

# **Home – School Engagement and Communication Policy 2026**

EKC Schools Trust

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## Our Commitment to Working with our Families

At EKC Schools Trust, we believe that strong partnerships between home and school are essential to every child's success.

Our commitment to working with families is rooted in respect, inclusion, and collaboration. We recognise that parents and carers are the first educators of their children, and we value the unique insights, experiences, and aspirations that families bring to our school communities. We welcome every parent and carer as a valued partner in their child's education, and we are committed to building strong, inclusive relationships that support each child's learning, wellbeing, and personal development.

We also recognise that effective partnership relies on constructive engagement and clear communication. This policy outlines our shared commitment between families and schools to working together and reflects the values we model for our children. By engaging positively and respectfully, as outlined in this policy, we can ensure a safe, supportive, and thriving environment for every member of our school community.

Our schools operate with autonomy, celebrating the distinctiveness of each community. Yet across the Trust, we share a common commitment to:

- Welcoming every family into our schools with warmth, respect, and professionalism.
- Building trust and transparency through clear, timely, and respectful communication.
- Creating inclusive environments where all families feel seen, heard, and valued, recognising that inclusion means engaging thoughtfully and constructively, so every voice contributes to a positive school culture.
- Responding to family needs with empathy and flexibility, recognising that every household is different.
- Listening actively to parent voice and engaging through appropriate channels, with empathy, integrity, and professionalism.
- Celebrating achievements together, whether academic, personal, or community-based.
- Working in partnership to support pupil wellbeing, attendance, and progress.

We understand that effective parental engagement is not a one-size-fits-all approach. That's why each school within our Trust is encouraged to develop its own strategies for connecting with families while aligning with our shared values and ParentKind's gold-standard principles.

Together, we are building a culture where families are not just welcomed into our schools, but are active partners in shaping the future of their children's education.

As a Trust, we are proud to be working with **ParentKind**, the national charity for parent-friendly schools. Our partnership reflects our commitment to excellence and our belief that strong family-school relationships are central to pupil success. As pioneers in this space, we are already sharing best practice, how we listen to,

communicate with and involve families in school life. We welcome recognition of our parent-friendly approaches and are actively working towards formal accreditation. Parents and carers can feel assured that they are already part of a community where family partnership is not only welcomed, but embedded in how we work.

## How we Communicate with Parents and Carers

The sections below explain how EKC Schools Trust keep parents up to date with their child's education and what is happening in school. Each school has its own approaches to ensure you are fully informed about:

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests
- Trips, visits and events
- Newsletters and celebrations
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- Updates and helpful reminders
- Consent forms
- Policies and procedures
- Uniform information

**Face-to-face** meetings and **phone calls** home will also be used to support communication with you relating specifically to your child. This might include letting you know your child is not feeling well, specific support we are providing for your child, supporting your child's Special or additional need, giving you feedback on any changes in your child's learning or behaviour, discussing your child's attendance or celebrating something your child has achieved.

Parents also receive reports from the school about their child's learning, including (as age appropriate):

- An end-of-year report covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, and their attendance
- A report on the results of statutory assessments, public examinations and GCSEs
- Information about vocational qualifications gained (or credits gained towards these)
- We also arrange regular meetings where you can speak to your child's teacher(s) about their achievement and progress.

Key information about each school is posted on their **website**, including:

- School times and term dates

- Important events and announcements
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information
- Information about before and after-school provision

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

### **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding is the highest priority across all aspects of our schools and trust operations. This means that any safeguarding concern, action, or decision will take precedence over all other policies, procedures, and individual preferences.

Where safeguarding responsibilities conflict with other policies—including communication, complaints, or conduct policies—safeguarding will always take priority.

We recognise and respect the diverse views, beliefs, and cultural norms of our families and communities. However, where these views conflict with safeguarding duties or statutory guidance, the school will act in the best interests of the child, in line with legal and professional obligations and this may impact on aspects outlined in this policy.

All parents, carers, staff, and visitors are expected to support this principle and work in partnership with us to ensure the safety and wellbeing of every child.

### **Inclusion**

At EKC Schools Trust, we are committed to fostering strong, respectful, and inclusive relationships with all our families. We recognise that effective communication is central to building trust, supporting pupil outcomes, and ensuring every child feels seen, heard, and valued.

We understand that families may experience different challenges or have specific needs around how they receive and engage with information. Whether this relates to language, accessibility, technology, or personal circumstances, we want to work in partnership to find solutions that work for you.

