rarely in school holidays.

### **c. Meetings**

If parents would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the appropriate email address, or call the school to book an appointment. Please state the purpose of the meeting.

We try to respond and arrange meetings within 2 working days of the request.

While teachers may be available at the beginning or end of the school day if parents need to speak to them urgently, we recommend they book appointments. Teaching staff have classes to tutor or teach and cannot leave these classes to have a discussion over the phone or in person.

School teaching staff are not obliged to attend meetings later than 4.30. Teaching Assistants are not required to attend meetings after 3.30pm.

The leadership team may be able to attend a later meeting by arrangement.

### **d. Home-school communications app**

The Facebook page can be accessed by parents. Any comments do not represent the school. It is not a monitored site.

### **e. You need a response in the holidays**

Contact [admin@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk](mailto:admin@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk) or [info@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk](mailto:info@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk)

Your email will be forwarded to appropriate person.

## **5. Language other than English**

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

We currently make whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) available in English.

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



# Guidance for staff:

## PART 2

### 6. Interschool communications

Between colleagues

#### a. Emails

Emails should be used to convey non-urgent information to colleagues.

Emails can be sent at any time. There must be no expectation for receivers to respond outside of their contracted hours.

Emails must be professional and courteous. They should indicate, in the title, the necessary recipient particularly if sent to whole school, and the subject overview. This allows staff to prioritise. Make it clear if a response is needed, e.g. clear questions or stated please respond.

Use the 'set importance tab' in Outlook.

Email groups can be set up by the network manager on your request. Try to use 'whole school' emails frugally. Remember that you can expand a group before sending the email and delete individual recipients.

Bear in mind that some staff members receive a large number of emails daily. Do not send urgent requests via email.

Teaching assistants must be allowed to check their school emails during the day. This may be in lesson time or tutor time and should only take a few minutes for most TAs.

In term time, emails should be responded to within 2 working days where a response is needed. It is the responsibility of the sender to chase up responses. If there is no response after 3 days, please escalate the issue if a response is needed in order to proceed.

#### b. Texts

Colleagues may receive school text messages. These may be to inform of school closures, or for staff to be aware of messages sent to parents.

The headteacher or deputy headteacher may text staff outside of school hours if urgent information is needed to be passed on. Examples may be informing them that a key member of staff is absent and this may affect a trip.

#### c. WhatsApp

The leadership team may use WhatsApp to liaise with each other. Responses are not expected outside of contracted hours.

#### d. Phone calls

All rooms have phones. Use this method of communication by preference for staff to staff communication. Never reveal personal information about anyone over the phone if there are others present in the room.

Staff should not receive/ accept phone calls from parents or other agencies during their teaching time.

Staff are not expected to make or receive phone calls outside of their contractual hours. If colleagues need to pass on information to other colleagues urgently, they should text in the first instance.

During school time, phone calls are often the best method of communication as the school site is quite spread out. Don't pass on personal information if you can be overheard by others.

#### **e. Facebook**

There is a Facebook site for Crowdys Staff. Please do not put any personal information, specific school information concerning staff or pupils, or inappropriate comments on this site. This site is for staff to keep in touch with each other in an informal way. It should not be used to pass on school information.

#### **f. Face to face**

Urgent information should be passed to colleagues directly.

Much more information about an incident, concern or request can be passed on through discussions.

#### **g. Admin alert for staff PC screen**

Where a message is needed to be conveyed to a wide group of staff urgently, Attila Tancos or Louise Tolley can send an alert directly to all the screens on the school network. NB - This will be seen by any staff using their PCs.

### **7. School staff contacting external agencies**

School staff should respond to outside agencies within 2 working days.

Responses must be courteous and professional.

### **8. School staff contacting Headteacher**

The headteacher can be contacted at any time whilst she is present in school. Sometimes the headteacher is in a meeting which cannot be interrupted. Please be courteous and knock if the door is closed.

Outside of school hours the headteacher can be contacted via text if urgent.

### **9. Contacting staff who are absent**

Staff should not be contacted when absent to discuss school issues. If a member of staff needs to contact an absent member of staff, please be advised by a member of the leadership team first.

### **10. Absent staff contacting the school**

If a member of staff is absent, they must contact the school - see code of conduct - before 7.30am.

Teaching staff must leave cover work for absent lessons. If any other information, such as a TA who carries out medical activities, or a teacher is leading a trip, this must be passed on to relevant persons.

### **11. Contacting staff who are no longer employed by the school**

The headteacher or business school manager can contact employees no longer employed by the school.

## **12. Contacting members of the governing body**

The governing body can be contacted via the clerk to governors.

## **13. Contacting media on behalf of the school**

The headteacher must be consulted prior to any communication with media outlets.

## **14. How staff can receive messages**

Staff may receive messages from other staff via emails, phone calls or face to face. All correspondence must be professional, courteous, and timely.

## **Monitoring and Review**

The headteacher will monitor the implementation of this guidance and it will be reviewed, in consultation with stakeholders, every two years.

The guidance will be agreed by the governing board.

## **Links with other policies**

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- ICT;
- Acceptable Use;
- Staff code of conduct;
- Complaints;
- Staff wellbeing;
- Appendix 1: school contact list;

## APPENDIX 1

I have a question about...	Who you need to talk to
My Child's Learning/Class Activities/Lessons/Trips	Class tutor
My Child's Wellbeing/Pastoral Support/ SEN support	Mrs Russell or Mrs Orchard <a href="mailto:russell@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk">russell@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk</a> <a href="mailto:eorchard@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk">eorchard@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk</a>
Medical	Mrs Snook <a href="mailto:Esnook@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk">Esnook@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk</a>
ParentPay/School Events/Parents Evening/Uniform	Mrs Topp <a href="mailto:ftopp@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk">ftopp@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk</a>
Attendance	Mrs Sprules <a href="mailto:ssprules@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk">ssprules@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk</a>
Complaints, Requests for Absence	Mrs Higham <a href="mailto:head@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk">head@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk</a>
Deputy Headteacher & Designated Safeguarding Lead, Bullying and Behaviour	Mrs Orchard <a href="mailto:eorchard@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk">eorchard@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk</a>
Annual Reviews, EHCPs, Reports, School Calendar	Mrs Backhouse <a href="mailto:sbackhouse@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk">sbackhouse@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk</a>
Catering/School Diner Menus	Mrs Franklin <a href="mailto:nfranklin@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk">nfranklin@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk</a>
Finance/Premises/ Health and safety	Mr Winchester <a href="mailto:admin@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk">admin@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk</a>
Chair of Governors	Mr Poole <a href="mailto:chair@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk">chair@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk</a>
Head of Primary	Mrs Hibbard <a href="mailto:ehibbard@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk">ehibbard@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk</a>
Head of Secondary	Mrs North <a href="mailto:bnorth@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk">bnorth@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk</a>
Head of Sixth Form	Mrs Baptiste <a href="mailto:lbaptiste@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk">lbaptiste@crowdyshill.swindon.sch.uk</a>