

Heathfield Community School

Home and School Communication Policy

Rationale

Heathfield Community School (HCS) recognises the importance of clear and effective communication and is committed to being open and accessible to all who have an interest in our school. Our key stakeholders are parents/carers and students and this policy explains how we establish effective two-way communication between home and school.

Communication between home and school can be verbal, (meetings or phone calls) or written, (letters, email, notices on our website and social media platforms).

The majority of parents/carers are satisfied or very satisfied with communication between home and school. However, we know that we do not always get things right and that sometimes parents/carers feel frustrated when contact with school does not lead to an immediate response. Teaching and extra-curricular activities mean that our teachers may not have an opportunity to return phone calls received that day. Telephone communications are triaged, so that the most important calls elicit the most rapid response. The more information parents/carers give, the easier it is to prioritise return calls.

This policy is intended to clarify reasonable expectations about response times, given that the primary role of our teachers during the school day is to teach. Please see 'Appendix 1 - Communication Guide' for further details.

Aim of the Policy

- To improve the quality of communication between the school, parents/carers, students and other stakeholders.
- To provide guidance to parents/carers about how quickly they can expect return communication from school staff, following receipt of a message.
- To provide guidance to parents/carers about how to request a meeting, to discuss an issue or concern.

Scheduled Communication Opportunities

1. Prospective parents/carers are invited to an Open Evening in the autumn term preceding the year of entry to the school. All prospective parents/carers receive school information with details of examination results.
2. Parents/carers of Year 7 students are invited to meet Form Tutors during September, to review how the student has settled into the school.
3. Parents/carers are invited to meet tutors on Academic Monitoring Day, which usually takes place before Easter.
4. Each year group will have a Parent Consultation Evening where parents/carers will have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress with Subject Teachers. (Two (2) evenings will be provided for Year 11.)

5. Parents/carers of students in Year 9 are invited to Options Evening, to find out about curriculum pathways at Key Stage Four (KS4) and to hear from students currently studying the subjects offered.
6. Parents/carers can view homework and rewards online using Epraise.
7. Formal communication about academic progress takes place twice each year. Parents/carers receive a summative snapshot of progress against targets, Epraise points, attitude to learning and behaviour.
8. Details of the topics which students are studying in each curriculum area are shared through the Curriculum Newsletter and our school website.
9. Statutory policies and a wealth of other information about all aspects of school life are available on our school website.
10. Timescales relating to the Formal Complaints Policy are outlined within that document and fall outside the remit of this guidance document.
11. The school will periodically survey parental views at key events, such as parent/carer Consultation Evenings.
12. The school has published the following guidelines, to ensure the most efficient response to communication requests from parents/carers. This document will be reviewed on an annual basis, or more frequently by the school's leadership team and governing board and updated as appropriate.

Appendix 1 – Communication Guide

The following information is intended to let parents/carers know the best way to communicate with the school and the most appropriate member of staff to contact depending on the nature of their concern.

School Contact Details:

Telephone: 01823 412396
Fax: 01823 413119
Email: office@heathfieldcommunityschool.co.uk
Address: School Road
Monkton Heathfield
Taunton
TA2 8PD

Parents/carers are encouraged wherever possible to communicate queries using email as this allows efficient dissemination to appropriate colleagues who will then have the full details of your message.

Please note that parents/carers will be asked to outline the nature of their concern or request, so that their communication can be passed to the most appropriate colleague.

If reporting an absence we that parents/carers use the telephone to call main reception and follow the prompts.

Response Time

Any concerns (other than serious safeguarding issues) and requests for information or progress updates will be acknowledged within five (5) working days. We aim to collate and share the requested information within ten (10) working days.

We take our responsibility to safeguard your child very seriously and should you need to pass on a safeguarding concern, please ask for a member of the safeguarding team to contact you. Such concerns are prioritised by our Safeguarding Lead, Mrs Nicola Patmore.

Meeting Requests

A request for a formal meeting with staff will usually be actioned within five (5) working days. Parents/carers can request a meeting by contacting the appropriate member of staff (see table below). You will be required to give an indication of the reasons for your request and to specify any information required, so that we can try to collate this before the meeting.

There will be times when only a conversation with the Head Teacher is appropriate and these will happen within five (5) working days. Please contact Mrs Anne Treeby, the Head Teacher's Personal Assistant (PA) to arrange a conversation. Mrs Treeby will require details of the reason for your request. Parents/carers should have exhausted all appropriate lower level meetings and communication first. You can contact the Head Teacher's PA using the details above.

Please do not arrive at school without an appointment. If you arrive at school without an appointment, you will be asked to give details of your query with a member of the administration team and you will be contacted later to arrange an appointment.

Who to Contact

The following table shows who to contact, depending on the nature of your enquiry.

Nature of Enquiry	Contact
To update parent/carer contact details etc.	Reception or school office
Query relating to a school trip or visit.	Lead staff member - via reception or their direct contact.
School canteen account query.	Email finance@heathfieldcommunityschool.co.uk
To share and/or request welfare/progress/general information about a student.	Form Tutor
To share and/or request information related to Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).	Learning Support Department
Bullying concern.	Form Tutor
Query relating to Tutor.	Head of Year
Academic query relating to lesson.	Subject Teacher
Query relating to ability setting.	Head of Subject Department
Query relating to Subject Teacher.	Head of Subject Department
Serious safeguarding concern.	School Safeguarding Team
Informal complaint/concern regarding the school, not resolved by Head of Subject or Head of Year.	Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
Member of the community passing on concern.	SLT
Informal complaint regarding a member of the SLT.	Head Teacher
Formal Complaint	Please follow the procedure outlined in the 'Formal Complaint' Policy – available online or hard copy from Reception.

SEND

We expect our staff to conduct themselves in a professional manner when communicating with parents/carers. Similarly, we expect our staff to be able to work in a safe environment which is free from verbal or physical abuse. If a colleague is verbally abused and/or feels at risk of being physically abused, s/he will end the call or meeting immediately and report the incident to the senior team.

Serious verbal/physical threats will be reported to the police and may lead to the parent/carer no longer being able to come on to the school site.