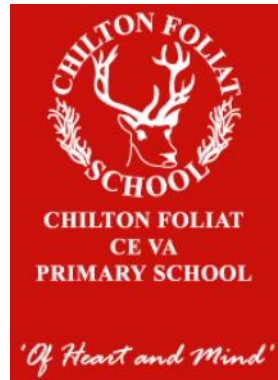




CHILTON FOLIAT CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL



### Our School Christian Vision

With thankfulness, courage, and love, we strive to improve heart and mind.

At Chilton Foliat Primary School we honour our educational heritage, supported by a strong Christian ethos. We strive to provide a diverse education that inspires children to develop a **thirst for knowledge**. This is delivered in a safe, supportive and nurturing environment promoting self-discipline, thoughtfulness and excellence in all that we do.

We encourage strong partnerships and inclusive relationships amongst pupils, parents, carers, staff and the wider community.

## Home School Communication Policy and Guidance

<b>Date Reviewed</b>	March 2024
<b>Review Period</b>	Annually/ <b>2 Yearly</b> /Readopted/Other
<b>Review Body</b>	Standards Committee

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### **1. Introduction and Aims**

Chilton Foliat CE VA Primary School's primary function is to provide a high-quality education in a safe learning environment to its pupils. Particularly in a small school, staff's time is heavily focused on delivering this, and it is important that our means of communication supports and enables this too. Therefore, the school needs to strike a clear balance, in order to ensure pupils' progress during their time at school is maximised and hence the most effective means of communication is utilised. This policy is based on the premise that all members of the school community have the interests of the school's children (their own and others) at heart, and they remain our priority.

The aim of this policy is to promote clear and open, respectful and professional communication by:

- Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers
- Setting clear 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.

We believe that clear, honest, structured communication between the school and parents/carers can support this aim. It has a positive impact on pupils' learning as it:

- Gives parents/carers the information they need to support their child's education and participation in school life
- Helps the school improve, through feedback on what is working well and whether areas of school life can be improved
- Builds trust between home and school, facilitating a sense of security and clear expectations for children
- Helps the school better support each child's educational and pastoral needs
- Creates a positive learning and working environment for our community to thrive.

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## CHILTON FOLIAT CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

These guidelines work alongside the Code of Conduct for Parents, Carers and Visitors.

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

### 2. Communication between school, 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.

**Contact details:** The school holds emergency contact details for all children on the School Information Management System (SIMS) and parents are contacted on an annual basis to ensure these are up-to-date. Parents are expected to inform the school immediately in the event that contact information needs to be revised. Depending on the nature of the communication, the school will use the most practicable means to contact families.

**SchoolComms:** This is a quick and effective way of communicating necessary information to parents and is the school's preferred method of communication and is used for standard communication with parents. Received by parents in an email format, we can send messages and attach documents. It is paperless and more reliable than delivery via pupil bookbags. We use SchoolComms to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Regular newsletters (providing insight into school life, reminders and upcoming dates of interest)
- Upcoming school events
- Friends events
- Trips and visits
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training/TD days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Governor letters
- Volunteer requests
- Extra-curricular activities
- General correspondence.

**School Website:** We use our website as a repository of key information about the school and an entry point for prospective parents. Parents should check the website before contacting the school. Key information posted includes the following and much more:

- School times and term dates
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Previous newsletters
- Important contact information
- Information about before and after-school provision.

**School Events:** Where possible, we try to give parents at least 10 days' notice of any events, trips or special occasions (including non-uniform days, special assemblies or visitors, or requests for pupils to bring in special items or materials). We appreciate short notice is not helpful to our community and do our utmost to provide as much notice as possible, but there may be instances where these timescales are not possible.

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**Informal Conversations:** We value relationships with all our parents. Members of our teaching staff will frequently be outside and accessible to parents at drop off and collection times. Valuable insights into school life and home life can be passed on in this way also providing parents with the opportunity to ask informal questions and for school to gain informal feedback.

**Phone Calls:** If we are unable to catch you in the playground, if we need to contact you during the school day or if we want a longer and more private conversation, we will call you. It is very important that we have up to date phone numbers for you. In an emergency (injuries or accidents), we will need to get in touch. If you see the school calling, please do answer. If there is no answer, we will call the second named contact, and so forth.

The school must be notified of pupil **non-attendance from school** by 8.50am on the first day and every subsequent day of absence. (Please see the Attendance Policy for more information).

**If the school needs to be contacted urgently**, parents should call the school office and leave a message on the answering machine if nobody is available to take the call. Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues.

