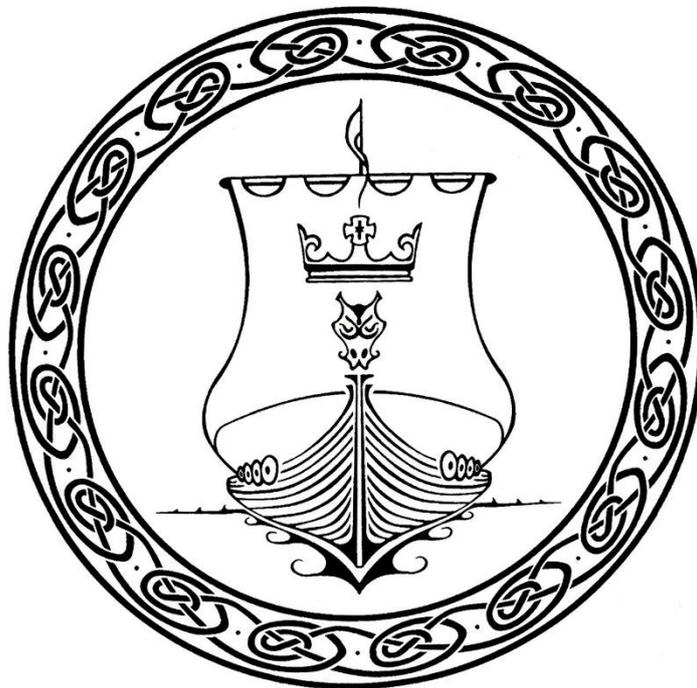




Queen Elizabeth II High School

Communication Policy



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Preamble

To support Queen Elizabeth II High School as a thriving and successful school we must communicate effectively with each other, with our students, with their parents and carers, other schools, the community and with outside agencies..

We need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community and our stake-holders are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

Confidentiality is very important and, under GDPR, personal data should only be shared when necessary, used for the agreed purpose and only kept for the required amount of time in secure conditions.

Definition of communication

Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It involves the management of relationships and the need to involve people. Communication is as much about attitude and behaviour as it is about message. It is a two-way process.

Scope

Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications and needs to recognise that the quality of their communication reflects on the school's reputation. This policy is important for all staff employed at the school, including those employed through shared services.

Aims

Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values and to work effectively together in the interests of our students.

In our school we aim to have clear and effective communications with all parents and with the wider community. We wish to recognise and celebrate the contributions made to our society by all the cultural groups represented in our school.

All communications at Queen Elizabeth II High School should:

- keep staff, students, parents, Governors, and other stakeholders well informed within Data Protection legislation, respecting confidentiality and maintaining professionalism
- be open, honest, ethical and professional, avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of racial or other discrimination
- use jargon free, plain English and be inclusive and easily understood by all
- be actioned within a reasonable time
- use the method of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience
- take account of relevant school and Government policies in particular Equal Opportunities, Acceptable Use Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection, Fairness at Work Policy, Freedom of Information and Data Protection.



Part 1 Internal Methods of Communication

1.1 Staff information

The planners contain information on daily routines and emergency procedures etc. School policies will be kept on the website. There is a staffroom site on Itslearning for internal documents such as notes from staff team meetings, SRE documents etc. The annual calendar is placed on SIMS and on Microsoft Outlook. Key information will be placed on Itslearning. Members of staff are required to read and follow all policies and procedures.

1.2 Meetings

There is an annual planned programme of meetings to facilitate involvement of staff in school review and improvement. The school calendar stipulates the **minimum** standard of frequency of these. Meetings should be used for discussion of policies and developments in learning and teaching. They are the main method by which members of staff are enabled to contribute to school improvement and development. It is important that time is put aside for structured opportunities for staff to engage in team working and to contribute to the team's reflection on priorities, activities and future plans. Calendared meetings are part of the contractual working hours for staff and attendance at them is a requirement. **Leave of absence from such meetings should be applied for in the usual way in advance using the leave of absence form.**

All formal calendared meetings should be structured with an agenda in advance. Members should be invited to contribute to the agenda. Brief notes should be published afterwards on a secure, shared site e.g. Itslearning.

For all other meetings brief notes should be taken, action points progressed and feedback given to staff involved.

