



SHENFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

COMMUNICATION POLICY

Approved by:	Governing Board	Date: 4-7-24
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1. Introduction and aims

At Shenfield High School we believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/carers has a positive impact on pupils' learning because it:

- › Gives parents/carers the information they need to support their child's 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 child's educational and pastoral needs

We are also aware that as a large organisation of over 1500 students and over 160 staff effective communication is a constant challenge.

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

- › Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers
- › Setting clear standards and expectations 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
- › Ensuring parents understand what constitutes constructive and positive communication

In the following sections, we will use 'parents' to refer to both parents and carers

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- › Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- › Regularly reviewing this policy

2.2 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- › Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's ICT and internet acceptable use policy

- › Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)
- › Demonstrating an understanding that, on occasion, due to the nature of the communication our parents may require a level of sensitivity and compassion during communication

In line with promoting staff wellbeing and helping our staff find a suitable work-life balance, staff may work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond outside of the core school hours, **but they are not expected to do so.**

2.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- › Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times
- › Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance
- › Respond to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- › Checking all communications from the school
- › Demonstrating an understanding that the ability of an individual member of staff to respond to a communication promptly may be governed by their teaching commitment or other commitments such as meetings and training or general workload

Parents should **not expect** staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours (8:30 to 3:15), weekends or during school holidays.

3. How we communicate with parents and carers

The sections below explain how we keep parents up-to-date with their child's education and what is happening in school.

Parents should monitor all of the following regularly to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child.

3.1 Email

We may use email to keep parents informed about the following things:

- › Upcoming school events
- › Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- › School surveys or consultations
- › Curriculum activities or teacher requests
- › Letters about trips and visits
- › Consent forms
- › Our half termly newsletter

3.2 School calendar

Our website includes a full school calendar for the current academic year

Where possible, we try to give parents at least 2 weeks' notice of any events or special occasions (including non-uniform days, special assemblies or visitors, or requests for pupils to bring in special items or materials).

3.3 Telephone calls

Telephone conversations with parents are part of our school's culture and occur on a daily basis. Telephone calls can be initiated by both school and parents.

We may telephone parents in order to

- Commend or praise their child
- Share concerns about the welfare of their child
- Share concerns about the conduct of their child
- Inform them that their child is to receive a sanction

3.4 Reports

Parents receive reports from the school about their child's learning, including:

- An end-of-year report covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, their attitude to their learning and their attendance
- A report on the results of public examinations
- We also arrange parents' meetings where parents can speak to their child's teacher(s) about their achievement and progress (see the section below).

3.5 Parent Meetings

We hold parents' evenings for every year group and the schedule of these is published on the school calendar at the start of the school year. During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum or schemes of work, their child's wellbeing, or any other area of concern.

The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings outside parents' evenings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, wellbeing or conduct.

Parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) will also be invited to additional meetings (one-plan meetings and EHCP reviews) to review their child's progress, needs and provision.

3.6 School website

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

- School times and term dates
- Important events and announcements
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information
- Information about before and after-school provision

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

3.7 Edulink

Edulink is the school's digital platform that is used so that students and parents have up to date information regarding the following;

- Attainment

- > Attitude to learning
- > Progress
- > Homework
- > Celebration points
- > Behaviour points
- > Attendance
- > Parents evening events and appointments
- > Exam dates and seating
- > Timetable

Parents are also able to use Edulink to report their child's absence, update contact details and communicate with the school via the Noticeboard or Forms area.

3.8 Social Media

This is not used as our main method of communicating with parents.

Shenfield High School has an official school X account (formerly Twitter) which will be used on occasion to forward on communications relating to transport, expected return times from fixtures and visits and school closures due to weather.

Social media is primarily used as a means of sharing successes.

4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

4.1 Email

Parents should always email the school, or the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within 48 hours, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 4 working days.

If a query or concern is urgent, and parents need a response sooner than this, they should call the school.

4.2 Phone calls

If parents need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should email the school office and the relevant member of staff will contact them as promptly as possible.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will respond to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure parents have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within 3 days of their request.

If the issue is urgent, parents should call the school office.

4.3 Meetings

If parents would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should contact the member of staff by email or call the school to book an appointment.

We try to agree a meeting time within five working days of the request.

SEND review meetings are organised and coordinated by the SEND administrative assistant. It is important that parents make every effort to attend these.

5. Monitoring and review

The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every two years.

The policy will be approved by the governing board.

6. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- ICT and internet acceptable use
- Complaints
- Parent Code of Conduct

7. Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy that can be found on our website www.shenfield.essex.sch.uk