

## OLT Home-School Communication Policy



**Policy Review Schedule**

<b>Policy</b>	OLT Home-School Communication Policy
<b>Review schedule</b>	Every 3 years
<b>Statutory Policy</b>	No
<b>Policy owner</b>	CEO
<b>Lead Reviewer</b>	DCEO
<b>Approver and date of last approval</b>	CEO
<b>Key review dates</b>	<b>Changes made</b>
April 2026 written	Written
Next review due April 2029	

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## **1. Purpose**

Omnia Learning Trust believes that effective communication between schools and parents or carers is essential in supporting pupils' wellbeing, safety and educational progress.

This policy sets out the principles and expectations for communication between Trust schools and parents / carers. It aims to ensure communication is respectful, clear, constructive and appropriate to the issue being raised. By establishing clear expectations, the Trust seeks to maintain positive relationships with families while ensuring staff are able to manage communication effectively alongside their teaching and safeguarding responsibilities.

## **2. Scope**

This policy applies to communication between schools within Omnia Learning Trust and parents or carers of pupils attending those schools.

It covers communication through email, telephone, face-to-face meetings, written correspondence and approved school communication platforms.

The policy applies to all staff and parents/carers and all OLT schools.

## **3. Principles of Communication**

Schools within the Trust are committed to communication that is respectful, clear and timely, solution-focused and appropriate to the issue being raised.

All communication should be courteous and professional. Schools will aim to provide clear information and respond to enquiries within reasonable timeframes. Communication should focus on resolving concerns and supporting pupils. Some matters are best addressed through verbal conversation, rather than in written form.

Schools also aim to provide communication to parents in a predictable rhythm where possible. This may include regular newsletters, curriculum updates, event notifications and important school information. Schools are expected to use the communication quality checklist and the suggested newsletter structure below.

### **Communication Quality Checklist**

- Is the purpose of the message clear?
- Does it explain the event or information being shared?
- Are dates, times and locations included?
- Is it clear whether parents need to take action?

### **Suggested Newsletter Structure**

- Key Dates
- School News
- Learning information
- Important Reminders

- Celebrating Success

#### **4. Communication Channels**

Parents and carers should normally use the following channels when contacting the school.

1. Telephone the school office
2. Email the school office

General enquiries should be directed to the school office, which will direct the enquiry to the most appropriate member of staff.

Urgent matters such as pupil absence, safeguarding concerns or issues requiring same-day attention should be communicated via the school office by telephone, where messages can be left.

Brief day-to-day messages may be shared via approved communication platform or school system where appropriate.

Where a matter requires discussion, a telephone call or meeting will be arranged.

#### **5. Response Times**

Schools will aim to respond to parent enquiries in a timely manner.

Staff will aim to respond to emails within two working days. Where a full response cannot be provided immediately, the school may acknowledge receipt and indicate when a fuller response will follow.

Staff are not expected to monitor or respond to emails outside normal working hours. Messages received after 3.30pm, during evenings, weekends or holidays will normally be treated as received on the next working day.

#### **6. Expectations of Staff**

Staff are expected to communicate with parents professionally and appropriately at all times.

All teachers and other staff will respond to parent questions through the school office or other similar system (Arbor). It is not appropriate to email teachers or support staff directly.

Staff should respond to emails within two working days where possible, acknowledge emails requiring further investigation, maintain confidentiality when communicating about pupils or families and use appropriate communication channels for sensitive issues.

Staff should seek support from senior leaders where issues are complex or escalating. Staff should not normally initiate sensitive discussions via email where another form of communication would be more appropriate or respond to abusive or offensive communication. Such communication should be referred to senior leaders.

## **7. Expectations of Parents and Carers**

Parents and carers play an important role in maintaining positive communication between home and school.

Parents are expected to ensure the school has up-to-date contact details, use the school office as the first point of contact unless advised otherwise, allow reasonable time for staff to respond and communicate respectfully with school staff.

Parents should raise concerns constructively and in a solution-focused manner. Detailed discussions about academic progress, behavioural concerns or complex pastoral matters are usually better addressed through an arranged telephone call or meeting rather than email. Meetings to discuss this can be set at a mutually agreeable time.

## **8. Age/phase related communication to expect from school**

### **Nursery / EYFS (Ages 2–4)**

Parents should typically receive:

- Informal updates/ general conversation at handover when deemed necessary
- Next steps in learning shared at formal parent evenings
- Progress summaries within reports
- Progress Check at Age 2 (where applicable)

### **Reception (Age 4–5)**

Parents should typically receive:

- Regular updates
- Clear information on:
  - phonics
  - early reading
  - routines and expectations
- Curriculum overviews
- Guidance on how to support learning at home
- Formal parent meetings (2 per year)
- End-of-year EYFS profile information

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### **Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2)**

Parents should typically receive:

- Termly curriculum information
- Updates on:
  - phonics
  - reading progression
  - Maths
- Reading records (or equivalent platform online)
- Communication about: wellbeing, behaviour (where appropriate) and notable achievements
- 2 formal parent consultations per year
- End-of-year report
- Through newsletters and/or key dates, notifications of:
  - events
  - trips
  - key assessments

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### **Lower Key Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4)**

Parents should typically receive:

- Termly curriculum overview
- Key information about:
  - times tables
  - reading expectations
- Assessment updates (less frequent, more summarised)
- 2 parent consultations per year
- End-of-year report

- Communication about: behaviour, wellbeing, notable achievements where appropriate.

