

Communications Policy

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Purpose

To promote partnerships between the school, parents and carers, pupils and the wider community through efficient and effective communication.

All communication, from all parties, needs to be open, honest, respectful, ethical and professional. Communication also needs to be timely and effective.

Principles

The school uses a number of different methods to maintain effective communication with parent/carers, other schools, the wider community and outside agencies.

Communication on issues that affect the safety and well-being of a pupil will be treated as a priority. The school holds emergency contact details for all pupils and families are asked to notify the school immediately if contact information needs to be revised.

Staff will always seek to establish friendly relationships with parents/carers and they need to ensure relationships are professional and parents/carers will be addressed in a formal manner. Staff are to avoid developing close relationships with parents/carers. The use of a parent, carer or staff member's first name is not appropriate, therefore all communications will be to and from Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Dr etc.

Aims of the Policy

To ensure effective communication and consultation takes place between the school, parents, carers, pupils and other stakeholders, and to ensure that there are robust processes to facilitate this.

Key stakeholders for the school are parents, carers and pupils.

Parents and carers have a role to play in their child's education. The school will make every effort to encourage and make arrangements for parents and carers to contribute to creating a shared view of their child's needs.

The school recognises that engaging and working with parents and carers is a vital key in providing their child with an excellent education. Parents and carers are offered opportunities throughout the year to convey what they expect from and think of school. The school wishes to involve as many parents and carers in their child's education as possible.

The school's aims include the following:

- To make the school as welcoming and inclusive as possible
- Signage will be clear, informative and positive
- All written and telephone enquiries will be dealt with promptly and parents and carers can expect an acknowledgement with 3 working school days

- A variety of forms of communication with parents and carers, for example, telephone contact, email, post and text
- Parents and carers are contacted for positive as well as negative reasons
- Information is given to parents and carers on what pupils will be taught and tips for helping their child will be provided
- Parents and carers will be encouraged to help to support their child's learning at school and at home. Information will be provided in a timely way to enable this support to be effective.

Communication with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are best placed to contact their child's Form Tutor, Year Manager or Key Stage Leader in the first instance. These colleagues will have a good working knowledge of the child and are best placed to provide contextual support. Any communication that is sent through to the Headteacher or to headteacher@kettlethorpe.wakefield.sch.uk will be dealt with, in the first instance, by the Headteacher's PA. All correspondence will be acknowledged, within 3 working school days, and forwarded to the most appropriate school based colleague to deal with in the first instance.

Letters

Staff will always reply to a letter from parents and carers as quickly as possible. A response to acknowledge receipt of a letter will be made by telephone, letter or email within 3 working school days and, if required, responded to within 10 working school days.

The school will keep copies of correspondence on the school's SIMS system and/or in individual pupil files.

Any letters of concern or complaint should be dealt with in accordance with the school's complaints policy and procedure: <https://kettlethorpehigh.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Complaints-procedure.pdf>

Whole school information will be regularly communicated through the Headteacher's newsletters. These will be emailed to families and copies placed on the school's website. They will also be publicised on the school's Facebook and Twitter pages.

Parents and carers are encouraged to provide the school with a current email address for prompt and effective communication. However, if we are unable to obtain a current email address for any parent or carer, communications will be delivered home in hard copy by their child or sent by post.

The current salutations must be used when writing to or emailing parents/carers/partnerships. The use of a parent, carer or staff member's first name is not appropriate, therefore all communications will be to and from, Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Dr etc. and sign off is always full name, Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Dr teacher surname. Any relevant line

manager, teacher, senior teacher, form tutor or support colleague must be copied into letters or emails.

Email

Is a quick, effective way of communicating necessary information and is the school's preferred method of communication. Emails received, will be treated in the same way as letters: acknowledged within 3 working school days and, if required, responded to within 10 working school days.

Emails should be short and clear and the same care and consideration should be given as when sending a letter. Any items longer than a paragraph should be attached in word format as a report or letter.

Parents and carers may wish to contact the school via email for a general enquiry as an alternative to telephone or letter. The school email address is headteacher@kettlethorpe.wakefield.sch.uk

Under no circumstances should staff contact pupils or parents and carers using their own personal email address.

On occasion, to communicate important information, the school will both email and post out communications.

Telephone Calls

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in school, where teachers may be teaching full-time, running clubs or working with pupils at lunchtime or after school. Parents and carers may be frustrated 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.

In a non-emergency, a return call will be made within 3 working school days, with any required follow up action from the request/query/problem being dealt with, if required, within 10 working school days. Staff will make a record of a telephone conversation with a parent/carer on the SIMS call log. Please note the school's telephone system records the time, length, date and telephone number of all calls in/out of school.

