Carshalton High School for Girls

Communication Policy

Reviewed and agreed by Carshalton Local Governing Body: Autumn 2026

Next Review: Autumn 2029

Policy Notes may be subject to review and revision at any time by the Carshalton Local Governing Body notwithstanding that the next review date has not been reached.

Review dates are for guidance only and whilst the intention is always to arrange reviews within the stated time frame all Policy Notes will remain in force until this has taken place and been formally approved by the Carshalton Local Governing Body.

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1. Introduction and Aims

Effective communication between school and home is essential to ensuring the best possible outcomes for students. At Carshalton High School for Girls, we are committed to fostering positive, professional and respectful relationships with parents and carers through clear, timely and accessible communication. This partnership helps to support students' academic achievement, wellbeing, attendance and personal development.

We recognise that students thrive when schools and families work together. Effective communication:

- Provides parents and carers with the information they need to support their child's education and wellbeing.
- Enables the school to share important information, celebrate successes and address concerns promptly.
- Encourages constructive feedback and meaningful engagement with the school community.
- Builds trust, understanding and collaboration between home and school.
- Supports the safeguarding, welfare and educational progress of every student.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Place the needs, welfare and educational interests of students at the centre of all communication.
- Establish clear expectations for communication between the school, parents and carers.
- Ensure communication is professional, respectful, accessible and timely.
- Clarify how the school communicates with parents and carers, and how parents and carers can contact the school.
- Promote mutual respect and understanding in all interactions.
- Help parents and carers identify the most appropriate member of staff to contact, ensuring that enquiries and concerns are addressed efficiently and effectively.
- Support staff wellbeing by setting reasonable expectations regarding communication and response times.

This policy should be read alongside other relevant school and Trust policies, including :

- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection Policy & Freedom of Information Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Student Attendance Policy
- Home School Agreement

These policies can be found on the website: Carshalton High School for Girls - Policies

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 The Governing Body

The Local Governing Body is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the school has effective systems and procedures for communication with parents, carers, students and the wider community.
- Monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of this policy.
- Supporting a culture of openness, transparency and positive engagement.
- Ensuring that communication arrangements promote safeguarding, equality and inclusion.

2.2 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Promoting a culture of respectful, professional and effective communication throughout the school.
- Ensuring that communications with parents/carers are effective, timely and appropriate.
- Balancing the needs of communication with staff workload and wellbeing.

- Overseeing the implementation of this policy

2.3 Senior Leaders and Line Managers

Senior leaders and line managers are responsible for:

- Modelling high standards of communication.
- Supporting staff in responding appropriately to parental enquiries and concerns.
- Ensuring information shared with families is accurate, timely and consistent.
- Monitoring communication within their areas of responsibility.
- Escalating significant concerns where appropriate.

2.4 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Communicating professionally, courteously and respectfully at all times.
- Responding to parents/carers in a timely manner and within a maximum 48 hours (2 working days). This may be a holding call/email if more time or further action or investigation is required.
- Deciding which type of communication is most effective for each issue. Staff should consider that a telephone call is often a more personal approach with less opportunity for misunderstanding.
- If using a personal mobile is necessary, ensuring they keep their own number confidential and deleting the record of the outgoing call immediately afterwards.
- Keeping a record of communication where required, usually on CPOMS or Arbor.
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents/carers get timely information if they cannot address a query.
- Ensuring that their telephone answerphone messages are personal to them and that messages are checked daily.
- Ensuring that their Carshalton Girls email signature is set up and that emails are checked ~~daily~~ on every working day. Part-time work hours should be clearly identified and out of office responses providing the contact details of an alternative contact should be set up.
- Ensuring that out of office email messages are updated when appropriate.
- Ensuring language is appropriate and formal, on topic and with no personal or inappropriate comments about students or staff.

Staff will aim to respond during their normal working hours. In line with promoting staff wellbeing and finding 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.

2.5 Parents and Carers

Parents and Carers play a vital role in supporting their child's education and are expected to:

- Treat all members of the school community with courtesy and respect.
- Checking all communications from the school regularly.
- Allow reasonable time for staff to respond to enquiries.
- Raise concerns promptly and constructively so that they can be addressed effectively.
- Making every reasonable effort to address their communication to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance.
- Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner.
- Ensuring contact details and student medical needs are kept up to date with any changes emailed to the school email office@chsg.org.uk
- Refrain from using social media or other public forums to raise individual concerns before allowing the school the opportunity to investigate and respond.
- Parents/carers should not expect staff to respond to communication outside the individual's school working hours

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with Parent Code of Conduct and Home School Agreement (found in the Behaviour Policy).

2.6 Students

Students are encouraged to:

- Communicate respectfully with staff and fellow students.
- Take responsibility for sharing relevant school information with parents/carers where appropriate.
- Seek support from a trusted member of staff when they need help or guidance.
- Report concerns relating to their wellbeing, safety or education promptly.
- Use school communication systems appropriately and in accordance with school policies.

3. How We Communicate with Parents/Carers

Parents/carers should monitor all of the following regularly to make sure they do not miss important communication or announcements that may affect their child.

3.1 Arbor

The school uses Arbor to send emails and text messages to parents/carers. It is generally used for group emails, eg whole school, year group or tutor group but may also be used for individual student/parent/carer letters.

Arbor is used to keep parents/carers informed about, or example:

- Latest news updates
- Attendance
- Scheduled closures and early finishes
- School surveys
- Student specific letters
- Newsletters
- School events and activities, including Parent Consultation Evenings
- Progress reviews and school reports
- Extended Curriculum information
- Trips

Email is the preferred option and text messages are usually used for urgent or last minute information.

3.2 Emails

All staff have a school email account. Individual members of staff will use their school email to respond to parents/carers, as well as to students, other members of staff and other enquiries related to their role at Carshalton Girls.