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### **Upper Key Stage 2 (Years 5 and 6)**

Parents should typically receive:

- Information about:
  - SATs expectations
  - secondary transition
- Assessment summaries
- Communication about: wellbeing, behaviour and notable achievements (where appropriate)
- Targeted updates where needed
- Continued:
  - parent consultations
  - annual report
- Support materials for revision and boosters

### **9. Email Communication Guidance**

Email can be an efficient and convenient form of communication when used appropriately. Messages should be clear and concise and should indicate whether a response or action is required. Emails should avoid confrontational or emotionally charged language and must not include personal information about other pupils or families.

Where email exchanges become lengthy, complex or emotionally charged, the school may decide that further discussion should take place through a telephone call or meeting to ensure concerns are understood fully and resolved effectively.

### **10. Communication at the School Gates/ Classroom doors**

The start and end of the school day are important times for ensuring pupils arrive and leave school safely.

Senior staff may be present at school gates or playgrounds to greet families. These times may be used for very brief messages where appropriate.

However, the school gates are not an appropriate place for detailed conversations about a pupil's learning, behaviour or wellbeing. Staff must prioritise pupil safety and supervision, the orderly arrival and dismissal of pupils and maintaining confidentiality.

Parents wishing to discuss matters in more detail should contact the school office to share information, arrange a telephone call or arrange a meeting.

### **11. Raising general concerns**

Schools encourage parents to raise concerns early so they can be addressed promptly.

Most concerns can be resolved through discussion with the appropriate member of staff. Where concerns cannot be resolved informally through the appropriate channels, parents may raise a formal complaint in line with the Trust Complaints Procedure. Information about the Complaints Procedure is available on school websites.

Where concerns have already been responded to, but a parent remains dissatisfied, the school may advise that the matter should be progressed through the formal complaints process rather than continuing through informal correspondence.

### **12. Communication Following Incidents or Behaviour Concerns**

Schools recognise that parents value being informed when incidents occur involving their child.

Where incidents occur, staff will assess the seriousness of the situation and determine the appropriate level of communication with parents. Parents will normally be informed where an incident results in a pupil being hurt or distressed, involves repeated unkind or unsafe behaviour, requires significant staff intervention or results in a sanction under the school's Behaviour Policy.

Minor playground disagreements or one-off incidents can happen regularly in schools. Those that are minor and quickly resolved may not always be communicated.

When communicating with parents about incidents, the school will explain what has happened in relation to their child, how the situation has been addressed and any steps taken to support their child.

When incidents involve more than one pupil, schools must respect the privacy and confidentiality of all children involved. Schools cannot share details of sanctions, consequences or support arrangements given to other pupils.

When incidents are investigated, staff may gather information from pupils, staff and other witnesses. Investigation notes, witness statements, behaviour records, safeguarding records and internal investigation reports are confidential internal school documents and are not routinely shared with parents.

Parents will be informed about the outcome of the investigation as it relates to their child and any relevant next steps.

Schools may require time to speak with pupils and staff, review information and establish an accurate understanding of events. Parents are asked to allow reasonable time for investigations to take place before a full response can be provided.

Parents should be aware that, due to confidentiality and safeguarding requirements, schools are not able to share:

- information relating to other pupils
- witness statements
- internal investigation notes or reports
- records of sanctions or actions taken with other pupils

Where concerns relate to access to personal data, parents have the right to make a request under data protection legislation. However, parents are encouraged to seek clarification through normal communication channels before making a formal request, as many queries can be resolved more quickly and effectively in this way.

Formal requests for information, including Subject Access Requests, will be responded to in accordance with statutory requirements. However, such requests will not result in disclosure of information relating to third parties or confidential safeguarding records.

### **13. Communicating concerns about bullying**

Bullying is taken seriously by all schools within Omnia Learning Trust. Parents and carers should report concerns about bullying promptly so that the school can investigate and take appropriate action.

Parents and Carers should read the schools' Behaviour Policy and the Anti-bullying Policy to help determine whether *bullying* is taking place.

#### **What is bullying/ what is not bullying?**

- When someone says something unintentionally hurtful and they do it only once... *that is not nice.*
- When someone says or does something intentionally hurtful and they do it once.. *that is unkind*
- When you and your friend or groups of friends fall out and everyone is upset... *that is conflict*
- When someone says or does something intentionally hurtful and they keep doing it, over and over again over a period of time, even when you tell them to stop or show them you are upset ... *that is bullying*

We recognise that minor disagreements will take place between pupils and this is part of typical child development. However, unkind behaviours and bullying is never acceptable.

