

COMMUNICATION POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

Within this policy, 'we', 'us' and 'the Federation' refers to The Rutland and District Schools' Federation which comprises of Catmose Primary, Catmose College and Harington School.

In the following sections, we will use 'parents' to refer to parents, guardians, carers and anyone else who contacts us.

We aim to offer a high standard of communication to our community. When you have any contact with us you can expect our staff to be friendly, polite and helpful. We ask the same of our community.

We believe that clear, open communication has a positive impact on students' learning because it:

- Gives parents the information they need to support their child's education.
- Helps us to improve, through feedback and consultation with parents.
- Builds trust between home and each setting, which helps us better support each child's educational and pastoral needs.

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

- Explaining how we communicate with parents.
- Setting clear standards and expectations for responding to communication from parents.
- Helping parents reach the member of staff or team who is best placed to address their specific query or concern so they can get a response as quickly as possible.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Senior Leaders

Senior Leaders are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with parents is effective, timely and appropriate.
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy.
- Regularly reviewing this policy.

2.2 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this 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).

Staff will aim to respond to communication during core hours, or their working hours (if they work reduced hours). In line with promoting staff wellbeing and helping staff find a suitable work-life balance, staff may work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond outside of core hours, however, they are not expected to do so.

The reception desks at each of our settings are manned in term time during the following hours:

- Catmose Primary - Monday to Friday 8.30am – 4.30pm
- Catmose College - Monday to Thursday 8am - 5pm, Friday 8am - 4pm
- Harington School – Monday to Thursday 8am - 5pm, Friday 8am – 4.30pm

2.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the Federation is respectful at all times.
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance, if unsure, please email office@catmoseprimary.com, office@catmosecollege.com or office@haringtonschool.com so that we can direct the query appropriately.
- Respond to communications from the Federation (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner.
- Checking all communications from the Federation.
- In order for you to receive communications from us, it is necessary that the contact details we hold for you on our system are correct. If any of your details change over the course of your child being at any of the settings, please update us at the earliest

opportunity; you may email the relevant office as outlined above or send an Xpression.

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated seriously. Staff who are concerned about a parent's conduct will end the call/meeting and report their concerns to a senior leader.

Parents should not expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core hours (as outlined above), or during school holidays.

3. OUR STANDARDS

3.1 If you contact us in writing, for example, by letter, email or Xpressions:

- You may receive an automatic reply outlining when you can expect a response.
- A member of staff will take responsibility for your enquiry.
- We are unable to respond to comments or messages on social media as these are public sites. The best way to contact us is by using the relevant email address (see section 2.3).
- If we cannot reply within five working days, we will let you know who is dealing with your enquiry and when you can expect a full response.
- Holidays and weekends are not classed as working days for the purpose of this policy.
- If staff are out of office, an auto-reply email will be used to indicate this and when they will be returning. If the matter is urgent, please email the relevant office email address (see section 2.3) so that a different member of the relevant team can be asked to respond.

3.2 If you contact us by telephone:

- During office hours (see 2.2 for details), we will endeavour to answer your call promptly (during busy periods you may be held in a queue).
- Upon answering, we will tell you where you have called and the name of the person with whom you are speaking.
- During term time, if your call cannot be answered, voicemail facilities should be available for you to leave a message.
- If you leave a message, a member of the administrative team will return your call within one working day.
- It is unlikely that a specific member of staff will be immediately available to answer your query but it will be passed to them so that they (or another better placed colleague) will respond within five working days.

4. HOW THE FEDERATION KEEPS PARENTS UP-TO-DATE WITH THEIR CHILD'S EDUCATION AND WHAT IS HAPPENING IN SCHOOL/COLLEGE

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

4.1 Email and Xpressions

We use these to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events, trips, etc
- Behavioural expectations
- Progress evenings and reports
- College surveys or consultations
- Attendance concerns
- Catch ups
- Job vacancies at the Federation.

