

Guidelines for Parents & Carers: Home-School Communication

The Cherwell
School



A Centre of Opportunity

In addition to the school's efforts to communicate with parents and carers via our website, letters, parents' evenings, progress reports and other means, these guidelines are designed to improve the effectiveness of school communications with parents and carers – in both directions. They indicate how parents should contact school and identify the most appropriate person to contact.

These guidelines take into account that teachers spend the majority of each day teaching and so are not always readily available to respond to emails or phone calls.

Emergencies

With any emergency / urgent matter, please contact the School Office and the receptionist will then direct your call: (01865) 558719

Clearly labelling emails and letters

In emails or letters, it is essential that the student's name and form are clearly stated (in the **subject bar** in emails), with the surname of the student first. E.g. **SURNAME Forename, 10BT**

Summary of communications

Example Issue	Who to contact	How
Reporting absences	School Office	email (depending on Year group): absences7-9@cherwell.oxon.sch.uk absences10-11@cherwell.oxon.sch.uk absences12-13@cherwell.oxon.sch.uk or telephone 01865 558719
Enquiries about progress in one subject	Subject teacher	email office@cherwell.oxon.sch.uk or letter*
Enquiries about progress in several subjects	Form Tutor	email (address provided separately / via Parent Gateway) or letter*
Planned medical appointments	Form Tutor	email (address provided separately / via Parent Gateway) or letter*
General non-urgent queries	Form Tutor	email (address provided separately / via Parent Gateway) or letter*
More urgent and serious concerns and queries	Deputy Year Leader & Year Leader	email (address provided separately / via Parent Gateway) or letter*

*Postal address: **The Cherwell School, Marston Ferry Road, Oxford OX2 7EE**

Absence

To report **absences** you should contact the **School Office by telephone or email.**

Telephone: **(01865) 558719**

Years 7, 8 or 9: absences7-9@cherwell.oxon.sch.uk

Years 10 or 11: absences10-11@cherwell.oxon.sch.uk

Years 12 or 13: absences12-13@cherwell.oxon.sch.uk

Please note that these are new email addresses

Any emails should have the name and form of the student in the subject bar (as detailed above). You may be called back to check on the authenticity of the absence report.

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Routine matters, queries and non-urgent pastoral/welfare issues

Where time is not of the essence, you should contact the **Form Tutor by email or in writing**. The relevant contact details are provided as a hard copy and are also available from the school office and via the Parent Gateway.

Matters relating to a particular subject

Please contact the **subject teacher by email or by letter**. Emails for subject teachers should be sent to office@cherwell.oxon.sch.uk, with the student name in the subject bar and the name of the member of staff it is to be forwarded clearly stated at the start of the email. Please note that this may mean the email is not received by the teacher before a particular lesson.

Urgent/serious matters

To discuss **more urgent or serious matters, including serious matters which require an overview of your child's experience at the school**, you should contact the **Deputy Year Leader by email or telephone**. The Deputy Year Leader, who is non-teaching, will keep the **Year Leader** informed and can arrange direct contact as needed. The relevant contact details are provided at the start of term and are also available from the school office.

Sharing Student success

We know that students achieve many things outside of school which we are not always aware of and for us to know about students' activities and achievements outside of school would very much help Form Tutors and Year Leaders in particular, get to know their students. Students can find it difficult to share their achievements but we are delighted when Parents and Carers send us information. We are very proud of all our students and believe achievements and successes should be celebrated - from the quiet knowing word of a Form Tutor, to the sharing in assemblies and newsletters; how we use this information would be with your child's agreement. As such, please keep us informed by contacting your child's Form Tutor or Year Leader using the contact information that will be supplied separately to this letter.

The Cherwell Parent Gateway

We have developed a website to give you access to some information specific to your child. We are calling this the Parent Gateway. We have tried to keep the site as straightforward as possible whilst giving access to a range of information about your child. This will be updated on a weekly basis.

The Parent gateway includes:

- Timetable
- Tutor email address
- Previous Progress Reviews
- Attendance summary
- Achievement and Behaviour information

Use of student planners

We ask that parents **sign planners** as a way of supporting the work in school and encouraging the accurate recording of homework and to give consent regarding early school closure and other practical matters, but **please do not write notes in student planners** as a way of communicating with school, rather please email, telephone or write a letter.

Mobile phones

We ask staff not to provide their private contact details, including mobile phone numbers, to students or parents. Communication should always go through the methods detailed above. Arrangements for particular trips/activities may include the provision of a school mobile number.

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Contacting the Senior Leadership Team

Should you have a particularly serious or whole-school matter of concern you may wish to contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team. An outline of the roles and responsibilities of the SLT is available on the school website via Information / *Leadership and Governance* page, and members of the SLT should be emailed via the office email address: office@cherwell.oxon.sch.uk

Response time

In all areas of the school we aim to reply to emails from parents and carers (and other correspondence, wherever possible) within 2 working days.

Matters requiring more immediate attention should be communicated by a phone call to the school reception.

Schoolcomms

The school uses an email system called schoolcomms to send bulk communicates to parents. We find this an efficient and cost effective way of sending information to parents and carers with over 90% of parents currently registered. As such if you have an email address through which you are already receiving messages, please ensure that the school records are kept up-to-date. To inform the school of any changes to your email address or to add your email address to the system, please email office@cherwell.oxon.sch.uk. Parents and carers who do not receive information via schoolcomms will receive communication via student-post or Royal Mail delivery.

Staff-student communication

We encourage students to talk to relevant members of staff whenever there is a need. Given the nature of a split site school, if a student is finding it difficult to locate a particular teacher we ask the student to talk to their Form Tutor who can then facilitate the contact between the teacher and staff member. We ask students not to email teachers unless they have been given permission to do so from the teacher in advance and preferably to only use their school email address, as well as to use appropriate formal language and keep to school matters. Teachers will only communicate with students via email using the school email system.

We hope you find these guidelines helpful.

Should you have any queries regarding our methods of communication, please contact Lily Prior (HR & Administration Manager) via lprior@cherwell.oxon.sch.uk