If you ever feel that our communication methods present a barrier, or if you have suggestions for how we can improve, we warmly encourage you to let us know. We are here to listen, adapt, and support as partnership is key to your child's success.

Please contact your school office to find out more about how we can support with a range of adaptations to meet your needs.

### **Visiting Your Schools and Being on Our Sites**

#### **Keeping Everyone Safe**

In EKC Schools Trust, the safety and wellbeing of every child and staff member is our highest priority. We are committed to providing a secure, respectful, and inclusive environment where children can learn and grow with confidence.

To support this, we have strong safeguarding procedures in place, including:

- **Trained Staff:** All staff receive regular safeguarding and child protection

training to identify and respond to concerns swiftly and appropriately.

- **Secure Premises:** Our school grounds are monitored and access is controlled to ensure students are safe throughout the day.
- **Clear Policies:** We follow national and local safeguarding guidelines, and our policies are regularly reviewed to reflect best practice.
- **Open Communication:** We encourage children to speak up about anything that worries them, and we work closely with families to support children's emotional and physical wellbeing.
- **The Curriculum:** Through our curriculum, children learn about personal safety, respectful relationships, and how to seek help when needed.

To help us maintain a safe and welcoming environment, we ask anyone visiting our schools, including parents, carers and families to follow these important guidelines:

- **Sign In and Out:** All visitors must report to the school office upon arrival, sign in, and wear a visitor badge at all times while on site.
- **Follow Staff Instructions:** Please follow any guidance given by school staff, especially during emergency procedures or drills.
- **Respect Boundaries:** Visitors, including parents and carers should remain in designated areas and avoid entering classrooms or children's spaces unless invited or accompanied by staff.
- **Model Positive Behaviour:** We expect all adults on site to treat staff, children, and other visitors with respect, courtesy, and professionalism.
- **Use Appropriate Language and Conduct:** Aggressive, inappropriate, or disruptive behaviour will not be tolerated and may result in restricted access to the school.
- **Mobile Phones and videos and photos:** Use of mobile phones is restricted on school site, and taking photos or videos is not permitted unless explicitly authorised by school staff.
- **Report Concerns:** If you see or hear anything that causes concern, please report it immediately to a member of staff or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

We believe that safety is a shared responsibility. By working together with families and visitors, we can ensure our school remains a safe, respectful, and nurturing place for everyone.

### Appropriate Behaviours

At EKC Schools Trust, we are committed to fostering positive, respectful relationships between staff, parents, and carers. Effective communication is essential to supporting children's wellbeing and learning, and we expect all interactions to reflect our shared values of respect, kindness, and collaboration.

To maintain a safe and professional environment, we ask that all staff, parents and carers:

- **Communicate Respectfully:** Listen to each other and communicate with courtesy and consideration, whether in person, by phone, email.
- **Use Appropriate Channels:** Contact each other through official channels and *never* use social media as a means to discuss matters relating to children or the school.
- **Be Constructive:** Take a solution-focused approach to handling any concerns or queries.
- **Maintain Confidentiality:** Avoid discussing sensitive issues in public forums or with others not directly involved. This helps protect the privacy and dignity of all members of our school community.
- **Support Positive Engagement:** Work together in partnership to support each child's education and wellbeing, attending meetings and responding to communications in a timely manner.

We value the role parents and carers play in our school community and thank you for helping us maintain a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for all.

### When You Have a Worry or Concern

We understand that, at times, parents and carers may have concerns or feel unhappy about something relating to their child's education or experience at school. Across all schools in our Trust, we are committed to listening, responding fairly and working together to resolve issues promptly and constructively. We operate an open-door approach as we recognise that most concerns can be addressed quickly and informally when raised early.

Parents and carers are encouraged to raise any concerns or queries with the appropriate member of staff in the first instance—usually the relevant teacher or a pastoral lead. If the issue cannot be resolved at this stage, our [Trust-wide Complaints Policy](#) sets out a clear process for escalation, including a straightforward form that must be used to submit a formal complaint.

At every stage of the process, we will take the time to **listen, understand and work towards a fair and positive outcome** in the best interests of your child.

While we welcome individual concerns raised through our established complaints procedures, we do not respond to group complaints or petitions. This is because such approaches can unintentionally create division, escalate tensions, and detract from the collaborative relationships we strive to build with families and communities.

