



Marketing and Communications Policy

Responsible officer: S. Morrison/I
Warnock

Principal: R Denial

Ratified By: Governing Body

Review frequency: Annual

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Next Review Date: 31 July 2014

Ratified: 27 September 2013

Aim:

To have clear and effective communication among staff and with pupils, parents, governors and members of the wider academy community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the academy community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

Objectives:

All communications should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents and other stakeholders well informed
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional
- Use jargon free English and be easily understood by all
- Be actioned within a reasonable time
- Use the method of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, method and audience
- Take account of relevant academy policies e.g. Equal Opportunities

Communication with colleagues

Meetings

There is a programme of meetings set out on the academy calendar. All formal meetings should be minuted and members invited to contribute to the agenda. It is important that time is set aside for structured opportunities for staff to engage in team working and to contribute to the department's reflection on priorities, activities and future plans. For all formal meetings, notes should be taken, action points progressed and feedback given to staff. Minutes of meeting should be filed in the departments 'Good Book', and copied to relevant staff.

E-mail

The academy gives all staff their own email account to use for all academy business. Email can be an efficient way of communicating with colleagues and passing on information, however, it should not be used as a substitute for face to face contact and staff must consider whether it is the best way to communicate in each situation.

Staff should ensure that:

- They check their e-mails at least once a day and respond within one working day when requested to do so if only to acknowledge receipt and indicate a more comprehensive response will be made later (within five working days)
- They do not engage in private/personal correspondence with a student. (This includes texting and Media messaging e.g. MSN Messenger)
- They do not contact pupils, parents or conduct any academy business using personal email addresses
- They do not send chain letters
- They do not embed adverts
- Messages are polite, remain as brief as possible and superfluous phrases should be avoided (e.g. Further to our earlier conversation)

- Sensitive information is sent in attachments rather than in the main body of an email
- All emails should have a suitable subject text and message body
- Messages regarding pupils should be written in a professional manner; as if a parent was expected to read it

Written communications

These are placed in pigeon holes in the staff room, which staff should check on a daily basis. Phone messages taken by office staff will also be placed in pigeon holes except in cases of emergency.

Staff Briefings

Staff Briefings take place at 8.20 on Mondays and Fridays where the week's events and information is shared. Minutes from the briefing are available in the staff shared area. There is also a weekly Bulletin, which is emailed out to staff every Friday.

Staff Handbook

A copy of the Staff Handbook is saved in staff shared area and a hard copy is given to every new member of staff. It is updated at least annually and the updated sections are given to staff. This handbook contains essential information for staff.

Notice boards

Staff notice boards are located in the staff room. These are maintained and updated by relevant staff.

Communication with parents and other important stakeholders

We aim to have clear, effective communications with all parents and the wider community. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values, through keeping parents well informed about academy life. This reinforces the important role that parents play in supporting the academy. Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents, it is appropriate that relationships are professional and parents are addressed in a formal manner.

We aim to make our written communication as accessible and inclusive as possible. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of discrimination. We wish to celebrate the contributions made to our society by all the groups represented in our academy.

Letters

Staff will endeavour to reply to parents' letters as quickly as possible. Letters will be acknowledged in 2 working days and a reply sent within 7 working days. Letters must be approved by a member of the LT before posting. Copies of correspondence with parents will be placed on student files.

E-Mail

Email is a quick, effective way of communicating information however it does not replace face to face meetings where some discussion is required. All e-mail should be treated as

letters and should be checked carefully. Staff should acknowledge e-mail as they would a letter, within one working day if only to acknowledge receipt and indicate a more comprehensive response will be made later (within five working days). E-mail sent should be written carefully, in the same way as a letter written on academy headed paper. Staff sending emails to external organisations, parents or pupils must cc. their line manager or member of the LT in the first instance. Under no circumstances should staff contact pupils, parents or conduct any academy business using personal email addresses.

Telephone calls

Staff should take notes about the content of telephone calls, as they would with meetings with parents. Detailed notes from telephone calls, including main points of discussion and action required/taken should be kept on student files. Staff should log this on Sims using the communication facility.

Meeting with parents

Other than the open meetings for parents with a member of the LT, any parent wishing to meet with a member of staff should contact the academy in advance and request a meeting with the member of staff. This request should be responded to within the usual communications protocols and in a timely manner. Parents should not come to the academy to talk to a member of staff without an appointment. If a parent comes to the academy without a prior appointment, the member of staff may still choose to meet with them, but there is no expectation to do so.

