



Cumnor House
School

Communication Charter

It is widely recognised that the more involved parents are in their child's education, the better the pupil performs at school.

Students respond very well to parents participating in their schooling – whether that is just being aware of their progress and understanding their achievements, or whether it is when parents decide to take a more active role and become involved in the school itself.

Either way, greater parental engagement often motivates the child to do well. In order to establish and maintain this interest, there needs to be regular and reliable communication and sharing of information between the school and pupils' families.

Schools must create an effective partnership by providing an open and communicative environment with its wider community, forming a link between the classroom and the home, and the school and the family.

The Cumnor House Communication Charter

Our Charter was produced to help form this strong link, in consultation between senior staff and a focus group of parents, representing a range of year groups across all school locations.

This group looked at key aspects of communication, from day-to-day announcements to Parents' Evenings and calendars.

Some of the initiatives discussed have already been implemented, and the production of this Charter will, we hope, manage expectations and offer useful tips which will ensure that the home-school partnership that is so key to positive pupil outcomes is as strong and effective as possible.

We will continue to review the effectiveness of our communication but, in the meantime, I hope that you find our Charter helpful in your dealings with our school.

Mr Daniel Cummings
Headmaster

Cumnor House Boys' School and Nursery

Mrs Amanda McShane
Headmistress

Cumnor House School for Girls

Our Aim

To ensure that Cumnor House is a thriving and successful school, we must communicate effectively with each other, with our pupils, with their parents and with other members of the wider community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

Our Principles

We believe that:

- Families are a crucial influence on the education and development of our pupils, the effective partnerships between home and school have a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- It is important that parents have access to relevant information and that they receive our support, guidance and help in a timely and effective way.
- It is important that parents are consulted and given opportunities to provide feedback to the school.
- We strongly believe in respect and equal treatment for all persons regardless of their differences. We insist that this is applied in every aspect of our business and how everyone, including parents conducts themselves. **This includes face to face communication, emailing, telephone calls and social media including 'WhatsApp'.**
- No member of staff who works for the school will be discriminated against, harassed or victimised because of their personal characteristics.

Cumnor House recognises:

- The important role played by parents, other adults, siblings and peers in supporting learning.
- The importance of effective systems for facilitating communication to support the learning and wellbeing of our pupils.

Please Note: *'WhatsApp' is not a recognised communication tool used by Cumnor House.*

What Makes Good Communication?

Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It is through effective and interactive communication that:

- information is transmitted
- understanding is developed and shared
- trust is built
- confidentiality respected
- co-ordinated action is taken

Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications and needs to recognise that the quality of their communications reflects on the school's reputation.

