



Scammonden Road, Barkisland, Halifax, W. Yorkshire, HX4 0BD

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Working in Partnership

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we reach the third week of the new school year, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on the importance of transition and settling in, and to clarify how we can best work together as a school and parent community.

Although September marks the beginning of a new school year, the process of transition begins much earlier. In the summer term, staff spent considerable time sharing information about the children in their classes with one another. This includes their personalities, individual strengths, interests, attainment and progress, friendships, challenges, successes and any additional support they may need. This information is an important part of ensuring that staff know the children as individuals and can provide continuity as they move into a new year group or class.

The first few weeks of a school year are particularly important. They give teachers and children the opportunity to get to know one another, establish relationships and routines, understand expectations and develop a positive learning environment. For children who have a new teacher, this is also a period where their teacher is getting to know them even more deeply – how they learn best, what motivates them, where they need support and how they respond to different situations. This takes time and is an important part of effective transition.

Working together around behaviour, learning and pastoral matters

Since returning to school, we have noticed that there have been more requests than usual from parents wishing to have conversations or meetings with teachers about individual incidents, behaviour, sanctions, friendships or aspects of their child's learning. We absolutely recognise that parents want to understand how their child is doing, and we remain firmly committed to working in close partnership with you.

At the same time, it is important that we maintain a balance. Our teachers' primary responsibility during the school day is to teach, support and care for all of the children in their class. It is therefore not possible for teachers to have ongoing conversations with parents about every minor misdemeanour, mistake, disagreement or learning challenge that may occur during the school day.

Children, like adults, make mistakes. They may fall out with a friend, make an unkind choice, forget an instruction, receive a sanction, find something difficult or have a particularly challenging moment. Part of growing up is learning how to manage these situations, reflect on what has happened and make better choices next time. Our staff are skilled and experienced in responding to these situations as they arise, and we need to give them the professional space and trust to do this.

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May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed Psalm 20:4*



This does not mean that we will not communicate with you - *We will contact parents when we feel that communication is necessary.* This may be where we identify a pattern of behaviour, where a child is experiencing an ongoing difficulty, where additional support may be needed, where we have a concern that there may be something underlying a change in behaviour, or where there is something important that we need to share with you.

Equally, we want our parents to feel able to contact us when they have a genuine concern. We will always take parental concerns seriously and will consider them carefully. However, where an issue has arisen during the school day, we ask that you trust the adults working with your child to investigate and respond to it appropriately.

It is worth remembering that children do not always retell an incident in its entirety when they get home. They may understandably share the part that they found upsetting, frustrating or significant to them, without having all of the context surrounding what happened. This is why it is important that school has the opportunity to understand and address situations within the context in which they occurred.

We also want to encourage our children to develop their own resilience and independence. As they grow, they need opportunities to solve problems, repair friendships, respond to mistakes and learn from consequences, with appropriate adult support. Our role is to guide them through this process rather than to remove every difficulty they encounter.

Communicating with school

We would also like to remind parents how they can communicate with school so that we can respond to you as effectively as possible.

We appreciate that parents may sometimes send an email to the school office, telephone the school and then speak to a member of staff at the beginning or end of the school day about the same issue. Whilst this is understandable when you are keen to ensure that a concern has been received, it can unfortunately result in the same matter being dealt with several times by different members of staff, doubling the work involved for the school and taking staff away from their other responsibilities.

We therefore ask that, wherever possible, you choose one method of communication for an individual matter and allow us the appropriate time to respond.

- **Brief conversations:** Staff are available at the entrance doors in the morning and at the end of the school day for brief conversations. These are useful for sharing a quick message or piece of information. If a matter requires a longer discussion or needs consideration by a number of staff, we may ask you to arrange a meeting or contact the school office.
- **Email:** Emails sent to the school office will be forwarded to the most appropriate member of staff to deal with the matter. We aim to respond within **three working days**. Please note that this is a working-day timescale and does not include weekends or school holidays.
- **Telephone:** If you telephone the school, the office team will ensure that your message is passed to the appropriate person where necessary. The member of staff concerned may not be able to return your call immediately.

We ask that parents please respect these timescales. A class teacher may not always be able to respond immediately because their first commitment during the school day is to teaching and supporting the children in their class. Similarly, members of our wider school team have their own teaching, safeguarding, pastoral, leadership and operational responsibilities each day and may not always be immediately available to respond to a query. Our communication policy can be found on the school website here should you need more information regarding this: https://spaces.schoolspider.co.uk/uploads/677/page/26059629_page_file.pdf?ofn=communications-policy-2024.pdf

This is not about reducing communication with families; it is about making sure that communication is manageable, purposeful and effective, while protecting the time that staff need to do their most important job – working with the children.



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Looking ahead

Our first formal Parents' Evening, just before the October half term (Wednesday 21st October), will provide an opportunity for teachers to talk with you about how your child has settled into their class, their relationships, learning, progress and any areas that may require further support. By this point, teachers will have had more time to get to know each child and will be able to provide a fuller picture of how they are progressing.

In the meantime, please continue to talk to us and to raise concerns where you feel this is necessary. We value the relationship between home and school enormously. Open, respectful two-way communication is an important part of our partnership with families. Equally, we ask that parents place their trust in the professionals working with their children each day and allow us the time and space to teach, support and get to know them.

Our shared aim is the same: for every child to feel safe, happy, valued and successful at school, and to develop the confidence, independence and resilience they need as they grow.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support and partnership.

Kind regards,

Mrs Schofield
 Headteacher

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