Texts

The school will send out automated and bespoke text to parents and carers to promote events and communicate urgent news, for example, an emergency closure of the school. Members of staff will not respond by text to a text message from a parent/carer. Instead, any response should be done using an alternative means of communication such as email or telephone, if appropriate.

Absence

If a child is absent, parents and carers are asked to contact the school as soon as possible on the morning of the absence. Contact can also be made with the school's two attendance officers by use of the Edulink app or calling the school on 01924 251605

Meeting with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers wishing to meet a member of staff must contact the school to make an appointment. This request will be responded to within 3 working school days.

Parents and carers should report to the main school reception prior to meeting with a member of staff. Here they will be signed in and provided with a visitor pass.

Please note, the school is not a public access site and presence on site is at the school's invitation. Arriving unannounced and asking for an immediate appointment will not be possible.

The school has a meeting room in the main reception area. If parents and carers are involved in meetings in other conference rooms or offices, then they will be accompanied there by school based staff.

Staff should call a meeting to a close in the event of the parents or carers becoming angry or abusive. This should be reported immediately to a member of the Senior Leadership Team and/or the Headteacher's PA.

Social Networking

The school has both a Twitter and Facebook account, which are used to provide updates to parents/carers and pupils who wish to subscribe to this. It is not compulsory to do so and therefore any key messages will be relayed through formal school communication.

The school will remove offensive or derogatory comments posted by parents/carers or pupils and will remove those involved from the circulation lists.

Reports and Progress

Parents and carers will receive progress reports throughout the academic year. They will also have an opportunity to meet their child's subject and form tutors at school consultation evenings. Reports will be emailed out and consultation appointments can be booked through the school's Edulink system.

Parents and carers should contact the school if issues arise about their child's progress or well-being. The first point of contact should be the child's form tutor and then the Year Manager.

The school welcomes the presence of any other adult a parent or carer wishes to invite to a school meeting for support, or to act as an interpreter.

On occasion, the school may choose to operate consultation evenings through 'remote' services such as MS teams or Edulink.

Edulink and Class Charts

These platforms are used by the school to provide parent/carer access to pupil behaviour logs and timetables. The school will use these platforms to facilitate meetings and to provide 'live' information and detail as these systems become embedded.

Accessibility

The school will endeavour to make any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary to enable a parent or carer with a disability to participate fully in a meeting or receive and understand a communication. The font size used in letters will be size 11 or larger. Documents printed using a larger font or on coloured paper can usually be provide, and request should be made directly to headteacher@kettlethorpe.wakefield.sch.uk

If a translation of a document is required, in the first instance, parents should access google translate: <https://translate.google.co.uk/>. Key school information can be translated. Please request this through headteacher@kettlethorpe.wakefield.sch.uk

School Website

This is regularly updated and details all school working policies alongside curriculum information, well-being advice and other statutory details. It is used to promote the school to a wider audience.

MS Teams/VLE

Pupils and staff will use both MS Teams and the VLE to support learning in and out of school, on occasion the school may hold virtual meetings with stakeholders.

Communication between Pupils and Staff

Two way communication between pupils and staff is an important aspect of school life. The school welcomes and encourages pupils to engage in conversation with all members of staff within the school. When communicating with a member of staff pupils should:

- Stand in front of the member of staff they are speaking with and make eye contact
- Address the member of staff using their formal name e.g. Mr Smith, never referring to a member of staff by their first name
- Be respectful, do not talk over, raise their voice or walk away before the conversation has ended.

When communicating with pupils, staff should use pupils' names and full names for staff (Mr Surname and Ms/Miss/Mrs Surname) in front of pupils. Try to avoid generic terms of Sir and Miss to convey politeness.

Pupils may also email staff on their school accounts in relation to their learning. All pupils are taught email protocol:

- Complete the subject line
- Use Mr/Miss/Ms/Mrs and surname on salutation
- Use standard English
- Avoid abbreviations
- Sign off with thank you or kind regards.

Correspondence is to remain professional at all times. Staff are never permitted to use personal email accounts when communicating with pupils.

Communication between Kettlethorpe High School Staff

Verbal: Staff are to use first names when communicating with each other, and full names (Mr/Dr/Mrs/Miss/Ms Surname) in front of pupils. Avoid generic terms of Sir and Miss to convey politeness.

Email: Consider whether an email is appropriate when face-to-face communication may be more conducive.

- Avoid exclusive email correspondence without requesting or organising a face-to-face meeting
- Avoid send or reply all, unless necessary
- Line Managers are to be copied in
- Keep emails concise, use standard English and bullet points, if necessary
- Staff to check emails at least twice a day
- Use group emails as appropriate. A number have already been pre-populated
- Please note: Staff should not send emails between 1800hrs and 0700hrs, and never at weekends, unless it is a safeguarding concern. Staff can write emails and store in 'draft' format or arrange for automated release within the acceptable communication hours, as above.