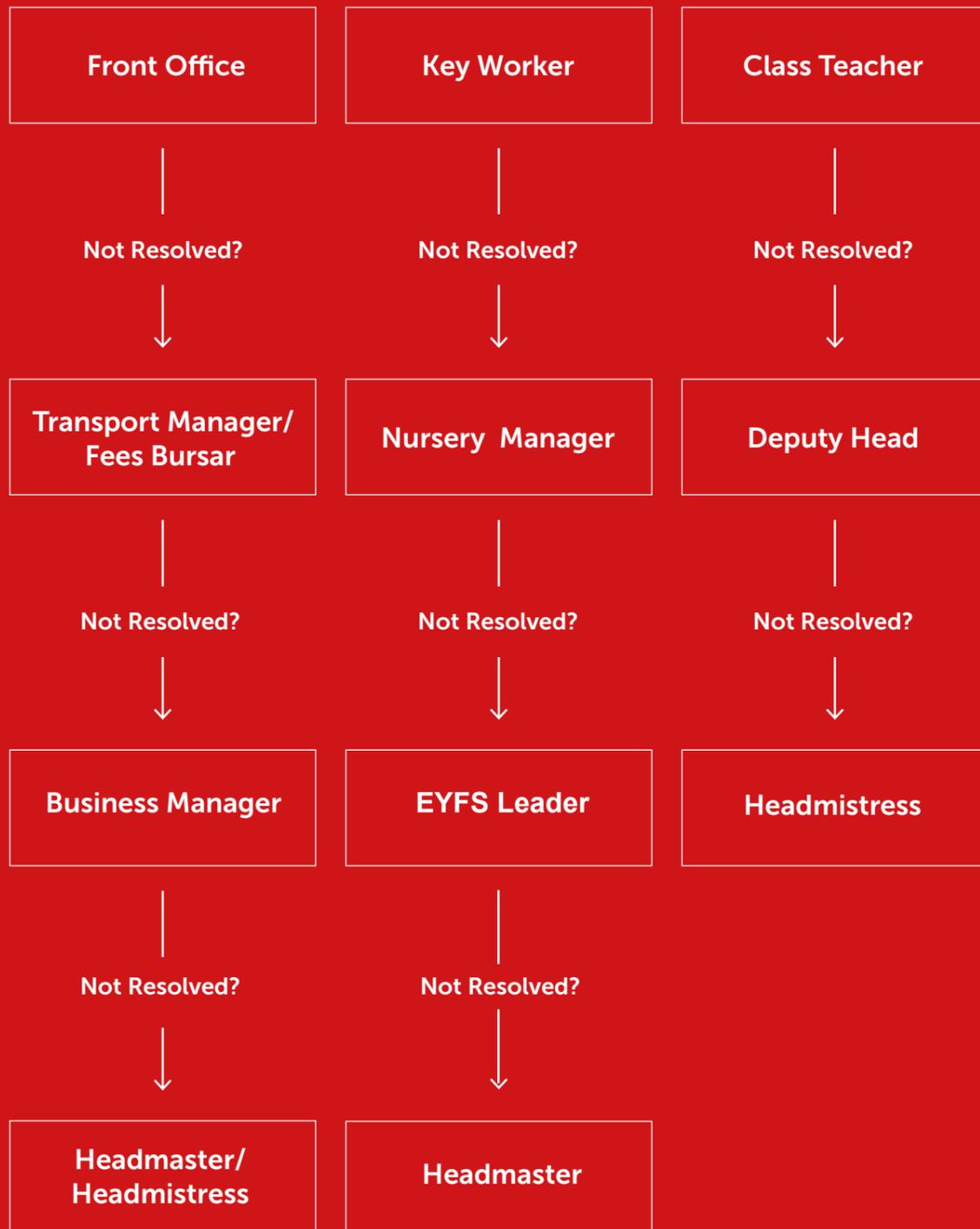
Whilst staff will always seek to establish respectful, fair, open and friendly relationships with parents, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional. To this end, parents should always be addressed in an appropriate manner, a courtesy that staff will also expect in return.

Parents will be provided with various methods and points of contact, including the main point of contact, Front Office. There is also a specific protocol for parents with concerns over academic or pastoral issues, as highlighted in the diagrams below.

Our Charter is designed to provide open dialogue between parents and school, and for school to provide multiple contact and communication points with parents so that they can access all the information they require during the school week. By following the route map below, we will try to ensure that any matters are resolved as quickly and effectively as possible.

Operations

For issues relating to finance, transport or wraparound care (Breakfast and afterschool club)



Nursery (Aged 2–4)

For issues relating to academic or pastoral matters

Girls School (Yr R–Yr 6)

For issues relating to academic or pastoral matters

Boys Pre-Prep (Yr R–Yr 2)

