



# Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School

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Dear Parents / Carers

Happy New Year!

We are writing to clarify and to remind you all of our procedures regarding communications between the school and home. We are doing this as we have experienced a number of situations where parents /carers have had unreasonable expectations of by whom, how and when any request they make will be dealt with.

First of all, appointments. All our staff, including the Senior Leadership Team, have teaching commitments and pre-set meetings, many with external agencies. Therefore, there will frequently be occasions when you will have to wait for a mutually convenient time for an appointment. In all cases, contact should be made with the School Office to arrange an appointment; turning up at school asking to see someone will rarely yield results as our diaries fill very quickly. Meetings are also far more productive when parents have informed us of the issue in writing and we have had time to gather any relevant information.

Secondly, messages. When parents / carers leave a message on the school phone system, it is unreasonable to demand an immediate response. The switchboard is staffed from 8am until 3.45pm – any message left after this time will not be heard until the following morning. Again, parents / carers need to remember that the school, and especially the office, is a busy working environment which will always put the immediate needs of our pupils first. If we are dealing with the ever-increasing issues that present daily, we may not be able to respond to your queries till later in the day so please be patient.

Thirdly, emails. In an age when there is so much instant communication, it is easy to fall into the trap of expecting immediate responses via email. However, to ensure staff well-being, and afford them quality time with their families, staff have been advised not to check school emails beyond 5pm or at weekends/holidays. There may be some exceptions to this (eg when a trip is being planned) but it should not be the norm for parents / carers to email staff in the evening and expect a response immediately – I'm sure many of you would not appreciate your employers expecting you to respond to work-based emails in the evening.

Lastly, voice tone and demeanour. On a number of occasions recently, parents / carers have been quite intimidating and rude to staff in general and to office staff specifically. This is totally unacceptable and should this happen we will employ our "Dealing with Abusive Parents" policy (available on our website). We constantly remind the girls of our school values – respect, honesty, teamwork, kindness, trust, ambition – and expect them to apply them at all times; our expectation extends to our parents / carers also embodying these values.

It is worth remembering that we have systems in place, and these were all explained to you when your daughter joined the school, regarding with whom, how and when to communicate with the school. Please give the School Office clear details when you ring as staff there can direct you to the best person to speak to. Your first port of call, for most issues, will be your daughter's form tutor; if a pastoral matter is more serious, this will be passed on to her Head of Year. Academic issues should be first discussed with your daughter's subject teacher and may need escalating to the Head of Faculty. It is very rare that you should need to make direct communication with a member of the Senior Leadership Team and the Co-Headteachers especially will only become involved in the most serious matters which are very few. This system works effectively and we

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thank you for using it appropriately. We trust that we can move forward very positively on these communications' issues.

Thank you all for your continued support in all we do to ensure the best educational experience for your daughters. It is these strong partnerships between home and school that lead to our pupils "enjoying and achieving".

Yours sincerely

Ms T Nickson Mr A Wood  
**Co-Headteachers**