



## **Home School Communication Policy**

It is very important to the Robert Carre Trust that we work closely in partnership with parents and carers, and communication between home and school is key. We recognise, however, that it can sometimes be difficult communicating with staff and, more particularly, teachers because they have a very full timetable. We also recognise that parents and carers also have very busy lives and always endeavour to maintain open channels of communication.

### **Contacting Us**

Communication by student planner or by email is our preferred method.

- Notes in student planners are by far the best way to get a message to a member of staff promptly and should be used for most of the everyday communication.
- The student is responsible for showing any note to the correct member of staff. If you need to discuss something in more detail with a member of staff, this is the best way to ask them to contact you when they are able. If needs be, please write a separate note for the student to give to the relevant member of staff.
- Medical and other appointments/absences should also be notified to the school office via email or telephone, or notification can alternatively be provided via the MCAS. A note in the student planner is also helpful as it allows the student to show to the class teacher. Students are asked at reception to show notes before they sign out for medical appointments during the day.

Staff prefer to respond to parental queries at the earliest opportunity and will do their best to do so; however, most of a teacher's time is taken up with lessons, meetings, planning and preparation, or covering a lesson for an absent colleague and support staff may also be responding to a range of demands on their time. For clarification:

- Teachers are usually in meetings, on duty, or preparing for tutor time and lessons from 8.15am.
- Once a week they give their morning break to be on duty and lunchtimes, if not spent on duty or running activities, will be used for planning etc.
- After school, teachers will sometimes be on duty, in meetings or running after-school clubs. They may not, therefore, be able to respond on the day that the query is made.
- Support staff including the SENCO also have commitments during the school day, including working with students, outside agencies and other colleagues and this may preclude them from responding within a parent's desired timeframe
- The Trust, in caring for its staff, has advised all staff that there is no expectation to respond to queries in their personal/family time, such as at evenings and weekends.
- Heads of Year and Subject Leaders generally have their role designated 'non-contact' time booked for meetings with students, parents, carers, or colleagues.
- Form Tutors do not have additional non-contact time and may therefore not be able to respond immediately.
- Part-time staff may not be in school every day and this may delay a response.
- Sometimes a parental query would be better dealt with by another member of staff than the one you have asked to speak to. In this instance, please allow time for communication between colleagues to happen as your query is dealt with.
- We will endeavour to respond on the same day, but within three working days where this is not possible.

### **Telephone**

Please use the main reception number to leave a message for a member of staff to contact you;

- Reception staff will relay this to the member of staff as soon as they can, usually by email. Please note that there are no phones in classrooms and lessons will not be interrupted for teachers to take calls. Be aware that all calls to and from the school are recorded for security and training purposes.
- If the nature of the call is extremely urgent, please tell the receptionist and they will attempt to find a senior member of staff to speak to you.
- Safeguarding concerns will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Deputy Safeguarding Lead

## E-mail

To contact staff please use the following addresses:

[enquiries@carres.uk](mailto:enquiries@carres.uk) or [enquiries@kshs.uk](mailto:enquiries@kshs.uk)

Please add a note in the subject field stating who you would wish the enquiry to be directed to, e.g., F.A.O. Form Tutor 7B

For reasons of confidentiality, **this email address should not be used for sharing details of safeguarding information.** In this instance, you should request the contact details of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

- Please note though, that *teachers* are not always able to check emails during the day and the school does not expect work emails to be checked during a teacher's personal/family time from home; as above, we aim to respond as soon as possible, and within three working days.
- Support staff may also be unable to check emails through the day if they are working away from their computer.
- Part-time staff may take longer to access emails, so emails should only be used for non-urgent communication that cannot be done via the student's planner.

## Vexatious or Abusive Communications

We expect communication from parents to be respectful and appropriate. Members of staff have a right not to be subjected to abusive or vexatious communications in their workplace. Where the school deems communication to be abusive or vexatious it reserves the right to draw upon the measures outlined in the Trust's Vexatious Communications Policy.

## Meetings

With around 800 students in the school, the day-to-day care, welfare, and safety of your child is managed by the wider pastoral team and their teachers. The hierarchy outlined below ensures that your child's needs are addressed by the most relevant staff member(s).

- In the first instance, please address communication to the following members of staff who are responsible for your child in the following order:
  1. Form tutor or classroom teacher (if query is relevant to a specific subject)
  2. Head of Year or Student Support Team (pastoral concern) or Subject Leader (specific subject concern)
  3. SEND concerns – SENCO or Student Support Team
  4. Safeguarding concerns – Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy DSL
  5. Assistant Headteacher
  6. Deputy Headteacher
  7. Headteacher
- Meetings should always be pre-arranged with members of staff so that they can adjust their schedules as needed. We cannot guarantee that you will be able to speak to a member of staff if you come into school without an appointment.

- If you urgently need to see someone, for instance if there is a serious family emergency or a safeguarding issue, please phone ahead and the reception staff will do their best to find a senior member of staff to speak with you.
- For non-urgent meetings we will aim to meet with you within 5 working days. The school will determine the level of urgency at its discretion, to enable it to manage multiple demands.
- We would also request that parents and carers make every reasonable effort to meet with school staff within a similar time frame if serious concerns are raised by the school

## **Contacting You**

Our preferred means of contacting you is via the My Child at School (MCAS) System.

- Parents and carers at both schools will receive letters and notifications using Bromcom or MCAS.
- We also use this system to notify you if we must close the school in an emergency.

## **Social Media**

We use Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to promote student achievements, subject information and generic educational information. This information can also be found in the Newsletters that are published regularly. The schools' social media accounts are for reason of publicity and information sharing, and the account and its monitoring are not set up so that the school can respond to social media comments, messages, or replies. Communication should be via the school's identified preferred means of communication.

## **School Website**

Key information may also be posted on the school website.

## **No Response**

If you have contacted the school and not had a response within three working days, we ask for parents and carers to contact the school either by email to [enquiries@carres.uk](mailto:enquiries@carres.uk) or [enquiries@kshs.uk](mailto:enquiries@kshs.uk), or alternatively to speak to reception at the relevant school who will then endeavour to identify a member of staff who can respond to your enquiry.

Communication with parents and carers is important to us, and we will continue to monitor practice under this policy in seeking ways to improve our communication processes further.

**Adopted by the Trustees on 10 March 2023**

**Next Review Date: March 2025 (Biennially)**