

Court Lane Academies Home-School Communication Policy



Approved by:

LGB

Date: July 2025

Last reviewed on:

23rd June 2025

Next review due by:

June 2026

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1. Introduction and aims

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 policy 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

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

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 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)

Staff will **aim** to respond to communication during core school hours from 8am till 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:

- 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
- Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school
- Ensuring that contact details, phone numbers and email addresses are kept up-to-date and that there are at least two emergency contact numbers for each child.

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with our code of conduct.

Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours 8am till 4pm or during school holidays.

3. How we communicate with parents and carers

The sections below explain how we keep parents up to date with their child's education and what is happening in school.

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 Email

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

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)

- School information, surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests

3.2 Text messages

On very rare occasions, we may text parents to know of short-notice emergencies such as unforeseen school closures or late arrivals back from school trips or events.

3.3 School calendar

Our school website includes a full school calendar for the academic year.

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 event will be included in the school calendar on the website.

There is a basic Arbor calendar available in the Arbor portal or App that shows term dates and Inset days.

The schools will also publish a calendar of trips and events that require a payment at the start of each academic year. This will show the dates by which payments are due to help families to plan ahead.

3.4 Phone calls

The school may telephone parents for the following reasons:

- On the first day and subsequent days of an unreported absence
- In the event of a child being unwell or suffering a serious injury at school
- If there is an immediate query that cannot wait until the end of the day
- Teachers may also telephone parents about more in-depth issues that cannot be addressed at the start or end of the day or in response to enquiries from parents

3.5 Letters

We email or send the following letters home regularly:

- Letters about trips, visits and school events
- Consent forms
- Attendance related matters
- Half-termly curriculum newsletters for Juniors
- Our half-termly newsletter
- To inform parents of minor medical or welfare information that have happened during the day

Most letters will be emailed home to ensure that they are received safely by families. Paper copies of letters will only be given to children to bring home where a reply slip is required.

All letters that are sent or emailed home will be uploaded to the Letters Home section of our websites.

3.6 Tapestry

The Infant School uses Tapestry is a learning journal to upload photos and videos of the children's work and learning opportunities by parents at home or staff in school. Tapestry is not a day-to-day communication channel and day-to-day messages sent through this platform will not be responded to.

3.7 Reports

Parents receive reports from the school about their child's learning, including:

- An end-of-year report covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, and their attendance
- A report on statutory national curriculum assessments

Parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) may receive additional reports and plans such as individual learning plans to review and address these needs. We also arrange regular meetings where parents can speak to their child's teacher(s) about their achievement and progress (see the section below).

3.8 Meetings

We hold 3 parents' evening(s) per year. 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.

The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings between parents' evenings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing.

We also hold curriculum workshops where parents are invited into the school to find out about certain topics, such as reading or phonics and learning showcases where parents are invited into the classrooms to see their children's work.

Parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to review and address these additional needs.

3.9 School website

Key information about the school is posted on our website, including:

- School life and contact information
- Opening times and term dates
- Curriculum information
- Key information, policies and procedures
- Important contact information

- Information about community links, facilities hire and before and after-school provision

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

3.10 Arbor parent portal and app

All parents will have access to the Arbor Parent Portal and Arbor App. This will enable parents to:

- Report their child's absence from school
- Update their contact details
- View their child's attendance
- Provide and manage the consents for your child (through the parent portal only)
- Order school meals
- Book places on the Junior school free Breakfast Club
- Pay for places on trips and visits
- Book appointments for parents' evenings
- Book tickets for school performances

We may also send in-app messages and notifications to remind parents of key information. In-app messages may also be used to provide parents with short-notice information about changes to our normal routines.

3.11 School Facebook Page

The Court Lane Academies share a Facebook page. This is used to:

- Share photos and stories of the events that are taking place in the school
- Share information about events of interest that are organised by our partners and local community groups

The school Facebook page is not continuously monitored and parents should not use this forum to raise queries or contact the school offices.

4. How parents and carers 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 about non-urgent issues in the first instance:

inbox@courtlaneinfant.chimat.uk for the Infant School

admin@courtlanejunior.chimat.uk for the Junior School

We aim to acknowledge all emails sent to these addresses within one working day, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within five working days.