Parents (like all visitors) should report to reception prior to meeting with a member of staff. If the meeting is due to take place outside office hours, separate arrangements can be made. A member of staff may ask for their line manager to accompany them. If a meeting with a parent is taking place outside normal academy hours, the member of staff should try, where possible, to ensure that another colleague is nearby. It is perfectly acceptable to call a meeting to a close in order to allow time for further investigation. Staff should call a meeting to a close in the event of the parent becoming angry or abusive. The member of staff should report such an incident to their line manager and seek further advice. The line manager should either accompany the member of staff to a further meeting with the parent or hold it without the original member of staff present.

Parentmail

We encourage all parents to inform the academy of their current e-mail address, to allow them access to Parentmail, which is a quick and efficient method for the academy to communicate with parents. Those who do not have access to Parentmail will receive a paper copy of any correspondence. Parentmail is used to send out a variety of information, either to a targeted group, or to all parents on Parentmail. The newsletter, information about whole academy events and all letters relevant to the whole academy are sent out to all parents on Parentmail and in addition, some specific communications regarding trips and events are sent out to the relevant groups of parents. We aim to have 100% of parents signed up to Parentmail to facilitate paperless communication.

Social Networking Sites/Blogs etc

Staff will not communicate with parents or pupils via social networking sites or accept them as their “friends”. The exception is networks or blogs set up specifically for the purpose of teaching and learning.

Written reports

Once a year a full written report is sent to parents on their child’s progress in each subject. Each student is also issued with two interim reports per year, which give grades for effort and progress. In addition parents meet their child’s subject teachers once a year, at parents evening. When students have special educational needs or if they are making less than expected progress or experiencing behavioural or disciplinary difficulties, we would expect to meet with parents more regularly.

Academy Prospectus

The academy prospectus contains a range of specified information to give parents a full picture of our provision. This is updated every year. The prospectus information is also available on the academy website.

Academy Website

The academy website provides information about the academy and an opportunity to promote the academy to a wider audience. It also has a regularly updated area for information for current parents

Public Access Documents

Curriculum information, policies and copies of recent letters will be available on the academy website.

Home-academy Communication

All students are issued with a planner. This enables parents to record a wide range of information that they wish to share with the tutor and for teachers to communicate with parents. Most importantly, parents should use planners to check homework and communicate day to day issues with the tutor. Parents and tutors should check and sign the planner at least weekly. A calendar of academy events is available on the website, and is updated on the newsletters and issued to parents. The academy’s newsletter is published weekly and is sent to all parents, it is also available on the academy website. We encourage parents to contact the academy if issues arise regarding their child’s progress or well-being. For everyday issues parents should contact their child’s form tutor. If there are specific subject problems, parents should contact their child’s subject teacher, or the subject leader. For issues that are persistent or serious then parent’s should contact the relevant leadership link. There will be Parent Forums every term to discuss current issues of importance to parents. Meetings are held prior to any residential trip to inform parents of planning, content and arrangements. A meeting for new parents is held in July each year. Additional meetings include a Year 7 Settling in Evening, Year 9 Options Talk, Year 10 GCSE evening, Sixth Form information Evening, Year 12 Higher Education Evening. If a child is absent from the

academy and we have no indication of the reason, the attendance officer will contact a parent on the same day, to find out the reason for the absence.

Communication with other academies and outside agencies

Before joining Year7, students are visited in their primary schools to support their transition.

Child Protection

We are supported and regularly communicate with various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed on ways to meet students' needs to ensure that students can participate fully. Support comes from such services as Educational Welfare, Educational Psychologists, Social Care etc. We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our academy should provide a safe and secure environment. We are the people most in contact with our children, and we are therefore in a unique position to identify and help abused children. So when any member of staff has concerns about a child, these will be passed on to the Child Protection co-ordinator, who may share this information with the Social Services. (See Safeguarding Policy).

Confidentiality

We hold information in our academy and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for a variety of purposes. Information is held for a variety of purposes as stated in the Data Protection Register entry with the Information Commissioners Office. For more details of the information held, the purposes and who information may be passed on to, you should refer to the register entry on the ICO website at:

<http://www.ico.gov.uk/ESDWebPages/DoSearch.asp?reg=5591654>

Related documents:

- Child Protection Policy
- ICT and Email Policy