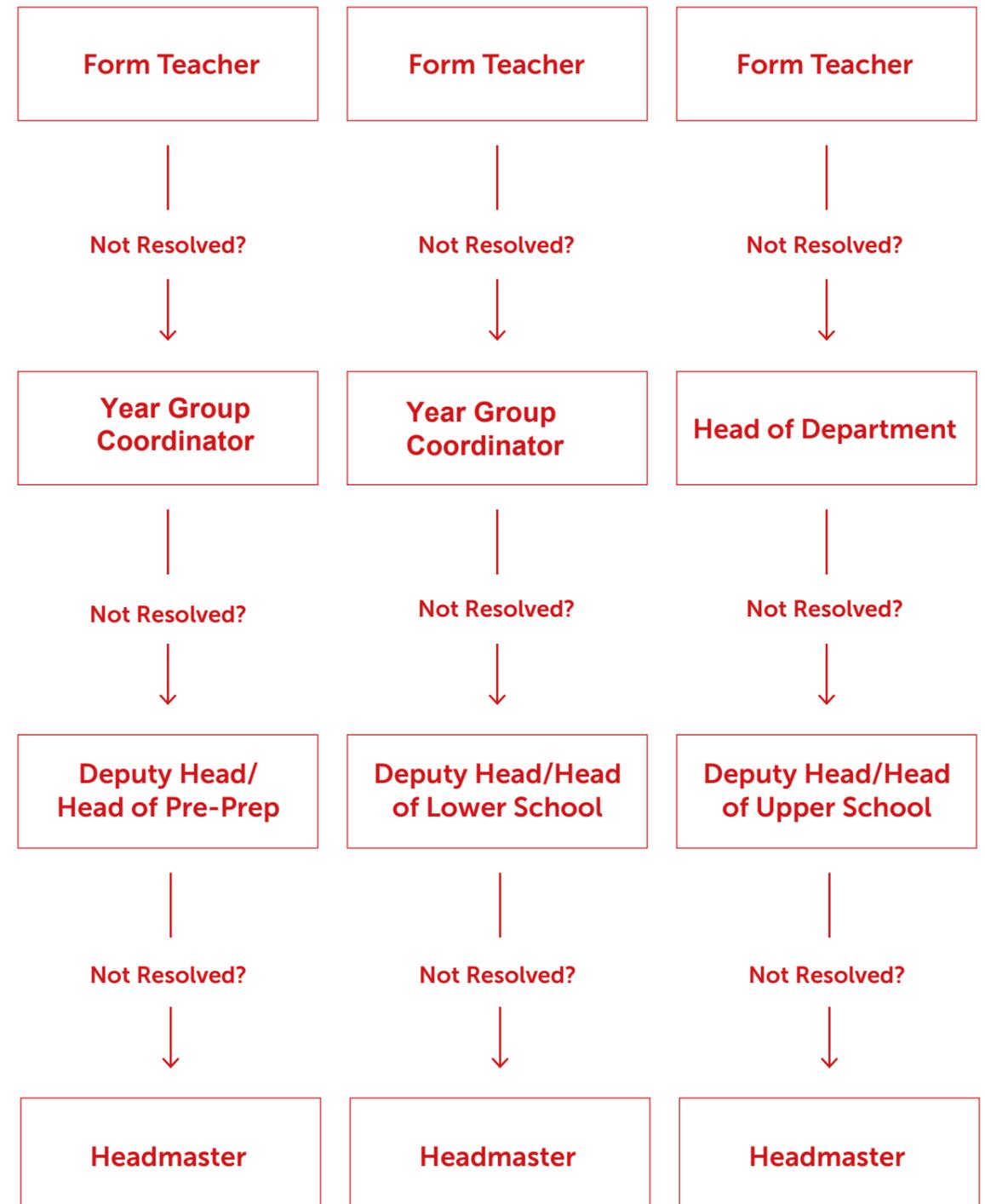
For issues relating to academic or pastoral matters

Boys Lower School (Yr 3–Yr 5)

For issues relating to academic or pastoral matters

Boys Upper School (Yr 6–Yr 8)

For issues relating to academic or pastoral matters



The Communication Charter

In order to ensure that communication between school and home is as robust and supportive as possible, the following commitments should be made by staff, parents and pupils. When this partnership is at its best, all three parties will be engaged fully in the 'triangle of communication'.

School will:

- Publish a termly calendar on the website
- Publish team sheets & match info on www.cumnorhousesport.com & www.cumnorgirlssport.com 72 hours before fixtures
- Code **ParentMail** messages with CHSB/CHSG Yr Group & INFO or ACTION to assist parents
- **Mark homework** in a timely manner, ideally within 48 hours. Homework will be clearly explained and differentiated to children's needs
- Respond promptly to **e-mails** and **phone calls** from parents, ideally within 48 hours
- Set clear targets for pupils at **Parents' Evenings** in Autumn and Spring Term
- **Reporting:** Send effort and attainment grade reports with targets for English and Maths in the Autumn and Spring terms and a full subject report in the Summer term.
- School to use **Facebook** and **Twitter** for news bites and comms channels to advise on upcoming events and share pictures and results of what has occurred
- School to issue **Voice of the Parent Survey** annually

Parents will:

- Highlight those events that relate to their child (ren)
- Check www.cumnorhousesport.com & www.cumnorgirlssport.com 48 hours before fixtures for up to date info
- Read **Parentmail** messages that relate to their child
- Look at books periodically once homework tasks have been completed
- Discuss homework and show an interest in home learning
- Re-read e-mails carefully before pressing 'send', never sending a message in anger
- Use Parentmail to book and attend Parents' meetings – discuss targets with children (CHSB)
- Read reports carefully and discuss targets with your children
- Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter and separate Sports and Cumnor House feeds
- Participate in the **Voice of the Parent Survey**, be honest and open and reply with key opinions and comments, avoiding the day to day minutiae