1.3 Notice Boards

Staff Notice Boards are located in the Staff Room. Staff duty rotas are posted here. There is an electronic 'noticeboard' on Itslearning.

1.4 Staff Briefings

Staff Briefings take place on a weekly basis, currently on a Friday morning. These are used to communicate sensitive information which it may not be appropriate to email.

Tutor Briefings take place weekly from 8.45-8.55. A half-termly tutor team meeting is also calendared for longer discussions.

If a member of staff is unable to attend the briefing, it is his/her responsibility to find out the information they have missed from the relevant senior leader.

1.5 Itslearning

This is safe and secure and should be used in preference to Googledocs for the sharing of confidential internal documents such as minutes, SRE documents, learning materials, assessment information not on SIMS etc.



1.6 Email

The Acceptable Use Policy and Data Protection legislation include use of email and other electronic communications. **Emails are subject to data protection and FOI requests and the language used should always be professional. Appropriate levels of confidentiality must be observed in sharing confidential information.**

Information and notification of initiatives are communicated through the use of email where appropriate. Email is a quick, effective way of communicating information however it does not replace face to face meetings where some discussion is required.

Staff should check their email at least twice a day but should not use email when they are teaching. They should ensure that email notifications are closed when teaching so alerts do not appear on whiteboards in front of students. Emergency notifications are made using SIMS.

Emails should be deleted as soon as possible and Email should not be used to store documents. Any information which needs to be saved should be saved in an appropriate secure site.

1.7 Written Communications and letters

These are placed in pigeon holes, in the staff room, which staff should check on a daily basis.

1.8 Telephone Calls

Where possible, members of staff should use the internal government network when contacting other colleagues.

1.9 Social Gatherings

The School looks favourably on opportunities to develop professional working relationships and encourages informal gatherings within and outside the organisation in order to build on relationships, develop strong teams and encourage communication.

Part 2 External Methods of Communication

2.1 Communications with Parents/Carers

Good communication between the school and the home is essential, and children achieve more when schools and parents work together. Parents can naturally help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve. Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional. To this end parents will always be addressed in a formal manner (i.e. Mr/Mrs) and staff will avoid developing close friendships with parents. Where such friendships exist, staff must distinguish between their private and professional conversations. School matters should not be discussed with parents unless required for professional purposes. **Extreme care must be taken not to breach data protection regulations.**

If a child is absent from school, and we have had no indication of the reason, a member of the admin team will contact a parent to find out the reason for the absence. Tutors will follow up absence issues.



2.1.1 School Prospectus and general information

The school prospectus contains a range of information to give parents a full picture of provision at our school. This is updated every 2 to 3 years. Other information is on the website.

2.1.2 The School Website

The school website provides information about the school, including major school policies, and an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience. Curriculum Handbooks and other documents are updated on an annual basis and published on the website. It also has areas for information for parents and students. An increasing amount of information is being placed on the website and members of staff are encouraged to use it and contribute to its development. With FOI, the more information we share openly, the fewer requests we should have to manage.

2.1.3 Newsletter

The School's Newsletter is published on a termly basis on the school website and an email alert sent to parents. The newsletter will promote School successes and will incorporate news relevant to the School. Members of staff are encouraged to contribute appropriate items to the newsletter which should be emailed to Mrs Ferns.

We send other letters of a general nature when necessary and store copies on the school's website.

2.1.4 Social Networking Sites/Facebook, Twitter etc.

The Acceptable Use Policy and Government Electronic Communications and Social media Policy must be followed. Members of staff must ensure that any activity on social networks is such that the individual's and school's reputation is not at risk. Misuse of social media can be considered gross misconduct.

Social media should not be used to communicate with individual students or parents directly.

The school Facebook page is used to celebrate events and achievements and publish notices. It is monitored daily. Any information for students and parents **must** go through the official school Facebook site or website.

If a department requires its own site for specific educational reasons, this must be approved by the Head and there must be a designated person responsible for monitoring the site and ensuring there are no breaches of policy. The admin team keeps a record of students for whom approval is given for photographs etc to be shared.

ItsLearning and Google platforms can be used to support teaching and learning. Class lists/groups etc. should be updated at least annually to remove any obsolete groups and student details.

