



## How-to Guide: Family-school communication

At William Ellis, we aim to keep parents/carers updated about their child's progress and wellbeing, as well as school news and events.

This guide explains how we will communicate with you and how you can contact the right person at school if you have a question or concern about your child.

We aim for all our communication to be clear, open, honest, ethical, and professional and to treat all parents/carers with respect. We ask that parent/carers adopt the same approach when communicating with teachers and school staff.

### Keep your contact details up to date

When your child joins the school, you'll be asked to provide your contact details including phone number and email addresses. Please ensure that we have contact details for all parents/carers who wish to receive important updates and please let us know if these change so we can always reach you.

Please notify us of any changes to your contact details via an email to [info@williamellis.camden.sch.uk](mailto:info@williamellis.camden.sch.uk)

### How to contact us

General enquiries can be sent to [info@williamellis.camden.sch.uk](mailto:info@williamellis.camden.sch.uk)

We encourage parents/carers to email their queries in the first instance. However, if you need to speak to someone regarding an urgent matter, please call the school office.

All staff have teaching and other commitments that cannot be interrupted during the school day, therefore it is not possible for staff to meet with family members who come to the school without an appointment.

If you would like to meet with a member of staff in person, please arrange this in advance for a time that is mutually convenient by contacting the member of staff via email or through the main contact details below. Staff email addresses adhere to the format of first initial and surname @williamellis.camden.sch.uk (e.g. *jsmith@williamellis.camden.sch.uk*).

In an emergency	Call 0207 267 9346
If your child is unwell/can't attend school	Call 0207 267 9346 and follow the prompts to leave a message on the absence line answer phone. When possible, please call before 8am. This means we can update your child's teachers ahead of the school day.
To report a concern	For everyday issues, please contact your child's form tutor in the first instance. The tutor has a daily routine of contact with the student and an overview of wellbeing and progress. The tutor will be able to direct issues to more senior staff when appropriate. For more serious issues please contact your son's Head of House.
To discuss progress/academic performance	For subject-specific issues, you can contact your child's subject teacher or, for issues that are persistent or serious, contact the Subject Leader. Contact details for all subject teachers are listed on the school website <a href="https://www.williamellis.camden.sch.uk/about-us/staff-list">https://www.williamellis.camden.sch.uk/about-us/staff-list</a> For subject issues that are persistent or serious, contact the Head of Department. These are listed on the website.



To discuss special or additional educational needs (SEN/AEN)	If your child has been assigned a key worker in the AEN/SEN team, contact them in the first instance. If your child has not been assigned a key worker, contact the SENDCo (special educational needs coordinator) at <a href="mailto:send@williamellis.camden.sch.uk">send@williamellis.camden.sch.uk</a>
Other questions	For other questions relating to your child, please contact their form tutor or key worker in the first instance. For general questions in relation to the school, contact the school office at <a href="mailto:info@williamellis.camden.sch.uk">info@williamellis.camden.sch.uk</a>

### What should I do if I don't receive a reply?

Sometimes when you have contacted one member of staff at the school your message will be directed to somebody else who will then respond to you directly. This enables us to respond to your query in the most useful and informed way to support our students.

If you have not had a response after 2 school days, please resend your email and copy (cc) a senior member of staff such as the Head of House. Our teachers and support staff are often working directly with students and may not be able to reply straight away. In relation to additional educational needs, contact the relevant senior leader within the AEN/SEN team or the SENDCo.

### How we will communicate with you

#### General news and updates

- **School newsletter:** A weekly update on school news, events and key dates. It is published on Fridays and you will receive a copy by email. The newsletter may include links to further information about news items on our website or partner websites. We encourage all parents/carers to read the newsletter. If you are not receiving the newsletter, check your junk mail or contact [info@williamellis.camden.sch.uk](mailto:info@williamellis.camden.sch.uk) to make sure we have the correct email address for you.
- **Email:** We use email as the primary means to keep parents/carers updated on school news.
- **Text message:** Urgent/time-sensitive messages such as absence notifications may be sent via text message.
- **Website:** Includes news items, an archive of school newsletters, contact details for staff and many other resources. See [www.williamellis.camden.sch.uk](http://www.williamellis.camden.sch.uk)
- **School social media accounts:** School events and appropriate news stories may be published via our Instagram account. Our Parents' Association, WESPA, uses social media to update parents on events and fundraising. We do not routinely use social media to give live updates about students' activities.



## School communication systems

When your child joins William Ellis you will receive information on how to create an online account for the applications below. If you cannot connect properly to them, please contact [info@williamellis.camden.sch.uk](mailto:info@williamellis.camden.sch.uk)

- **My Child At School (MCAS):** This web-based application enables you to see and hear about daily routines for students. In particular, it shows rewards, concerns and sanctions including detentions and students' attendance records.
- **Satchel One:** This is the application we use to set and monitor homework, where you can see the work that has been set and deadlines given. Some departments also use external programmes to set homework specific to their subject.
- **ParentPay:** This system is used to pay for school food, trips and other items sold at school including ties and equipment.

## If your child becomes unwell at school

School staff will contact you by phone. We instruct students not to contact you directly if they feel unwell – it is important that the student speaks to a member of staff as a priority to ensure prompt help is given if needed. Please remind students of this and if your child does contact you from school please tell them to see their Head of House or speak to a member of staff at Reception. A student using their phone in school without permission is not allowed in our mobile phone policy partly for this reason.

## Behaviour concerns

We will contact you by phone or email to discuss any serious behavioural concerns.

We use a system of daily praises and concerns. Praise points recognise good behaviour by students. Concerns help us address behaviour issues and to intervene and support where there are any concerning patterns. If your child receives a praise or concern during the day, you will be notified via MCAS and you will receive a text message if your child has a Level 3 or 4 detention.

## Progress reports and parents evening

You will receive a report for your child twice a year. This tells you how they are progressing in each subject area compared to their previous performance and national expectations for their age of study. It is sent via email and is available on our parental communication portal My Child At School (MCAS). You will have the chance to discuss the report at parents' evening.

There is one parents' evening for each year group every academic year, usually held in person at the school. Ahead of the evening, you must book the meeting sessions with your child's subject teachers. Occasionally teachers are unable to attend a parents' evening due to illness or another professional commitment, or they may teach more students in a year group than the maximum number of appointments available.

If you are unable to attend or not able to book sessions with all the teachers you would like to see, you can contact them by email to arrange a separate meeting.



### **Information about exams, school trips and other school matters**

We will keep you updated about exams, trips and other matters relevant to your child as these arise. This may include via email updates, information in the school newsletter, at Information Evenings in person or online.

School trip leaders have access to contact information for students with them in order to be able to contact parents/carers remotely in case of emergency. Families are not routinely contacted to give updates of a trip's arrival but a text message may be sent to inform parents/carers of any delay to expected return time for a trip.

### **What is my child studying?**

The curriculum section of the website has resources for all the subjects taught at William Ellis. See [www.williamellis.camden.sch.uk/learning-and-curriculum](http://www.williamellis.camden.sch.uk/learning-and-curriculum)

Each subject area includes a summary of topics covered by each year group or key stage, and links to further information.