Pupils will:

- Look ahead each week to see which events relate to them
- Confirm details with parents and discuss with the coach if questions arise
- Discuss any relevant items with parents and, if necessary, staff
- Record homework in diaries (KS2/3) and ask for clarification if unsure of task
- Complete homework tasks carefully and thoroughly
- Acknowledge the targets set and work hard to achieve them
- Discuss targets with parents and work hard to achieve them
- Complete the **Voice of the Student Survey** annually
- Participate in School Council throughout their school journey

Safeguarding

Safeguarding in our school

Our commitment is to safeguard and promote the welfare, health (including mental health) and safety of our pupils by creating and maintaining an open, safe, caring and supportive atmosphere.

This includes:

- Proactively teaching pupils about safeguarding;
- Ensuring that systems and procedures are in place to protect pupils; and
- Acting in the best interests of the child.

For any issues relating to safety and wellbeing of a child, please contact the school's Designated Safeguarding Team.

School Communication

Calendar

The termly calendar is an online calendar hosted on the school website, thus allowing for planning for the coming three months. The calendar contains useful information, such as key contact details and term dates, as well as details of the coming term (including fixtures, trips and visits, Parents' Evenings etc).

ParentMail

The school subscribes to the **ParentMail** service, which allows us to e-mail letters to parents, as well as, in the case of an emergency to send out text messages for reminders and last-minute changes. We urge parents to provide us with a valid e-mail address and to sign up to ParentMail service. A ParentMail App is also available for both Android and Apple phones.

Club bookings and Parent Evening bookings will now be made using the ParentMail service (CHSB only).

Where it is not possible to use e-mail, most written correspondence is passed on to families by the children, so it is important that the school bags are checked on a daily basis. Any other correspondence will be forwarded through Royal Mail.

Ensure that the school has an up-to-date e-mail address for anyone who wishes to receive the newsletters.

Contacting Home

E-mail

E-mails can be a useful way of communicating quickly between school and home. However, when used incorrectly, it can also be a barrier to developing effective partnerships.

- Please remember an e-mail can often be read in a very different way to how it might be meant, so where possible for difficult conversations a face to face meeting is advised.
- Staff are encouraged to check e-mails between the hours of 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday, when they are not teaching. Please do allow staff time to respond within these hours and do not be disappointed if you do not receive a reply instantly.

Telephone Calls

Telephone calls will be made where immediate contact with a family member is required i.e. for pupil injury or pupil incident. A member of staff will call the first named emergency contact as listed. Where no contact is made, a call will then be made to the second named contact. In the event that no live contact can be made, the member of staff will either leave an answer phone message (ascending order as before) or ensure that repeat calls continue to be made to the contact numbers, where possible. All phone calls made by parents to the school should go through the main school switchboard.

First Day Calling

Parents must notify the school by 9am on the day of absence, if their child is going to be absent for any reason. 'First Day Calling' will take place when a child is absent from school. As a school it is our duty of care to ensure children attend school. When a child is absent from school we will make every effort to ascertain the reason for absence. If this information cannot be obtained on first day of absence, social services may be notified to avoid any undue risk to a child that has not made it to school. Parents should also contact the school on any subsequent day of illness until the child returns to school.

Ensure that the school has phone numbers for you and any other relevant contacts.

Sports - Selection for Fixtures & Team Sheets

Cumnor House School use: www.cumnorhousesport.com and www.cumnorgirlssport.com for communicating team selection, fixture lists, directions to matches etc. This is the first port of call for anything match related. All fixtures are in the calendar (on the website). Please check the sports websites regularly for last minute changes.