It is our policy that office staff do not interrupt teaching unless it is an emergency. Messages can be taken and forwarded to the relevant person. **For more general enquiries, please email the school office or check the school website.**

**Email:** All email communication should be directed to or via the school office in the first instance, including instances when parents need to contact a specific member of staff.

**Meetings:** In a variety of situations, we may ask you to attend a meeting at school. We will always contact you to discuss your availability and try to be as flexible as possible in arranging meetings. However, especially if external agencies are involved, our ability to be flexible may be limited. We ask parents to be as understanding and flexible as possible and to please attend school meetings on time.

If parents would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the school office to book an appointment. These must be organised in advance due to the busy nature of the school and staff have the right to decline a meeting request if they feel it has no purpose, where efforts have already been made to create a satisfactory conclusion, or where expectations are unrealistic. It is perfectly acceptable to call a meeting to a close in order to allow time for further investigation. A member of staff may ask another colleague to accompany them. Requests assessed to be urgent and will take place as soon as possible subject to the school's (and other relevant agencies') availability. School leaders have a legal responsibility to exercise a duty of care towards staff.

There may be instances when a pupil should not be present or involved in a meeting.

**Home Visits:** These are very rare, but may take place on occasion, particularly if there is a significant safeguarding concern.

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**Early Years Welcome:** Before your child starts in Reception, we will invite you to a welcome meeting to support you through the transition into school life. You'll get to know the space and teachers, as well as other parents. We will also invite you and your child to various activities/events and taster days, so they too become familiar with the setting and our team ahead of their official start. Previous schools/nurseries will be contacted to help gather key information to make the transition as smooth as possible.

**Homework:** Homework or Home Learning is offered across the school and takes different age-appropriate formats. In Early Years and KS1 the focus is on phonics and reading. In KS2, regular homework is communicated via the class Gmail accounts. All homework is based on consolidation and new learning is not expected. Reading Logs are a useful tool used across the tool for parents to record reading completed at home and can also be used to communicate day-to-day comments and questions. Reading Logs are checked by staff regularly and parents should also check and sign the log at least weekly (for Early Years and KS1, before designated book changing days). Homework expectations progress through school as we want children to develop habits of responsibility prior to their transfer to secondary school.

**Parent Evenings:** Twice per academic year we will invite you parent meetings with your child's teacher to discuss their progress across the curriculum. During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum, their child's wellbeing, or any other area of concern. Parents meetings are organised via a cloud-based booking system and details are sent via the office.

Parents are able to contact the school to request additional meetings should they have an ongoing concern regarding their child's progress or wellbeing. Likewise, the school may also contact parents to arrange such meetings.

**SEND:** Parents of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to support these additional needs. All children with an Education, Health and Care Plan will have an annual review/one meeting each academic year to discuss their progress in relation to the aims and objectives of their plan to review impact and effectiveness of provision and support.

**Letters:** Letters home are limited, however occasionally the school may post or send letters home in bookbags.

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

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

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**CHILTON FOLIAT CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**3. How parents and carers can communicate with school**

The school office can be contacted between 8.30am and 3.45pm in term time.

**All email communication should be directed to the school office in the first instance.**

Postal Address	Telephone	Email
Chilton Foliat CE VA Primary School Stag Hill, Chilton Foliat, Hungerford RG17 0TF	01488 682630	admin@chiltonfoliat.wilts.sch.uk

Effective communication can sometimes be a challenge, particularly in a small school, where the admin team may be out of the office and in other areas of the school site dealing with matters relating to their role, and where teachers may be teaching, running clubs in meetings or working with pupils at lunchtime or after school. Parents and carers may be frustrated if they feel that a message elicits no immediate reply, when in fact there has been no available opportunity for staff to return a call or email promptly. School will endeavour to respond as quickly as possible as we balance the many demands on time and resources and the nature of the enquiry. **Further information can be found in the Code of Conduct for Parents Carers and Visitors, and we ask that this be adhered to with all communications.** When communication becomes inappropriate, aggressive, vexatious, persistent or disproportionate and the school deems it is unacceptable, then measures will be put in place in accordance with these policies.

Who and how to contact the school will vary, depending on the matter involved. Below includes a list of who to contact for various types of enquiries:

*Urgent wellbeing or safeguarding concerns should be directed to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mrs. Turner head@chiltonfoliat.wilts.sch.uk. If she is not available, please contact Mrs Pinnegar our Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead via the school office. If the matter is urgent, please call the school or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 0300 4560108 (out of hours 0300 4560100) or email MASH@wiltshire.gov.uk.*

**Class Teacher:** Class teachers should always be the first point of contact when discussing your child's progress or needs. A meeting or telephone call can be arranged via the school office. A meeting could be arranged to discuss the following:

- Your child's learning, class activities, lessons, homework, wellbeing, pastoral support
- Concerns about behaviour and bullying (please see the Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy)
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (there may be instances when this is referred to the SENCo).