#### **Raising a Bullying Concern**

Parents should report concerns about bullying by:

- contacting the school office
- speaking to their child's class teacher

- requesting to speak with a senior leader if concerns persist

Parents are encouraged to raise concerns as soon as possible, even if they are unsure whether behaviour meets the definition of bullying.

### **What the School Will Do**

When a bullying concern is raised, the school will:

- investigate the concern in a fair and proportionate way
- speak to pupils involved and relevant staff
- take appropriate action in line with the school's Behaviour Policy and/ or Anti-bullying Policy
- put in place support for the child affected

Schools aim to ensure that concerns are addressed promptly and effectively, with a focus on maintaining a safe learning environment for all pupils.

### **Communication with Parents and Carers**

Parents and carers will normally be informed:

- that the concern has been investigated
- whether the concern has been substantiated
- what support is in place for their child

However, due to confidentiality requirements, schools cannot share:

- sanctions or consequences given to other pupils
- detailed accounts of incidents involving other children
- witness statements or investigation records

The school's response will focus on supporting the child and ensuring the situation improves, rather than sharing detailed information about other pupils.

### **Ongoing Monitoring**

Schools may continue to monitor situations following a reported concern to ensure that:

- the behaviour has stopped
- pupils feel safe
- appropriate support remains in place

Monitoring may continue without further detailed updates unless additional concerns arise.

### **What Parents Can Do**

Parents can support the school by:

- encouraging their child to report concerns to a trusted adult in school
- sharing concerns directly with the school rather than approaching other families
- avoiding discussion of incidents on social media or in parent groups
- working in partnership with the school to support positive outcomes

### **14. Raising Safeguarding Concerns**

The safety and wellbeing of children is the highest priority for all schools within Omnia Learning Trust. Parents and carers should contact the school immediately if they have a concern about the safety or wellbeing of

- their own child, or
- another child.

For clarity, a safeguarding concern is about a child's safety, welfare, or risk of harm. It focuses on whether a child is being harmed, is at risk of harm, or is not being cared for properly—either by others or by their situation. Whereas, a behaviour concern relates to a child's actions or conduct, usually within school or another setting. It focuses on what the child is doing, rather than direct risk to their safety.

Concerns can be raised by:

- contacting the school office (who will direct the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL))
- speaking to a member of staff in person
- telephoning the school for urgent concerns

Each school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and trained safeguarding team responsible for responding to concerns. Where a concern is urgent or a child is at immediate risk of harm, parents should telephone the school directly and, if necessary, contact emergency services.

### **What Parents Can Expect from the School**

When a safeguarding concern is raised, the school will:

- take all concerns seriously and respond promptly
- record the concern in line with safeguarding procedures

- assess the information and take appropriate action in accordance with safeguarding guidance
- involve external agencies where required, including children's social care

Schools will always act in the best interests of the child and in line with statutory safeguarding duties. However, due to confidentiality and safeguarding requirements, schools may not be able to share:

- detailed information about other children
- outcomes of investigations
- actions taken with other families

Parents will normally receive:

- acknowledgement that the concern has been received
- reassurance that appropriate action has been taken
- but not detailed information about other individuals.

Safeguarding concerns are handled with the utmost care and sensitivity. Information will be shared:

- on a need-to-know basis
- in line with safeguarding law and guidance
- to protect children from harm

Schools are required to prioritise the safety of children over parental access to information. If a parent or carer remains concerned after raising an issue with the school, they may:

- request to speak with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a senior leader
- follow the Trust's procedures

Parents can also seek advice or make a referral directly to:

- their local authority children's services (social care)
- the NSPCC helpline (0808 800 5000)
- the police, if a child is at immediate risk

Parents should:

- report concerns directly to the school rather than approaching other children or families
- avoid discussing safeguarding concerns on social media or in parent groups
- share concerns promptly so the school can act quickly

Safeguarding is most effective when schools and families work together in a timely and respectful way.

### **15. Managing Inappropriate or Repeated Communication**

Trust schools are committed to maintaining respectful communication and supporting staff wellbeing. Communication that is abusive, threatening, discriminatory, harassing or persistently unreasonable will not be accepted.

Where communication becomes inappropriate, schools may take proportionate steps to manage the situation. This may include asking that communication takes place through a single point of contact, limiting communication to written correspondence, arranging meetings with a senior leader present or directing communication through the formal complaints procedure.

Where a concern has already been responded to and addressed, schools may decide not to enter into repeated correspondence on the same matter.

### **16. Respectful Communication and Staff Wellbeing**

Staff work hard to support pupils and families and should be able to carry out their roles in an environment where communication is respectful and professional.

The Trust expects all members of the school community to communicate with one another in a manner that reflects the shared values of respect, professionalism and partnership.

### **17. Monitoring and Review**

Principals are responsible for implementing this policy within their schools.

The Trust will review the policy periodically to ensure it remains effective and reflects best practice.