- Team sheets should, whenever possible, be posted 72 hours before the fixture is scheduled to take place.
- It is a school policy that, if a pupil is selected to play for the school, she/he should honour that selection and **school matches take precedence over other out-of-school sports activities.**
- In exceptional circumstances, it is possible that a pupil may be unavailable for selection. As the Calendar is issued to parents by the start of term, it is expected that parents will inform the Sports Department in writing, at least 2 weeks prior to the fixture date (CHSB only).
- Selection for school teams is done on the basis of merit. Teams are not fixed but fluid, and Sports Department staff can rotate pupils up or down during the season according to their standard of play, attitude, and commitment in future fixtures.
- If you feel that your child has not been selected for the correct team, please encourage him/her to play his/her very best in the team for which she/he has been selected in order to demonstrate his/her ability, attitude and commitment.
- At the start of every term, the School will run some form of trials for each year group. However, for certain sports, such as pre-season nets and some squads, this is sometimes not possible due to pre-season training (CHSB only).
- If pupils are moved to a lower team, every effort will be made to explain clearly to the pupil on what basis the change has been made and what areas she/he needs to work on to regain promotion.
- Parentmail will advise if a match is going to be late back due to issues with traffic.

Please ensure you have downloaded the Parentmail app as communication will be sent via the app rather than by e-mail.

Parent Association & Class Reps

The Cumnor House School Parents' Teachers' Association (Boys and Girls) (CHSPA) organise social events to encourage the involvement of families in the life of the school. Fundraising goes towards equipment and activities for the pupils of Cumnor House School. They support school events by helping at concerts, drama productions, sporting events, open mornings and seasonal celebrations.

Each class has a Class Rep, who is a point of contact for their class to promote parent interaction and organise small social events so that the parents of the class can keep in touch. The Class Reps help the CHSPA promote events and recruit a class team of helpers. If you are interested in being a rep, please contact the school office and your details will be passed on to the correct person.

Homework

Assigning homework serves various educational needs. It serves as an intellectual discipline, establishes study habits, eases time constraints on the amount of curricular material that can be covered in class, and supplements and reinforces work done in school. In addition, it fosters student initiative (assignments provide some children with their first chance to manage time and meet deadlines), brings home and school closer together and encourages a love of learning.

Teachers assign homework for many reasons: it can help children review and practice what they have learned; get ready for the next day's class; learn to use resources, such as libraries and reference materials; and explore subjects more fully than time permits in the classroom. Homework can also help children develop good habits and attitudes.

Homework is meant to be a positive experience and to encourage children to learn. Assignments should not be used as punishment. Parents should encourage children to work independently on homework and check homework has been completed. Children should not feel upset or frustrated by homework and if this occurs, parents are encouraged to use judgement to cease homework and feedback to teachers. Teachers will support with difficulties that may occur regarding homework. Children should record their homework in the allotted diary, which should be signed regularly by parents.

Homework and Parents Evenings

Build 'homework time' into your evening routine; as a part of everyday life, it will become a habit rather than a daunting event.

Try to ensure your child has eaten beforehand, as low sugar levels lead to irritability and difficulty concentrating.

Reading Records & Pupil Diaries

The Reading Records & Pupil Diaries are used as a key vehicle for communication between parents and the school.

Check and sign the Reading Record regularly.

Parents Evenings

Parents' Evenings are those 'formal' times in the year, usually in the Autumn and Spring Terms, when you get the opportunity to discuss your child's progress with the Class or Subject Teacher. Time is at a premium, so it is vital that it is maximised. In essence, you should feel confident that the following questions will have been addressed during the allotted time:

- How is my child faring generally and, where appropriate, is she/he performing at the top/middle/bottom of the year group?
- What are his/her key strengths and areas for development?
- **Most importantly, what can we do together to help him/her improve in those areas? What are your child's next steps?**

Don't look on the identification of weaknesses as a cause for being defensive. Children come to school to learn and improve and the best schools embrace this and create pathways for children to achieve their potential. Parents' Evenings can be a focal point for achieving this when managed effectively.

Social Media & Survey

Social Media

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are the social media channels that Cumnor House uses to promote life at Cumnor. Follow us to keep track of events, reminders and an insight into the children's daily learning.

Voice of the Parent Survey

Our annual Voice of the Parent survey, led by Cognita offers an opportunity for all parents to give their opinion and views on all aspects of our school. By sharing your views on topics including, catering, transport, admissions, academics and extracurricular activities as well as facilities, we can set further improvements in motion. This Communications Charter was borne out of one such survey.

In the spirit of the Cumnor House Communication Charter, we prefer people to be candid and open with us about their responses. If there is a specific individual academic or pastoral concern we would prefer that you follow the protocol for resolving this before commenting on the survey.

Safeguarding

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