KS2 class teachers use Gmail to circulate homework. Immediate questions concerning this work can be sent back via this method and where possible, a response will be provided. This method of communication should not be used for other purposes. Contact should be arranged via the school office.

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**School Office/ Admin Team:** email: [admin@chiltonfoliat.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@chiltonfoliat.wilts.sch.uk) tel:01488 682630:

- On-the-day illness notification of absence – please call/ leave a message before 8.50am
- Pick-up changes
- Change to child's medical profile, such as a newly diagnosed allergy
- Payments
- School trips
- Absence requests
- Catering/meals
- Requesting/arranging meetings with a member of staff
- Communications to the Governing Body (or to the Clerk to Governors at [clerk@chiltonfoliat.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:clerk@chiltonfoliat.wilts.sch.uk))
- If unsure about who to direct your enquiry to, the school office will do their best to assist.

**Headteacher** (*contact via the school office*):

- To provide feedback or ideas, perhaps about something of strategic or operational importance
- For persistent or serious matters
- Although we hope it won't be necessary there may be an occasion when a concern needs to be escalated to the Headteacher. (See Complaints Policy and Procedure).

**Early Birds and After School Club** [chiltonclubchildcare@gmail.com](mailto:chiltonclubchildcare@gmail.com)

- Bookings, admin and payments
- Chilton Club's emergency phone number is: 07514 600151. This phone is on between 3pm and 6pm.

**Data Protection:** We hold information on pupils in our school and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational or Safeguarding purposes. The way in which we collect, use, retain and delete and share data and the types of data we manage is explained in our Data Protection and GDPR policy which can be found on the website.

#### **4. Inclusion**

Chilton Foliat CE VA Primary School aims to make its written communication as accessible and inclusive as possible. We will do our best to help parents to access our communications, making alternative arrangements where necessary (e.g. EAL, SEN, IT access or literacy issues). Please contact the school office to discuss what additional arrangements can be made. We will seek parent feedback on school communication via our annual parent survey.

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### 5. Safeguarding including Child Protection

We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that school should provide a safe and secure environment. We are the people most in contact with our children, and we are therefore in a unique position to identify and help children who are at risk of harm. We take this responsibility seriously, and therefore, when any member of staff has concerns about a child, these will be passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or in their absence the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead who may share this information with agencies such as Child Services or the Police.

We are supported by and regularly communicate with various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed on ways to meet pupils' needs, to ensure that all pupils can participate fully in school life. Support comes from such services as Educational Welfare, Educational Psychologists, Social Care etc.

### 6. Social Media

There are various online school groups managed by parents for parents, such as Facebook pages and WhatsApp groups, and they can be a wonderful source of knowledge, support and advice. We encourage you to positively participate if you wish.

**WhatsApp:** There are several WhatsApp groups created to support effective communication, and we support and welcome this. It is a great forum to ask general questions like 'is it a PE day?' or 'has anyone seen Billy's bookbag?'. Please refer to the Code of Conduct for Parents, Carers and Visitors and Appendix 1: Families of Chilton Foliat Primary School Guidelines for WhatsApp Groups to ensure this platform is used positively and appropriately.

**School Facebook site:** Our Facebook feed is designed to share positive aspects of school life. Any negative comments or complaints will be deleted, and the school reserves the right to 'block' any user from the school's page. The school is not in a position to respond to Facebook messages.

Within these spaces however we ask that you use common sense when discussing school life online and adhere to the Code of Conduct for Parents Carers and Visitors and Appendix 1: Families of Chilton Foliat Primary School Guidelines for WhatsApp Groups.

### 7. Roles and Responsibilities

**Headteacher:** The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy
- Ensuring that communication is efficient allowing the school to focus on its primary purpose
- Monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and recommending changes to the Governing Body.

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**Staff:** All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents via the school office 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).

In line with promoting staff wellbeing and helping our staff find a manageable work-life balance, they are **not expected** to work outside of the working day, weekends or holidays. Teachers will also not respond to requests to contact parents during times when they are responsible for a class. There may be instances when the school decides someone else will respond to a communication dependent on its nature and who is best placed to respond or manage it.

**Parents:** Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times and is in line with the Code of Conduct for Parents Carers and Visitors and this Home School Communication Guidance
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance (refer to section above - How parents and carers can communicate with the school)
- Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Ensuring that we have up-to-date contact details (phone and email)
- Regularly checking all communications from the school, including newsletters and SchoolComms
- Not expecting staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours or during school holidays.