Group complaints often lack the nuance and context needed to understand individual experiences, and they can make it more difficult to address specific concerns effectively. More importantly, they risk shifting the focus away from the child's best interests and may undermine the trust and safety that children need to thrive in their school environment.

We encourage any parent or carer with a concern to speak with us directly about their individual concerns and their child's needs or experiences.

We are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers, even when things feel difficult. We understand that raising a concern can sometimes feel emotional or stressful; however, it is essential that all communication remains **respectful, courteous, and constructive** throughout the process. Aggressive, threatening, intimidating or otherwise inappropriate behaviour (either face to face

or written) towards school staff or other members of the school community will not be tolerated.

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Communicate calmly, respectfully and honestly.
- Allow staff reasonable time to investigate and respond.
- Use appropriate channels (e.g. speaking to school staff directly rather than airing grievances in public forums)
- Refrain from sharing concerns, complaints or opinions about staff or pupils on social media or messaging platforms such as WhatsApp or Facebook.
- Respect professional boundaries and follow the published complaints process.

The following behaviours are considered unacceptable and may result in further action being taken by the school or Trust:

- Shouting, swearing or using aggressive or insulting language.
- Making threats (verbal, written or implied) towards staff, pupils or other parents.
- Posting defamatory, inflammatory or inaccurate statements about the school or individuals on social media.
- Recording conversations or meetings without consent
- Persistently contacting staff outside of working hours or through unofficial channels.
- Refusing to follow the school's procedures for handling complaints.

Where such behaviour occurs, the school or Trust may take appropriate action, which could include restricting contact to a single point of communication, asking the parent to leave the premises, or formally withdrawing the implied right to enter school grounds. In serious cases, legal action or police involvement may be necessary.

We ask all parents and carers to support a culture of mutual respect, where concerns are raised in a way that supports resolution and protects the wellbeing of the entire school community.

### **Third Party Harassment**

*Third-party harassment refers to any unwanted, offensive, or intimidating behaviour directed at a staff member by someone who is not employed by the school (e.g., parents, carers, contractors, visitors, or members of the public). This may include verbal abuse, written or electronic communication, physical intimidation, or repeated unreasonable demands. The school has a legal and moral responsibility to protect staff from such behaviour. All staff have the right to work without fear of harassment or abuse. To uphold this, the school adopts a zero-tolerance stance towards harassment of staff by third parties. Repeated or serious incidents may result in further action, including legal proceedings. By implementing these measures, the*

*school seeks to ensure that all staff can carry out their duties in a safe, respectful, and supportive environment.*

## **Community Protection Warnings**

Under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, schools and safeguarding partners have the authority to respond to behaviour that is unreasonable, persistent, and detrimental to the wellbeing of others, including children and staff.

A Community Protection Warning (CPW) may be issued to any individual aged 16 or over, including parents and carers, where their conduct:

- Causes harassment, alarm, or distress,
- Disrupts the safe and respectful operation of the school,
- Undermines safeguarding responsibilities.

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Engage respectfully with staff and other members of the school community,
- Avoid behaviours that intimidate, harass, or spread misinformation,
- Follow school safeguarding procedures and guidance.

Where behaviour falls below these expectations and poses a safeguarding concern, the school may refer the matter to the police or local authority. This could result in a Community Protection Warning, which is a formal written notice requiring the behaviour to stop. If ignored, it may escalate to a Community Protection Notice, which carries legal consequences.

Safeguarding is our highest priority. All families are expected to support this principle to ensure a safe and supportive environment for every child.

## **Data Protection and GDPR in Communication**

The school takes the protection of personal data very seriously and follows the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. To respect the privacy of all children, families, and staff, there are clear boundaries around the information that can be shared in communication with parents and carers.

### **What staff are able to do:**

- Share information with you about your own child's learning, progress, wellbeing and safety.
- Provide updates that relate directly to your child or to the class/year group as a whole, where no individual child can be identified.
- Ensure all communication is professional, respectful, and confidential.
- Use secure school-approved systems for emails, letters, or other communication.

**What staff are unable to do:**

- Discuss other children or families with you, even if they are in the same class or group as your child.
- Share reports, records, or information that include details of other children.
- Share CCTV footage unless required by law to do so
- Use personal email accounts, messaging apps, or social media to communicate with parents/carers.

By following these standards, the school ensures that communication with parents and carers respects the rights of all families and protects the personal information of every child.

**Who to contact at your school:**

In the Appendix to this policy, each school will provide a list of key contacts which parents can use in order to discuss specific matters about your child.