Staff should keep a record of communication between home and school on Arbor or in CPOMS.

3.3 Arbor

Arbor is the system which records behaviour, both positive and negative, as well as attendance and rewards.

Parents/carers can view the information on the Arbor Parent Portal and app. The information they will have access to is:

- Their child's attendance record
- Reporting absence
- Behaviour points (both positive and negative).
- Detentions set
- Payment details including payment for trips and spending in the canteen

3.4 Telephone Calls

All staff who have access to a telephone should regularly check their voicemail messages.

Messages taken by the Main Office will be forwarded or emailed to the appropriate member of staff as soon as possible, usually within 30 minutes.

Staff should endeavour to acknowledge messages within 48 hours (2 working days). If there are difficulties in meeting this timescale, for whatever reason, a member of teaching staff should ask a member of support staff to make a holding call.

Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring the phone messages of absent staff are checked on a regular basis.

3.5 Reports

Students receive three reports a year at the end of each term outlining progress, attainment, behaviour and attendance updates.

Reports are sent to parents/carers electronically via Arbor.

3.6 School Website

Key information is published on the website including:

- Term dates and school times
- School calendar
- Curriculum information
- Co-curricular timetable
- News and events
- Admissions information

3.7 Parent Meetings

Parents' Information Evening (in-person or recorded video)

These take place for each year group at the start of the academic year with the purpose of informing parents/carers about the new year ahead, key events, exams and other relevant information.

Parent Consultation Evening (online)

Parent Consultation Evenings are held once a year for each year group and the time of year depends on the year group. These are an opportunity to meet class teachers to discuss student progress in an individual subject.

Meet the Tutor Evening

This event is run during the autumn term and allows each family to book an appointment to meet with their daughter's form tutor. These are in person meetings.

4. How Parents and Carers Communicate with the School

Parents/carers should use the list in Appendix A to identify the most appropriate person to contact about a query or issue noting that the member of staff may have teaching commitments which will influence the timing of their response.

Parents/carers should note that staff work different hours depending on their role, and the majority of staff do not work during the school holidays.

Parents/carers may choose to contact the school office on office@chsg.org.uk or 020 8647 8294 rather than contact individual members of staff. The school office is open during term time between 8am and 4.30pm Monday to Thursday and 4.15pm on Friday.

4.1 Email

Parents/carers 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 two working days (48 hours). CHSG staff are not expected to monitor or reply to emails outside their school working hours.

If a query or concern is urgent parents/carers should telephone the school.

4.2 Telephone Calls

When calling the school, parents/carers will be given a list of options and they should select the option they require. If the call is transferred to an voicemail a clear message should be left, including:

- name and contact number
- name of their child and year group

- nature of their query and who they would like to speak to

If the issue is urgent, parents/carers should call the school office. Urgent issues might include:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

If parents/carers telephone the school, the school has a safeguarding responsibility to confirm their identity and their connection to an individual student before discussing a student.

4.3 Meetings

If parents/carers require a meeting with a member of staff they should email or telephone. We try to schedule all meetings within 5 working days of the request.

5 Inclusion

Parents/carers who need help communicating with the school, for example interpreters at meetings or assistance in reading, should contact the School Office or speak to their Head of Year or school contact to make arrangements.

Appendix A

Who should I contact?

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT…	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO	HOW DO I CONTACT THEM
My child's learning / progress / class activities / lessons / homework	Subject teacher	Send an email to office@chsg.org.uk Include who the email is for and the email the name and tutor group of your child.
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Form tutor If an issue remains unresolved contact the Head of Year, Assistant Head of Year or Pastoral Support Officer.	Send an email to office@chsg.org.uk Include who the email is for and the email the name and tutor group of your child
Admissions	Admissions Officer	Call 020 8647 8294 and select admissions or email chsgadmissions@carshaltongirls.org.uk
Arbor	Call the school reception and they will direct the call to the correct person depending on the nature of the query.	Call 020 8647 8294
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence submit on the Arbor Parent app on the day of absence or call the school office and select the attendance option. If you want to request approval for term-time absence, please contact the Head of Year. The form is found on the website: Attendance and Punctuality (chsg.org.uk)	Arbor app or call 020 8647 8294 and select attendance Email Request for Absence forms to office@chsg.org.uk or to the relevant Head of Year
Change of contact details	School office	Send an email to office@chsg.org.uk Include who the email is for and the email the name and tutor group of your child.
Finance	School office by email on who will forward your query to GLT Finance.	Send an email to office@chsg.org.uk Include who the email is for and the email the name and tutor group of your child.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT…	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO	HOW DO I CONTACT THEM
Free School meals	Check the school website Carshalton High School for Girls - Free School Meals or our admissions team	Call 020 8647 8294 and select admissions or email chsgadmissions@carshaltongirls.org.uk
Lost Property	School Office	Send an email to office@chsg.org.uk
Music lessons	Head of Music	Send an email to office@chsg.org.uk Include who the email is for and the email the name and tutor group of your child.
Safeguarding concerns	Check the school website or email the safeguarding team. For urgent concerns please ring the school. For out of hours and holidays please refer to the website: Carshalton High School for Girls - Safeguarding	Email: chsgsafeguarding@carshaltongirls.org.uk Or call 020 8647 8294
School trips	Enrichment & Communications	Send an email to Mrs Zghari: lzghari@carshaltongirls.org.uk Include who the email is for and the email the name and tutor group of your child
School Uniform	Check the school website: Uniform (chsg.org.uk) or contact the School Office	Send an email to office@chsg.org.uk
SEND queries	SENDCo	Send an email to office@chsg.org.uk for the attention of Ms Bramson

School Office

Telephone: 020 8647 8294
Email: office@chsg.org.uk