



Hope Academy

A joint Catholic & Church of England Academy

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS POLICY

Mission Statement:

“A community of learners of all ages from the local area committed to mutual service where all can flourish, be their best and work for the common good to the glory of God and his creation.”

APPROVED			
REVIEW DATE			
SIGNED PRINCIPAL		PRINT NAME	
SIGNED CHAIR OF GOVERNORS		PRINT NAME	

Principle:

Central to this policy is the tenet that, as its most effective, the education of young people is a collaborative enterprise involving teachers, parents and students themselves.

Parents know a great deal about their children; they have particular insights about their strengths, skills, interests, preferences, aspirations, anxieties and difficulties. Accordingly, the importance of meaningful, regular and positive communications between teachers and parents of their students can hardly be overstated – this principle forms the foundation of the Academy's policy on liaison with parents.

Note: The term 'parents' is employed throughout this policy to refer to parents, guardians and other in loco parentis.

Teachers

During a normal academic year, teachers communicate with parents directly or indirectly, by means of:

- Information for parents is included in the student Academy Diaries. This includes details of Academy policies and procedures, contact names, important dates and a copy of the Partnership Agreement. A shortened version of the pastoral policies is included in the Academy prospectus and is presented to the parents of all (prospective) students;
- A range of 'standard' letters either:
 - a) To parents typically regarding parental consultation events, open days, prize giving ceremonies, career forums, changes to the curriculum, educational visits, visiting speakers and Academy or local exhibitions and workshops or;
 - b) To parents of individual students concerning, for instance, achievement and progress, attendance, punctuality, or some commendatory or disciplinary matter;
- 'Personal' letters that address some matter(s) or incidents idiosyncratic to the pupil concerned, the style and manner of which often reflect the close relationship that has developed between the Academy and the parent;
- A comments section and the home/school communication section of the Academy Diary;
- Articles in the Academy's monthly 'Newsletter' to parents et al, in which the work and activities of the Academy are regularly and substantially represented;
- Twice-yearly formal reports that summarise students' achievements and progress over a specific period. One is a half year report distributed prior to the parents' evening and the other is an end of year summative report. **Guidelines for the completion of reports are in another section.**
- That tutors have created opportunities to talk with parents, and to show and explain to them examples of the students' work and activities;
- Academy's parents' evenings, open evenings and information evenings;
- Discussions with an individual pupil's parents, initiated at the request of either parents or the teacher;
- Communicating during certain educational visits, school exhibitions, productions or events.

Parents

To help fulfill their important role in the child's education, and to be informed as possible in any communications or discussion with teachers, parents are requested and encouraged:

- To ensure that their child has (at least) the basic equipment necessary for their proper participation in all lessons;
- To show an interest in, and to ask questions about, the work and activities in which their child is currently engaged at school and/or home;

- Periodically to look at, to ask questions about, and to comment meaningfully on, the child's folder of work;
- To ensure that the child industriously completes any set homework, including, for example, such tasks as collecting information from a library, studying advertisements in a magazine, or watching a particular television programme, as well as more obvious tasks concerned with producing written work;
- To check their child's Academy Diary and make comments for staff if necessary;
- To make every effort to attend the Academy's parents' evenings, open days, and other pertinent events, and when so doing, to make time to discuss their child's work and progress, and to look at some of the work displayed;
- To communicate to the Deputy Head of School, Head of House or to the tutor, any concerns or difficulties, interests or aspirations that are either specific to or that are seriously affecting their child's education.

With regard to this latter point, but also in general, in all of their communications with parents, teachers should strive to be as sensitive as possible, to the needs, apprehensions, and background circumstances of the parent(s) and the pupil. This means, among other important considerations, that in their communications with parents, teachers should:

- Pay attention to the form of address, so as not to exclude or embarrass one parent families, or children being fostered or 'in care';
- Seek to employ a form and tone that is clear, straight forward, appropriately friendly, and not patronising;
- Be sensitive to the known home and family circumstances of a parent and their child(ren), and should exercise caution when those circumstances are not known, e.g. the parents' first language;
- Encourage apprehensive parents to visit the Academy and to contribute as much as possible to their child's education;
- Gain approval from the Deputy Head of School or Senior Leadership staff for all 'original' letters before they are sent.

All parents, students and the Principal (on behalf of the Academy) are asked to sign a 'Partnership Agreement' that sets a co-operative tone for the people concerned. A copy of the agreement is included in the Staff Handbook and in the Academy Diary.

Parents are informed sufficiently in order that they can fully understand the measures the Academy is taking – this is particularly important during the making of a 'contract' or a review meeting. Parents' and students' views are invited and highly valued as a contribution to the process. Parents are always asked to give their consent to consultation with relevant health professionals and other agencies.

Parents are encouraged to discuss any problems or concerns with the Academy and a suitable room will be made available for such meetings. Problems or concerns raised by parents should initially be raised with the pupil's tutor. Most problems can be resolved this way. But if this does not happen, parents may raise concerns with the Head/Deputy of School or senior staff/Principal. After following this line of referral parents can, if still dissatisfied, complain to the governors and later, if they are still dissatisfied, may take their complaint to the Secretary of State.

Confidentiality between parents and the Academy will be paramount and sensitive information will only be shared within the Academy or on a 'need to know' basis. The Academy has the legal obligation to act in accordance with National and Local Authority guidelines in cases of suspected child abuse which must be referred to the Area Officer of Social Services. In the rare cases where such action is necessary the Academy will offer all possible care and support to the student and his/her family.