

School Communication Policy



Date: Revised May 2023

Review Date: April 2024

Responsible Person: Karen Holmes

Rationale:

Communication with parents/carers, external agencies and commissioners is a strength of our school. It is essential that, in order for our young people to feel safe and build trust in staff, they know that all the people that care for them are communicating regularly regarding their thoughts, feelings and needs.

Aims:

- To ensure that staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders are kept well informed
- To ensure that there is a clear structure outlining which form of communication is to be used for each purpose
- To use the method of communication that is most effective and appropriate to the context; message and audience
- To be open, honest, ethical and professional
- To use jargon free, plain language and be easily understood by all

Personal Contact details: The school holds emergency contact details for all pupils, and parents are contacted on an annual basis to ensure that these are updated. Families are encouraged to alert the school immediately in the event that contact information needs to be revised. Depending on the nature of the communication, the school will use the most practical means to contact a parent/carer.

General – All communication should be made with the age of student and context in mind, i.e. staff may vary the amount and level of language they use (as well as speed, tone and volume in the case of verbal communication). Communication should be concise and focussed towards the intended purpose. Staff should encourage two-way communication, welcoming questions from students and should use every opportunity to check understanding; be it a safety instruction or understanding of a concept. All staff are expected to communicate with students showing respect, following agreed procedures and respecting the Safeguarding Policy. No political or religious beliefs should be promoted and comments should be as balanced and impartial as the context allows.

Communication between staff and students is of imperative importance towards facilitating the teaching and learning process. The philosophy of our school is that of nurture and through the development of positive relationships based on trust and respect. All interactions therefore are grounded in this approach.

1. Daily contact

Students are transported to and from school by the young person's tutor. This allows parents/carers to speak to staff on a daily basis regarding their child's care and education. Daily communication provides essential information about curriculum, progress, health, behaviour, self-help needs etc. and serves to ensure wrap-around care for our young people and their families. Daily conversations with parents/carers establish strong and trusting relationships between home and school, and allow the student to feel fully supported.

2. Meetings: Annual EHCP Reviews/EPEPs

During each student's annual EHCP Review meeting, staff and parent/carers/commissioners have an extended period of time to focus on a pupil's progress and to plan together for future needs. In PEP meeting and LAC Reviews etc, parents/carers/Virtual School/external agencies will discuss the students' progress and requirements, and set future targets

3. Open Door Policy

Parents are encouraged to contact the school to discuss any support or information they may require.

4. 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.

5. Additional Points:

- Communications Involving Sensitive Data – All communications to parents involving sensitive data should be made face-to-face, or in the case that this isn't possible by phone call. Staff should never address sensitive matters by email.
- Staff should never send a group communication to parents in writing before having it approved by the senior leadership team.
- Staff should familiarise with the Data Protection Policy before making external communications.
- Staff should never communicate with parents (or students) via means of social media.
- Similarly, when communicating with students, no political or religious beliefs should be promoted and comments should be as balanced and impartial as the context allows. If in doubt, consult a member of the senior leadership team.
- Inspection reports will be made available to parents/carers/stakeholders

Above all, all members of the school community must abide by the 'Data Protection Policy', 'Safeguarding Policy', 'E-Safety' well as any laws that pertain to communication.