

Oldbury Wells School

Member of the Trusted Schools Alliance

Communication Policy for Parents and Staff

FREQUENCY OF REVIEW: Every 2 years

RATIFICATION DATE: December 2025

RATIFIED BY: OWS Local Governing Body

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW: Autumn Term 2027
(*unless there is a material change*)

1. Introduction and Aims

We believe that clear, open communication across our school and with parents/carers has a positive impact on pupils' learning and our staff 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.
- Helps staff to manage the pressures of their work life more effectively, supporting their wellbeing.

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

Parents are given access to Satchel One, Go4Schools (Admin: Mr D Hicklin and E Prescott) and ParentPay (Admin: S Billingham).

2.1 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate.
- Liaising with staff over the best way to ensure communications between staff are effective, timely and appropriate, and reflecting that in this policy.
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy.
- Regularly reviewing this policy.

2.2 Staff

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.

Abusive or aggressive behaviour – in person, by phone or email – will not be tolerated.

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

Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours 8am – 6pm or at all during school holidays:

[Parent/Carer/Visitor Code of Conduct](#)

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 surveys or consultations.
- Class activities or teacher requests.

3.2 Text Messages

We will text parents about:

- Payments.
- Short-notice changes to the school day.
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather).
- Some class related activities.

3.3 School Calendar

Our school website includes a full school calendar, with up to date [Term 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 event will be included in the school calendar.

3.4 Phone Calls

Staff Phone Calls to Parents

We encourage all teaching staff to make regular phone calls to parents to discuss pupils' progress, behaviour and achievements. These calls are not reserved solely for concerns; we place equal importance on celebrating successes and recognising positive contributions.

- **Positive Calls:** Teachers are encouraged to call home when a learner has demonstrated exceptional effort, improvement, kindness, leadership, or achievement in any area of school life (potentially linked to the Oldbury Wells Baccalaureate). These calls help reinforce positive behaviour and build student confidence.
- **Supportive Calls:** When a learner is struggling - whether academically, socially, or behaviourally - staff will reach out to parents to share observations and work collaboratively on strategies for improvement. These conversations are solution-focused and aim to support the learner in making progress.
- **Frequency and Purpose:** While there is no fixed quota, staff aim to make regular contact throughout the term, ensuring that parents are kept informed and involved. Calls may be initiated by subject teachers, form tutors, or pastoral staff depending on the nature of the discussion.

We believe that consistent, open communication helps create a supportive environment where students can thrive. Parents are also encouraged to contact staff with any concerns or updates, and we aim to respond promptly and thoughtfully.

3.5 Letters

We send the following letters home regularly:

- Letters about trips and visits.
- Consent forms.

3.6 School Planners

At Oldbury Wells School, the student planner is a vital tool that supports organisation, communication and personal responsibility. Every learner is issued a planner at the start of the academic year, and it is used consistently across all year groups.

Key Purposes of the Planner:

- **Homework and Deadlines:** Students are expected to record all homework tasks and key deadlines in their planner. This helps them manage their time effectively and ensures they stay on top of their learning.
- **Daily Organisation:** The planner includes timetables, key dates and space for daily notes, helping students stay organised and prepared for each school day.
- **Communication Tool:** The planner serves as a communication link between school and home. Teachers and pastoral staff may write notes to parents, and parents are encouraged to use the planner to communicate with staff when needed.
- **Monitoring and Support:** Tutors and teachers regularly check planners to ensure they are being used correctly. This helps identify students who may need additional support with organisation or time management.

3.7 Reports SFA

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

- A report covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, and their attendance.
- A report on the results of public examinations.

We also arrange meetings where parents can speak to their child's teacher(s) about their achievement and progress.

3.8 Meetings

We hold parents' evening(s) for each year group each 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. This could be with your child's form tutor, Pastoral Manager or Head of Year in the first instance.

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

3.9 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 clubs/activities.

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

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, or the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within 2 working days and have responded in full; if a meeting is required we aim to ensure this is arranged within 5 working days. Please note that the timings for Complaints vary and parents should refer to our [Complaints Policy](#).

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 2 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 2 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.

If staff call parents to talk about their child's attainment and progress, these calls could be used by parents to ask questions or raise concerns as appropriate.

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 5 working days of the request.

If parents need to speak to their form tutor urgently, we recommend they book a telephone / in person appointment to discuss:

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

5. Staff

5.1 Staff responsibilities to parents

All staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication within the school or with parents is respectful at all times.
- 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).
- Working with colleagues in line with this policy.

- Staff will **aim** to respond to communication during core school and partner hours 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.