2.1.5 Planners

Students in all years have a student planner with key information such as uniform, the code of conduct and times of the day. Parents can use it to record a wide range of information that they wish to share regularly with the teacher. Students use the planner or contact book to record homework assignments. The planner is signed weekly by the parent and the tutor.



2.1.6 Letters

Staff will endeavour to reply to parents' letters as quickly as possible. Letters to parents must be sent through "Typing". Copies of all correspondence with parents will be placed on student files. Any letter of complaint should be referred to the Headteacher.

2.1.7 E mail/InTouch

Parents are increasingly using e mail as a method of communicating with staff. All emails should be sent to: qe2enquiries@sch.im or InTouch

Staff should not communicate directly with parents via their own email. Staff will respond through qe2enquiries@sch.im or InTouch. This is for data protection reasons.

A copy of any email sent to a parent or received by staff from a parent will be logged on the student's SIMS file by the admin team.

2.1.8 Telephone calls

Staff will endeavour to respond to parents' phone messages within 24 hours. **Any call to a parent should be logged on SIMS as an intervention with the date, names of those involved and a brief note of the main issues and agreed outcomes.**

Office staff should not put calls straight through to extension numbers but should first ask if the person is available to answer the call. Teachers should not take calls when they are teaching.

2.1.9 Written Reports

Once a year a full written report is provided for each student's parents on progress in each subject. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development.

Each student also has one Progress Report per year which gives grades for attitude to learning and progress.

2.1.10 Meetings

We arrange various meetings for parents throughout the year. Records should be kept of meetings about specific issues for individual children and attached to the file on SIMS. Similarly, significant conversations with students should be recorded as interventions on SIMS so that tutors and DKS are aware of any issues/incidents.

Meetings are held prior to any residential trip to inform parents of planning, content and arrangements.

A meeting for new parents is organised each June/July. Additional meetings include the 14 – 19 Information Evening, held annually.

Parents are invited to meet teaching staff of their child once during the year for consultation at Parents' Evening. This gives them the opportunity to celebrate their child's successes, and to support their child in areas where there is a particular need for improvement. In some years there is also a parent/tutor meeting for the parent to meet with the form tutor. These meetings are useful for two-way communication between parents and the school.



We encourage parents to contact the school if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being. **Parents should always make an appointment in advance** for a meeting as staff will be engaged in teaching and other activities and cannot be available at no notice.

When children have special educational needs, or if they are making less than the expected progress, we find it helpful to meet with parents more regularly.

2.1.11 Surveys and questionnaires

Feedback from parents and students will be obtained regularly through questionnaires and surveys. SurveyMonkey is a useful tool for this. Parents' evenings provide good opportunities for obtaining feedback in addition to electronic surveys via the website. The Student Council is consulted on significant school policies e.g. behaviour and anti-bullying.

2.2 Communication with other schools and outside agencies

We hold personal information on students in our school, and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes or to ensure children's safety.

The GDPR will be followed. **Staff should not share personal information about students with other parties unless they are sure that this data sharing is within the law and government policy and it has the Head's approval.**

Students who attend post-16 classes as part of collaboration are regarded as part of our establishment and communication about their learning and attendance should be shared with the relevant school and the students' parents.

Each year, parents are asked to sign a Data Collection sheet which details why information is collected and how information may be shared.

Liaison with partner Primary schools is very important to ensure continuity of learning and a smooth transition to secondary school. Prior to students joining Year 7, they are visited in their primary schools to help and support their transition to Queen Elizabeth II High School.

We recognise that children have diverse needs, and we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed on better ways to meet these needs, so that children may participate more fully.

Support comes from medical services (such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy), from Educational Psychologists, from health professionals and specialists. It also comes from Police, Social Services and Child Protection Units.

We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our school should provide a safe and secure environment. We are the people most in contact with our students, 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 Officer, who may share this information with the Social Services and/or the Police. Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures will be followed.

Any confidential information relating to Child Protection will be kept in a secure cabinet in the Head's office. Members of staff must make sure that any such documents, whether electronic or hard copies, are kept secure and either deleted/shredded or filed in the designated cabinet.

Updated September 2019
S. Moore

Date of Last Review: September 2019 by Ms Moore
Date of Next Review: January 2021