

Policy Document**COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS AND STUDENTS POLICY****RATIONALE**

Communication between parents/carers and the Academy plays a key part in the development, both academic and personal, of each child as they progress through the Academy.

Stanchester Academy recognises the importance of clear and effective communications with all stakeholders (students and parent/carers, governors, Local Authority, outside agencies, national bodies etc.) and is committed to being open and accessible for all who have an interest in the Academy. The key stakeholders for a Academy are parents and students and this policy addresses the main ways in which the Academy ensures effective two-way communication between home and the Academy.

We continually review our current communication processes taking account of students, parent/carers and staff feedback, whilst also considering the formats available to communicate through, from one to one conversation to newsletters, from paper based to email and the internet.

Effective telephone or other communication can sometimes be a problem in an Academy, where teachers may be teaching full-time and running clubs or otherwise working with students at lunchtime or after-school. Parents may be disappointed if they feel that a message elicits no immediate reply, when, in fact, there has been no available opportunity for the member of staff to reach a telephone to return a call.

For this reason the Academy has been particularly proactive in encouraging use of modern communication methods, with Pastoral Co-ordinator's telephone contact numbers being published regularly in newsletters and all parents/carers being encouraged to give an e-mail address and telephone number for prompt and effective communication. We have introduced a new, user friendly, communications leaflet to assist stakeholders in finding the most satisfactory solution to a communication issue. This policy aims to clarify the parameters within which we operate to ensure that communication is carried out with all stakeholders and interested parties effectively and clearly

AIMS OF THE POLICY:

Ensure all stakeholders involved with the Academy have a robust, efficient two way communication/consultation framework.

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Communication between the Academy and parents operates in the following ways:

1. Prospective parents are invited to an Open Evening in the early part of term 1 preceding the year of entry to the Academy. All prospective parents receive an Academy prospectus with details of examination results, as well as a chance to discuss issues with the Principal, SLT, Governors and other staff.
2. Year 6 parents are invited, along with students, to a family interview in the summer term and an induction evening in July where the main channels of communication are outlined and information about the Academy is presented.
3. There are round robins (quick staff commentaries on students) and follow up phone calls by tutors home near the start and end of the academic year.
4. Parents are invited to attend one full parents' evening each year to review the academic progress of the student, as well as another meeting between the tutor and parents in term 1 to review the progress made to date.
5. The Student Planner is used as another vehicle for communication between parents and the Academy. This planner is fully explained at the family interview for new parents and to all students as they start at the Academy. The planner is monitored on a weekly basis by both parents and the student's form tutor.
6. Communication about student progress takes place formally each term for each student; through a Progress Check (which reflects "snapshot" progress towards targets, effort, behaviour, etc.).
7. Early telephone contact by Academy staff to make parents aware of concerns about behaviour or attendance as part of the Positive Behaviour Policy and Attendance Policy.
8. The Academy website is a key vehicle for communicating information concerning the Academy to parents/carers.
9. The Academy continues to have all newsletters, events and key information on an up to date website.
10. Key information is available via the new Academy App which stakeholders can download onto their digital devices.
11. Queries about events at the Academy may be made by letter, phone to the Academy or by e-mail.
12. The Academy also has a texting service to improve communication further in the future.
13. The Academy has published the following service standards to ensure a prompt response for communication requests by parents. These standards are reviewed on an annual basis by the Academy's governors.

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SERVICE STANDARDS AT STANCHESTER ACADEMY

Responding to parents – any written requests for information and requests for references or progress are responded to within 5 working days with an acknowledgement within 48 hours (term-time only). Telephone requests are responded to within 48 hours.

Concerns Procedure

Pastoral concerns should be addressed to the appropriate Pastoral Co-ordinator in the first instance, who will forward this onto the appropriate member of staff.

Subject concerns should be addressed to the Head of Department, who will then forward this onto the appropriate member of staff.

Concerns may be raised either via e-mail, letter, or phone call.

- All communications made to Academy (within the working week and term time) will be responded to in the first instance within 48 hours. If necessary, there will then be a follow up communication within five working days.

There is a system in place for monitoring the nature of complaints at the Academy in order to identify trends and address any recurring issues.

See Appendix A

CONSULTATION

Consultation between the Academy, parents and students operates in a number of ways:

1. Questionnaires are issued to parents on a range of issues and through a variety of means (hard copy, through electronic surveys, e-mail). They may be distributed at specific parental events (e.g. Parents' Evenings, Parents' Information Evenings, or letters home to parents (via students). They are also on the Academy website.
2. The consultation process via questionnaires addresses key service areas such as the Academy curriculum, changes to the timings of the Academy day, uniform, home learning, the Academy's reporting system, primary Academy transition, etc.
3. Comment slips are available in the Academy's reception area so that parents and visitors to the Academy may make suggestions for improving the service.
4. The Student Council is consulted on a range of key issues relating to the Academy. Meetings take place at least every half-term, with additional meetings for specific issues. Students are encouraged to be constructive about how the Academy can improve provision through the School Council.
5. Members of the Leadership Team undertake 'Learning Walks' regularly and discuss learning with students as part of this exercise.

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6. As part of the Academy's system of Self Review, students are involved in giving feedback to review the teaching and learning within departments and contribute their own thoughts on departmental strengths and areas for development.
7. Consultation between external agencies take place with a view to improving the service provided by the Academy.
8. The HUB works closely with individual students, parents/carers and external experts and meetings are held frequently to discuss best practice and provision for individuals and groups.
9. Ham Hill Federation meets half termly, to develop cross phase communication with our partner primary schools and their students/parents.
10. There are regular Key Stage reviews – where students are invited to communicate to SLT on a range of issues.

Impact on work life balance

This Policy has no significant impact on the workload of staff as the requirements are within professional expectations.

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Appendix A

**Guidelines for staff communicating with parents.**

In order to effectively communicate with parents/carers we must be clear on what it is we are communicating and the reason we are communicating it. Staff should respond in a positive manner, being clear with any information they receive, or have to deliver. The table below gives some guidance as to how/when staff should respond to a parental communication – time suggestions are maximum allowable – always try to respond quicker if possible:

Further clarification can be found in the Academy's "communication with parents" policy

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