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

4.2 Phone calls

If parents need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should email the school office and the relevant member of staff will contact them within three working days.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will respond to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure parents have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within five days of your request.

If the issue is urgent, parents should call the school office.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

For more general enquiries, please call the school office. The school telephone numbers are:

Infants 02392 378890

Juniors 02392 375444

4.3 Meetings

If parents would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the appropriate email address (see appendix 1), or call the school to book an appointment.

We try to schedule all meetings within five working days of the request. However, it may be longer than five days before the meeting takes place.

While teachers are available at the beginning or end of the school day if parents need to speak to them urgently, we recommend they book appointments to discuss:

- Any concerns they have about their child's learning
- Updates related to pastoral support, their child's home environment, or their wellbeing

4.4 Home-school communications app

Parents can use the Arbor Parent Portal or App to log an absence for their child or make changes to their contact details. Parents can also send in-app messages to school through the Arbor Parent Portal or App.

4.5 Tapestry and Reading Journals

Tapestry is not a day-to-day communication channel and should not be used for messaging the school.

5. Accessibility

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

5.1 Parents with additional communication needs

We aim to make communications accessible to all. We have taken the following steps to achieve this:

- All whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) are made available in multiple formats
- All communications are written as clearly and concisely as possible
- Accessibility is considered when designing/updating the school website
- Staff are trained on accessibility and will endeavour to provide information in an accessible format

Parents who need help communicating with the school can request reasonable adjustments, such as:

- School announcements and communications in accessible formats

Please contact the school office to discuss these.

5.2 Parents with English as an additional language (EAL)

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 through the Portsmouth EMAS service

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

6. Monitoring and review

The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every year.

The policy will be approved by the governing board.

7. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- ICT and internet acceptable use
- Code of conduct
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints
- Home-school agreement
- Staff wellbeing
- Social media policy
- Add other policies if relevant

Appendix 1: school contact list

Who should I contact?

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's class teacher
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your child's class teacher or a member of the Pastoral Team, in person or request a phone call via the school office. Infants 02392 378890 or inbox@courtlaneinfant.chimat.uk Juniors 02392 375444 or admin@courtlanejunior.chimat.uk
School trips	The school offices Infants 02392 378890 or inbox@courtlaneinfant.chimat.uk Juniors 02392 375444 or admin@courtlanejunior.chimat.uk
Uniform/lost and found	The school offices Infants 02392 378890 or inbox@courtlaneinfant.chimat.uk Juniors 02392 375444 or admin@courtlanejunior.chimat.uk
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, call or email school offices or report the absence on the Arbor Parent App or Portal. Infants 02392 378890 or inbox@courtlaneinfant.chimat.uk Juniors 02392 375444 or admin@courtlanejunior.chimat.uk If you need to request approval for term-time absence, complete a leave of absence request form via the website (or collect in person from the school office).
School events/the school calendar	The school offices Infants 02392 378890 or inbox@courtlaneinfant.chimat.uk Juniors 02392 375444 or admin@courtlanejunior.chimat.uk
Special educational needs (SEN)	Infants FAO: Mrs A Ventham, SENCO Tel 023 92 378890 inbox@courtlaneinfant.chimat.uk Juniors

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
	FAO: Mrs E Carter, SEND leader Tel 023 92 375444 admin@courtlanejnr.co.uk
Before and after-school clubs	The school offices Infants 02392 378890 or inbox@courtlaneinfant.chimat.uk Juniors 02392 375444 or admin@courtlanejunior.chimat.uk
Hiring the school premises	FAO: Mr M Stedman, Business Manager Tel 023 92 375444 admin@courtlanejunior.chimat.uk
PTA	CLACA Committee Members Via their Facebook page or by email clacommunityassociation@gmail.com
Governing board	FAO: Chair of Governors ClerkofCLA@courtlanejunior.chimat.uk
Catering/meals	Caterlink via the school offices Infants 02392 378890 or inbox@courtlaneinfant.chimat.uk Juniors 02392 375444 or admin@courtlanejunior.chimat.uk

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:

Infants 02392 378890 or inbox@courtlaneinfant.chimat.uk

Juniors 02392 375444 or admin@courtlanejunior.chimat.uk

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 aim to acknowledge all emails sent to these addresses within one working day, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within five working days.

Complaints

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