5.1 Staff Communication Considerations

Staff should all endeavour to support each other in their work and in communications. The following are examples of the types of considerations:

- Can a notice regarding something for implementation be sent a day in advance? This pressure on staff.
- Is consultation on a matter needed? If so, it is important to involve staff and for example through asking for comments on a draft. If consultation is not needed staff should aim to give final copies of matters as a way of reducing workload.
- Avoid “reply all” messages as a matter of course – only where necessary.
- Where possible, where a selection of staff is needed to hear a message, send emails to the right staff – not all staff.
- A regular staff bulletin and staff briefings are good for sharing key information.
- When writing a non-urgent email out of hours, consider scheduling the email to go out during working hours. Do this through: Options -> Schedule send -> Chose time ->

5.2 Staff Emails

In our school, communication between staff via emails has been agreed as:

- Email times: for usual communications, emails will be sent between staff on work days between 8am and 6pm.
- Staff to staff emails where necessary are agreed as between 5-7pm on Sundays or the last day of the holiday.
- Email times for unusual / urgent communications will also naturally occur, and in these cases, the person communicating outside usual hours will consider work / life balance in the mix before doing so. This is because there are many occasions across a year where to stick to the usual working hours times would be detrimental to staff wellbeing (eg. updating your line manager of an absence / illness); are necessary for staff or student welfare / safeguarding; or are necessary for the smooth running of the school. Examples include:
 - updating your line manager / school about your absence (as soon as possible, in line with our attendance policy).
 - safeguarding matters (without delay, in line with KCSIE).
 - closure for snow/bad weather.
 - significant changes of which staff need prior warning (schools trip cancelled / duties changed for the next day).

6. Accessibility

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

6.1 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.
- Sign language interpreters for meetings.

Please contact the school office to discuss these.

6.2 Parents with English as an additional language (EAL)

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

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

- School announcements and communications translated into additional languages.
- Interpreters (where available) 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 2 years.

The policy will be approved by the local governing board (LGB) which includes staff governors.

8. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- ICT and internet acceptable use
- Parent code of conduct
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints
- Social media policy.

Appendix 1: School Contact List

Who should I contact?

We welcome communication from parents and carers and aim to respond promptly and helpfully. If you need to get in touch with the school, please navigate using the following email addresses (also provided on our website) and telephone numbers. To help us deal with your enquiry efficiently, we kindly ask that you include your child's full name, year group and a brief summary of your query in the subject line or opening of your message. Our office team will ensure your message is directed to the appropriate member of staff, and you will receive a response as soon as possible in line with our communication policy.

Option 1:

If you have questions about any of the topics in the table below, or would like to speak to a member of staff:

- Email the most appropriate address
- Include your child's full name in the subject line.

We try to respond to all emails within 48 hours. School office hours are 8:30am to 3:30pm.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's relevant subject teacher or Head of Department/Cluster Lead.
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Head of Year group or Pastoral Manager: Year 7 – Mr C Smith & Ms A Rock Year 8 – Ms Keating and Mrs Burrows Year 9 – Ms Keating and Mrs Burrows Year 10 – Mr Cowburn and Ms Shakespeare Year 11 – Mr Cowburn and Ms Shakespeare
Payments	finance.OWS@oldburywells.com or Susan Billingham
School trips	Trip lead or Reception: school@oldburywells.com
Uniform/lost and found	Reception: school@oldburywells.com
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, call: 01746 765454 (option 1) and attendance@oldburywells.com If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact Mrs K Dwane at school@oldburywells.com
Bullying and behaviour	Head of Year group or Pastoral Manager: Year 7 – Mr C Smith & Ms A Rock

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
	Year 8 – Ms Keating and Mrs Burrows Year 9 – Ms Keating and Mrs Burrows Year 10 – Mr Cowburn and Ms Shakespeare Year 11 – Mr Cowburn and Ms Shakespeare Or Ms R Lawson / Ms S Barlow DSL@oldburywells.com
School events/the school calendar	Mrs N Nicholson/ Mr T Williams
Special educational needs (SEN)	Ms C Morgan
Before and after-school clubs	N/A
Hiring the school premises	Mrs N Nicholson
PTA	Mrs K Dwane (Oldbury Wells School does not currently have a PTA).
Governing board	Mrs K Dwane
Catering/meals	Mr A Taylor / Mr A Ratcliffe.

Option 2:

If you have questions about any of the topics in the table above, or would like to speak to a member of staff:

- Email or call the school office on school@oldburywells.com / 01746 765454.
- Put the subject and the name of the relevant member of staff (from the list above) 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 48 hours.

Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy.

<https://www.oldburywells.com/media/65864/complaints-procedure-june-2025.pdf>