Walkie-talkies are to be used by all staff 'on call' and by the Behaviour Support/Inclusion Team.

Agendas for meetings should be circulated, ideally, at least 5 days in advance. The minutes of meetings to be circulated to all relevant parties within two weeks of the meeting.

Dealing with the Media

If colleagues are asked to speak directly to the media, they are required to inform the Headteacher or the school's Human Resources Manager. This is to assist with liaison and to

ensure information is factual, concise and correct. The school has access to the Wakefield Local Authority team, who can word press releases on the school's behalf.

School Trips, Visits and Activities

The school will endeavour to publish all proposed trip, visits and activities on the school calendar at the start of each academic year. Parents and carers will be notified of trips by letter. Ideally, this will be within 6 weeks of any planned trip, visit or activity.

Occasionally, opportunities arise during the academic year to offer pupils additional trips, visits or activities that were not known or available when the school calendar was published. The school will look to provide adequate time to allow both school and families to plan for such events.

Severe Weather and Emergency Closure

In the event of emergency closure, communication will be made to parents and carers via text or email. Parents and carers will also be able to tune in to local radio, as well as check the school and Wakefield Council website for notifications. In addition, Facebook and Twitter will be used.

Prospective Parents/Carers

The school's prospectus is published on the school's website and hard copies are available by request from headteacher@kettlethorpe.wakefield.sch.uk

Prospective parents/carers and pupils are invited to an open evening at the end of September/early October of the year preceding their child's year of entry to the school. Pupil tours are offered and the school will provide a flavour of what it is like to be a pupil at Kettlethorpe High School.

An induction evening is held every July to which all families of pupils who have been offered a place are invited to attend.

The school is also able to provide 'tours' of the school at other times of the year. Please contact headteacher@kettlethorpe.wakefield.sch.uk

Supporting Parents and Carers of Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The school recognises the importance of positive relationships with parents and carers of all pupils with additional needs. The SEND Code of Practice emphasises the importance of positive, supportive attitude to parents and carers and user-friendly information and procedures. All staff will make every effort to ensure effective communication with parents and carers.

All staff within the school are expected to help parents and carers understand how to contribute effectively to their child's education and will make every effort to ensure that parents and carers understand their rights and responsibilities. All relevant information will be provided in a way for all to understand and respond to.

When pupils who have special education needs are making less than the expected progress, or if they are experiencing behavioural difficulties, we would expect to meet with parents and carers more regularly. Parents and carers are encouraged to communicate immediately where they have a concern about their child's needs being met and should also refer to the school's website. Pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) will have an annual review each academic year.

Communication with Other Schools and Outside Agencies

Prior to pupils joining Year 7, pupils are visited in their primary schools to gain further information about them to help support their transition to Kettlethorpe High School. The school recognises that children have diverse needs, and where required we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals including medical services. These include, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy etc. In addition, the school uses educational psychologists, health professionals and specialists and various welfare focused services, such as educational welfare and the local authority children's services single point of access.

We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm and that their protection is a shared responsibility. The school has to provide a safe and secure environment for all pupils.

The school holds information on all pupils in school and on occasion the school is required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. All personal data is held and processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Investigating Incidents

When investigating an incident involving pupils, school members of staff will interview all pupils and ask them to, or assist them to, complete a written account. The school will only share any information that would identify any pupil in accordance with data protection regulations and legislation.

Mobile Phone Confiscation

Parents/carers will be informed of their child's mobile phone confiscation by text message. This will link to the school's mobile phone policy: <https://kettlethorpehigh.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Mobile-phone-policy.pdf>.

Mobile phones can only be collected between 3.05pm and 4.30pm, Monday to Thursday and 3.05pm to 4.00pm on a Friday, the next school working day. Mobile phones confiscated on a Friday cannot be collected until the following Monday. Staff in school will not be available to meet with, or respond to telephone calls/emails until the mobile phone is collected.

Guiding Principles

The school will not tolerate or accept communication with any stakeholder that is rude, derogatory or offensive in nature or tone. If the school is required to deal with such behaviours, then senior staff and/or a governor will write to inform those involved that the behaviours witnessed are not acceptable and must cease.

Failure to comply could lead to stakeholders having their communication stored or filed without receipt or reply. The school may also use legal channels and/or the school's school based police officer as required. The school does reserve the right to ban and/or remove stakeholders from the school site.

Please contact the school if you do not receive a reply and/or acknowledgement to your communication. This may be because staff are absent from school or the correspondence has been misdirected.

If you require a meeting and/or want the school to specifically comment or provide feedback, do please make this clear in your communication. Otherwise, the school will acknowledge your communication only.

