Home – School Communication Policy

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1. Aims:

Communication is a fundamental aspect of school life and at Selly Oak Trust School we recognise the role it plays in creating a positive, purposeful environment. We all have a collective responsibility to communicate in a manner that is respectful, thoughtful and kind. We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/carers has a positive impact on students' learning because it:

- Gives parents/carers the information they need to support their young persons' education
- Helps the school improve, through feedback and consultation with parents/carers
- Builds trust between home and school, which helps the school better support each young persons' educational and pastoral needs

The aim of this policy is to promote clear and open communication by:

- Explaining how the school operates everyday type communication with parents/carers
- Setting clear standards for responding to communication from parents/carers
- Helping parents/carers reach the member of school staff who is best placed to address their specific query or concern so they can get a response as quickly as possible

This policy aims to improve the effectiveness of parent/carer communication and ensure that any concerns are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the Complaints Procedure. Selly Oak Trust School takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

This policy does not address:

School Absence procedures – see Attendance Policy
Safeguarding Issues – see Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
Complaints – see School Complaints Policy.

2. Objectives:

All communications between school and home, and home and school should:

- Keep staff, students, parents/carers and other parties well informed
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional
- Use language that can be easily understood by all parties – this to include where appropriate, recorded versions of policies, and by request, parental/carer support to use translation tools.
- Be conducted in a timely manner
- Use the method of communication most effective and appropriate for the context and parties involved

3. Background and Context:

This policy aims to promote the essential partnership between school, parents, carers, staff, students and other agencies, through efficient and effective communication. Good communication should allow and encourage all parties to participate in the development of the school and support our overarching aims and goals.

We believe that engaging and working with all parties, especially our parents and carers, is vital in our role to provide our students with an excellent education and a safe learning environment, as well as supporting our students to become well rounded young adults with a strong set of values.

We believe that effective communication underpins our school aims for our students to; Strive, Thrive and Achieve. We remain committed to being an open and approachable school that engages with our community and puts students at the heart of our decision making.

4. Roles and Responsibilities:

The following sets out different roles and responsibilities for effective communication

Headteacher
The headteacher is responsible for:

a. Ensuring that communication with parents/carers are effective, timely and appropriate
b. Regularly reviewing this policy along with the Governing Body

Staff

All staff are responsible for:

c. Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy
d. Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)

Staff will not be expected to respond to communications outside of school hours 8.30am to 5.00pm or their working hours (working hours for teachers are 8.30am to 3.30pm, or less if they work parttime) or when absent from school, or during school holidays. Members of the Senior Leadership Team may respond outside of working hours in some circumstances and this decision will be made by their own professional judgement.

Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

e. Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance through the school office
f. Respond to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
g. Ensure the school has the most up-to-date contact and medical information for their young person. This is to be provided in writing by emailing the school office.
h. Ensuring that communication with the school is always respectful

5. Communication with the school:

The sections below explain how we keep parents and carers up-to date with their young person's education and what is happening in school.
Parents should monitor all the following regularly to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their young person.

School will communicate with parents and carers in the following ways:

a. Messages in the home-school books – Year 7 (and on request for other year groups). Please check these regularly
b. Phone calls from the class team, engagement leads, medical team and the safeguarding team
c. Letters and the weekly newsletter
d. Emails and texts from the school account
e. Meetings – requested by school and by parent/carer request
f. EHCP review meetings
g. Parents' and Carers' evenings during the Spring term
h. Website

We ask that parents keep us aware of any changes at home that may impact on your young person so that we can maximise pupil support whilst on site. There are also a range of opportunities, both formal and informal, for parents to come into school. These range from parents' coffee mornings, annual review meetings to special events and parent workshops.

Email:

i. Parents are welcome to email the school on enquiry@sellyoak.bham.sch.uk about non-urgent issues in the first instance. If however, the query is better sent to a form tutor or specific member of staff then please use the email address provided by that contact.
j. Emails will be most helpful if they are concise, explaining concerns in a clear way.
k. The school will aim to respond within 2 working days. If a response is unable to be provided within this timeline, which can be to ensure a full and considered response, then a revised timeline will be provided and communicated. We ask that parents await a response from the school and

that further emails are not sent pending that response, unless the new deadline has passed.

l. If there is a change in a young persons' medical needs, this information must always be shared by email through the school office.

Phone calls:

School office: 0121 472 0876

m. If a query or concern is time sensitive and urgent the parent/carer should call the school office, who will liaise as necessary at the earliest opportunity. Teaching and leadership staff may not be available to receive calls due to teaching and other commitments, but they will address the message left as soon as practically possible.
n. If the query or concern is not time sensitive and urgent then parents should email or call the school office and the relevant member of staff will aim to contact them within 2 working days. If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will respond to schedule a phone call at a convenient time.
o. For general enquiries, please call or email the school office.
p. The medical team will call and or text parents if their young person presents as unwell during the school day.
q. Parents/Carers are expected to call or email the school office before 9.00am if their young person is absent.
r. We will call parents if their young person has had a head injury, even if minor.
s. The headteacher will call parents if their young person is admitted to hospital.
t. When a member of staff makes a phone call home and is unable to speak to the recipient a short message will be left and the staff member will clearly leave their name.

Social Media and Online Platforms:

u. The school will not respond to concerns raised via social media.
v. Should the school be made aware of any physical threats or abusive behaviour towards staff members or students on roll at our school on social

media, then the school will consider reporting this to the Police and seeking the removal of this content from the site.

School calendar:

We use the school calendar on the website to communicate with parents/carers about upcoming events. Where possible, we try to give parents/carers at least 2 weeks' notice of any events or special occasions (including non-uniform days, special assemblies or visitors, or requests for students to bring in special items or materials).

Reports:

Parents and carers receive reports from the school about their young persons' learning, progression and attendance.
This cycle includes:

w. a full written report for year 11 and 13 and a progression only update for years 7-10, 12 and 14 prior to the February half term.
x. A full written report for years 7-10, 12 and 14 and a progression only update for years 11 and 13 prior to the end of the summer term.

School website:

Key information about the school is posted on our website, including:

y. School times and term dates
z. Notable events and announcements
aa. Curriculum information
bb. Important policies and procedures
cc. Important contact information
dd. Information about Wrap Around clubs

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

Inclusion:

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school.

Parents who need help communicating with the school can request the following support:

ee. Interpreters for meetings or phone calls

ff. All messages to be sent by email rather than phone call to allow parents to translate the written words – this is by request

gg. Support to access and use translation tools

hh. Key policies for parents recorded for ease of understanding.

Appendix 1 – Contact Selly Oak Trust School on a page:

If you need to contact us…

ii. To report your child, absent please phone 0121 472 0876 and leave a message on the answer machine as early as possible in the morning.

jj. If your query is urgent or you need to speak to a member of staff urgently please phone 0121 472 0876 or email enquiry@sellyoak.bham.sch.uk

kk. If you have a safeguarding concern during school holidays, contact our safeguarding team on DLS@sellyoak.bham.sch.uk

ll. If the query is better sent to a form tutor or specific member of staff, then please use the email address provided by that contact.

mm. We will aim to respond to you within 2 working days. Should your query require longer than this you will be called and informed that more time is required.

nn. Please use your blue home to school book for any non-urgent day-to-day class/education queries.

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i. Interpreters for meetings or phone calls

ii. All messages to be sent by email rather than phone call to allow parents to translate the written words – this is by request