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with our Code of Conduct for Parents Carers and Visitors available on the school's website.

### **8. Definitions and principles to support this policy**

- 'Parents' to refer to both parents and carers
- Listening and agreeing are not the same. One can listen to a point of view but not agree
- Balance of evidence. Schools are expected to make judgements based on the balance of evidence

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- Hearsay evidence does not carry more weight than first hand evidence
- The school's Behaviour Policy provides the definition and structures that the school works to in its conversations with parents around behaviour. These definitions cannot be redefined by individuals
- The interest of children will always come first, and the school will apply policies and support fairly to all children without 'fear or favour'
- The school is committed to dealing with all concerns fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to the best of its ability with the capacity that it has
- Deliberately vexatious concerns damage the education of all children within the school as they divert precious resources from teaching and learning to managing the actions of adults.

### 9. Monitoring and review

The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will, alongside the Governing Body review the policy every 3 years. The policy will be approved by the Governing Body.

### 10. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- Attendance Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Code of Conduct for Parents Carers and Visitors
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- Home School Agreement
- Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Online Safe=

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**CHILTON FOLIAT CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **Appendix 1 - Families of Chilton Foliat Primary School Guidelines for WhatsApp Groups**

### **CHILTON FOLIAT PRIMARY SCHOOL**

#### **Families of Chilton Foliat Primary School Guidelines for WhatsApp Groups Best practice across social media associated with school**

##### **Introduction**

At the beginning of the academic year, each of our four classes set up a WhatsApp group. The main purpose of these groups is to share information regarding class activities, reminders of events, deadlines, dates in the school calendar, etc, quickly and efficiently.

The WhatsApp groups are an extremely beneficial tool when used successfully, but depending on the situation at hand, communications can become, less than positive and therefore inappropriate. As a result, in collaboration with our parents, Chilton Foliat Primary School are setting out polite, positive and constructive guidelines regarding the use of class WhatsApp groups. By taking a proactive stance, together we can seek to avoid any issues that may cause the school, any of our families, or members of staff, concern or distress. Equally, we can use this guidance to support our positive and welcoming school community culture.

##### **Points to note about the effective use of class WhatsApp groups**

- If you have a concern about your child, make direct contact with the school so that either the class teacher, headteacher or school administration team can answer your queries directly
- The WhatsApp groups are not a replacement for school generated communications
- Users must uphold mutual respect and cultural sensitivity
- Limit casual chat so important messages do not get "lost" making the group ineffective
- Consider the timing of posting messages: early morning or late night posts are discouraged
- End a conversation when it becomes irrelevant to the original piece of information or query
- Do not answer a question unless you really know the answer. Guesses may confuse
- Remember that not all families are represented on the WhatsApp groups.

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### CHILTON FOLIAT CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

#### The families of Chilton Foliat Primary School **encourage** the use of WhatsApp groups for:

- Reminders about deadlines, school activities and events
- Questions about school activities or special events, e.g., When is the next nonuniform day? What is the deadline for payment for a school trip? What can I do for the next Friends event?
- Sharing information already posted on the school's website or delivered via SchoolComms to help reach more parents e.g., alerts about road closures, emergency school closures
- Lost property notices
- Sharing information which can be useful to other parents in the group, etc, where to buy costumes for World Book Day, ideas for projects, if an after school club was enjoyable, etc
- Foster a sense of community, e.g., organising playdates or sharing the invitation for a birthday party (where the whole class is invited or involved)
- Sharing relevant community notices, e.g., road closures, new traffic lights in the local area, local events.

#### The Families of Chilton Foliat Primary School **discourage** the use of WhatsApp groups for:

- Posting any negative or critical comments about an individual or group of individuals
- Sharing personal problems
- Voicing grievances
- Commenting on any individual's behaviour: child or adult
- Posting photos/videos of school children at class events, trips etc. In order to safeguard children and on the request of the headteacher, please do not publish any photographic image, however well intentioned, as some parents do not consent to images of their children being published on social media
- Discussing the work of teachers: remember, make direct contact with the school if you have a concern about your child so that either the class teacher, headteacher or school administration team can answer your queries directly
- Complaints: if a parent has a complaint regarding the school, or any member of staff, that issue must be raised directly with the school
- Posting adverts, religious or political, "memes" or statements, or anything that may be deemed offensive or irrelevant.

#### **Role of Class WhatsApp Moderators**

On behalf of Chilton Foliat Primary School, a moderator (who may be the same person as the class rep) will be nominated. Their role is to review the posts for their class. Posts that do not follow the encouraged guidance will not be tolerated and the moderator will contact anyone who uses the WhatsApp group inappropriately. Members may be removed from the group.

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