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. Any such event will be included in the relevant calendar, accessible via the website for that setting.

4.2 Phone calls

On occasion staff will phone parents to discuss issues such as behaviour, attendance and the progress of their child.

4.3 Letters

We send the following letters home regularly:

- Commendations
- Attendance concerns
- Behaviour concerns

4.4 Meetings

We hold several progress evenings per academic 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. You will be notified in advance of these evenings and how to book appointments.

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

We will always communicate with parents, either by telephone or in writing, if there is a need to meet, so that you have time to prepare for the meeting and know its purpose. If you are unable to make the initial date or time of a meeting, we will offer an alternative and try to accommodate reasonable requests within the working day. If there is information that needs to be discussed when we meet this will be shared with you in advance of the meeting so that you have time to consider and respond to it. If you have information you wish us to consider in the meeting please also share this at least two working days in advance.

Parents of students with special educational needs (SEN), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these additional needs.

4.5 Reports

Parents receive reports from the relevant setting about their child's learning, including key assessments, checkpoints and tutor reports. Reports can be accessed via Edulink for each setting.

4.6 Federation websites

The websites provide information such as:

- Term dates
- Curriculum information
- Policies and statutory information
- How to make contact
- Admissions information

4.7 Groupcall Xpressions

We send the vast majority of communication home via email and app notifications. Groupcall Xpressions allows parents to receive notifications regarding crucial information, whole-school notifications and messages which are relevant to you and your child.

4.8 Social media

Social media is used to celebrate the success and achievements of our students with their involvement in extracurricular activities, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, performing arts and sporting events.

We are unable to respond to comments or queries on social media as these are public sites; any direct questions, comments or concerns should be raised via email to the relevant office@ email address as outlined in section 2.3.

5. HOW PARENTS CAN COMMUNICATE WITH THE FEDERATION

5.1 Email

Parents should always email the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance. If a member of staff does not respond after five working days, your email may have unfortunately been missed. Please therefore email the relevant office and a member of the team will ensure it is passed on and actioned.

5.2 Phone calls

Parents should call the relevant Academy if an urgent issue arises. Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

5.3 Requests for face-to-face meetings

- Speaking with parents (and other members of our community) is an important part of building positive relationships that help ensure students are supported to do their best.

- If you need to meet with a member of staff, please email them directly or, if you are unsure how to contact them, use the office email address outlining the reason why you would like to meet and the outcome you are seeking as a result of the meeting. We try to schedule all meetings within ten working days of the request with either the member of staff you request, or an alternative who is able to manage your query. If that is not possible, we will advise accordingly. If you are unable to make the initial date or time of a meeting, we will offer an alternative and try to accommodate reasonable requests within the working School/College day.
- Please do not come directly to our premises and demand to meet a specific member of staff; this will not be possible due to their existing commitments and the need for them to have had an opportunity to look into your concerns before responding to them.
- When meeting with staff please remain courteous, avoid raising your voice and allow staff to respond to your query or concerns. Staff will do the same. If a colleague is concerned about your conduct they will end the meeting and respond in writing to you.

5.4 Groupcall Xpressions

This tool can be used for the following:

- Reporting a student absence
- General enquiries
- Responding to forms concerning trips, parental consent, etc
- It also allows you to send messages directly to us, which is more convenient for you.

6. INCLUSION

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the Federation. Parents who need help communicating with us can request the following support:

- Announcements and communications translated into additional languages.
- Interpreters for meetings or phone calls.

7. FEEDBACK

Feedback about our service is important to us. By receiving feedback, we can develop and improve the quality of our provision. We need to know about any dissatisfaction or complaints you might have, so that we can resolve any problems and provide a more effective service. Each year we conduct a survey with all members of our community and use this feedback to guide our strategic improvement planning.

If you are unhappy with the service you receive, please read the Federation Complaints Policy which is available from our website: <http://rutlandfederation.com/policies/>

8. MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Executive Principal monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every year. The policy will be approved by the Trust.