

Communications between Parents and School Policy

1. Communications between parents and school

We expect all communications between parents and school to follow the school ethos of the 4Cs, particularly relevant are consideration and courtesy. We aim to acknowledge emails within two working days and address an issue more fully with 5 working days though this is not always possible. Some specific guidance is listed below.

- a) All stakeholders must communicate in such a way that assumes parents and staff both have the best interests of the children at heart.
- b) There are, sometimes, differences of opinion or genuine mistakes but we start with the assumption that no parents or staff deliberately act badly or outrageously or unreasonably.
- c) When there are differences of opinion that cannot be resolved, there will be mutual acceptance that what happens at home is the decision of parents and what happens at school (including school sanctions) is the decision of the school (subject to the school complaints policy).
- d) Whilst we welcome parental input parents should be understanding of staff workload especially given the national picture regarding recruitment and retention of teachers and the impact on this due to teacher workload. Responding to parental communications can be very time consuming.

We will not accept any communications that do not adhere to these requirements from parents, just as we would take strong action if any of our staff were not to follow these principles. If an email does not follow the school expectations then the member of staff will issue a standard response (see appendix) asking for the email to be sent again but rephrased in such a way that is appropriate. If a phone conversation does not follow the school expectations a reminder will be given but if expectations are still not followed then the call will be ended. Also, if an in-person conversation is taking place the meeting will be ended if the conversation cannot continue in a courteous and considerate manner.

2. Parents raising a concern

If a parent has a concern about how a member of staff has acted or has applied a sanction or set a deadline for work or made a decision the parent should follow these guidelines:

- a) Consider carefully whether the issue is serious enough to be raised. Staff workload is high and parents need to recognise that time spent answering emails takes away time that can be spent improving the educational experience of students.
- b) In almost all cases we expect the first communication to be with the member of staff concerned and not with their line manager or senior leader. If an attempt has been made to resolve the issue with member of staff and this has not succeeded and also if the issue needs to be taken further that is when other staff members might need to become involved. If a communication does go to a line manager or senior leader without a description / copying in of previous communications with the member of staff they will likely refer back to the original member of staff. A standard email will be sent in this case.

- c) In most cases we would expect that parents who have raised an issue would come to understand the reason for a particular decision or action. If this is not the case we usually expect parents to respect a decision even if they disagree with it and not to take the matter further.
- d) A phone meeting or an in-person meeting can be useful to address issues however these do take a lot of staff time and add significantly to workload. Parents can of course request such a meeting but there is no guarantee that this can be offered. This is especially true if the issue is one where there is a clearly defined school procedure / expectation. Such issues might be to do with mobile phone confiscation or decisions around maths or science sets etc.
- e) Whilst we are happy to explain decisions there is not an expectation on staff to further justify a decision if a parent continues to disagree.
- f) Whilst we would ideally like parents to agree with all our decisions this is not always possible.

3. Appendices

Standard emails (*delete / insert as appropriate)

Dear

Thank you for your email. Unfortunately, I/STAFF* am/is not able to reply as your email does not adhere to our communications policy regarding communications from parents. All communications need to follow the 4Cs (courtesy and consideration especially). For full details please find the communications policy in the following LINK:

In particular, the areas of the policy to consider are sections: *

Please do not reply to this email, instead write a new email and please ensure that your email is phrased in such a way as to follow our communications policy.

Yours sincerely,

Dear

Thank you for your email. If you have already tried to resolve this issue with MEMBEROFSTAFF* please could you copy the email sent or send me a description of the communications that you have had. If you have not yet raised this issue with the member of staff concerned, as described in our communications policy, please can you do so and then raise the issue with me if this is needed.

Yours sincerely,