

Ashlyns School Communications Guidance

Overview

It is very important to us that we work closely in partnership with parents and carers, and communication between home and school is key. We recognise however that it can often be difficult communicating with teachers because they have a very full timetable; and we recognise that parents and carers also have very busy lives.

Contacting The School

Communication should be via the school's identified preferred means of communication.

Communication by email is our preferred method

Teachers want 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. For clarification: teachers are on duty from 8.20am until 3.35pm; after this time, staff will often be in diarised meetings or running after-school clubs. Therefore they may not be able to respond on the day that the query is made. The school, in caring for its staff, has advised teachers that there is no expectation to respond to queries in their personal/family time, such as at weekends.

E-mail

Please use the general admin email admin@ashlyns.herts.sch.uk to provide factual information or to leave a request for a teacher to contact you (with brief details of the nature of your query). Our admin team will direct your query to the most appropriate member of staff.

- Teachers are not in a position 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.
- We aim to respond as soon as possible, and within three working days. Part-time staff may take longer to reply. Occasionally emails go astray, so if you do not get a reply within three working days, please re-contact admin@ashlyns.herts.sch.uk, who will pursue your enquiry for you.

Telephone

Please use the main reception number to leave a message for a teacher to contact you, with brief details of the nature of your query.

- Reception staff will relay this to the teacher as soon as they can.
- Please note that there are no phones in classrooms and lessons will never be interrupted for teachers to take calls.
- Calls to and from the school may be recorded for security and training purposes.

- If the nature of the call is extremely urgent, please tell the receptionist why this is the case and they will attempt to find a senior member of staff to speak to you where necessary.
- We will endeavour to respond on the same day, but within three working days where this is not possible.

Requesting a Meeting

The day-to-day care, welfare and safety of your child is managed by the person who is placed closest to them.

- In the first instance, please approach the following members of staff who are responsible for your child **in the following order**:
 1. Form tutor (if query relates to a pastoral issue) or classroom teacher (if query is relevant to a specific subject)
 2. Head of Subject (if subject query has not already been resolved)
 3. Head of Year (if pastoral query has not already been resolved)
 4. Assistant Headteacher
 5. Deputy Headteacher
 6. Headteacher
- Meetings should always be pre-arranged with a member of staff, with advance notice of the meeting's purpose. Due to the very busy nature of the school, and there being in excess of 1300 students in our care, it is not appropriate for a parent to come to school expecting to speak to a particular member of staff without an appointment. Appointments can be requested via the school office; this will enable us to have notice of any concerns which can be investigated in advance of the meeting, and to ensure that a member of staff is available.
- **Parents arriving at school without an appointment will be turned away** except in exceptional circumstances (for example, a serious family emergency or a child protection issue).
- 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.
- **If you urgently need to see someone, for instance if there is a serious family emergency or a child protection issue**, please phone ahead and the reception staff will do their best to find a senior member of staff to see you.

Contacting You

Our preferred means of contacting you is via Groupcall (letters, emails, texts). We also use these systems to text you if we have to close the school in an emergency. Parents can access their child's attendance, behaviour and school reports through our online system Arbor, and access details of homework assigned through 'Guardian'. Parent-Teacher Consultation Evening bookings can be made via our online booking system. If you require assistance with accessing these, please contact a member of our admin team.

Social Media

We sometimes use Twitter to promote student achievements, subject information and generic educational information. Our whole-school Twitter feed is @Ashlyns_School. The school accounts are for reason of publicity and information sharing, and the account and its monitoring is not set up so that the school can respond to social media comments or replies.

Whilst we recognise that some parents may set up their own group chats for classes or year groups on social media platforms, and that they may find these useful, these are not endorsed by the school and the school will not respond to or post on such forums. On occasion, posts made by parents or students on such forums can be inaccurate or not representative of the school's view. Please therefore rely on official communications from school or the school website for information about school business.

Harassment

Our staff have the right to a personal life and to be protected from harassment online, via email or in person. We ask that parents avoid addressing staff members directly via social media, and avoid posting inaccurate or defamatory statements about staff or school on social media platforms. This is reiterated by our Home-School Agreement. Concerns or disagreements should be dealt with politely, and in line with the school's policy and procedure which can be found at:

<https://www.ashlyns.herts.sch.uk/about/policies-and-statutory-information/>

No Response

In the event that you have contacted the school and have not received a response within 3 working days, please contact the school by emailing admin@ashlyns.herts.sch.uk or alternatively call the main school telephone number, and we will chase up 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.