

Communication Policy and Protocols



Undershaw

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Communications Policy and Protocols

Part One

Introduction

We want to make Undershaw as welcoming and inclusive as possible. We recognise that engaging and working with parents/carers is a vital key in providing our students with an excellent education. Strong and effective communication is an essential part of this.

Aims of the policy and protocols

The aims of this policy and set of protocols is to ensure that effective communication takes place between the school, parents, carers, pupils and other stakeholders; that there are clear procedures to facilitate this and that these procedures are recognised and used by all parties. Our ambition is for all interactions between the school and stakeholders to be driven by a culture of collaborative consultation and kindness that lies at the heart of all our communication.

Undershaw uses a variety of communication methods including:

- Opportunities for face-to-face meetings – both informal and formal
- Teams calls
- Telephone calls
- Letters
- Newsletters
- News on the website
- Emails

Our preferred channel of communication is always to offer a face-to-face meeting, but we recognise that this is not always practicable and that, more often than not, communication will be made using a different method. Regardless of the method of communication our staff will always behave professionally and courteously and reply in a timely manner. In return we ask that parents/carers please do the same.

3. Letters

3.1 General letters

Staff will always reply to a letter from a parent/carer as quickly as possible. A response to acknowledge receipt of the letter will be made by the member of staff, or their representative, by telephone, or by email **within 2 working days and the letter will be responded to within 10 working days.**

It is acceptable for parents/carers to address staff by their first name and equally, in line with our normal practice, all correspondence from the school will also address parents/carers by their first names unless we are requested not to.

3.2 Letters of complaint

Any letters of concern or complaint should be dealt with in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy – available on the school website.

All letters should be written in a way that is respectful and kind to the receiver.

4. E-mail

E-mail is a quick, effective way of communicating necessary information. Because of this, any **email received will be acknowledged within 24 hours of its receipt and responded to within 5 working days.**

Emails should be short and clear and the same care and consideration should be given as when sending a letter. They should follow the same protocols for salutations as those for letters.

Any items longer than a paragraph should be attached in word format.

The sending of, and replying to, non-urgent emails should be restricted to after 8.00 a.m. and before 6.00 p.m. during the working week. Staff are not expected to respond to any email communications that fall outside of these times. Emails should instead be saved as drafts or set to delayed delivery and sent during work hours.

Parents/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: hello@undershaw.education

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

5. Telephone Calls

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

Parents/carers may be frustrated if they feel that a message elicits no immediate reply, when sometimes 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 2 working days, with any follow up action from the request /query/problem being dealt with within 10 working days.**

Staff will always keep a record of a telephone conversation with a parent/carer on SIMS using the Communication Log feature.

6. Meeting with Parents and carers

Parents and carers wishing to meet a member of staff should contact the school to make an appointment and explain the reason for the meeting. **This request should be responded to within 2 working days.** Staff are very busy during the working day teaching, planning lessons, running enrichment activities or after school homework club and attending meetings. Please do not ask to see a member of staff without an appointment.

When coming into the school to meet with a member of staff or collect your child, please remain calm, kind and respectful at all times.

7. Use of social media (eg WhatsApp; Facebook)

The use of WhatsApp, Facebook or other social media groups can provide a useful informal source of support and information for parents/carers. However, it is important that the same protocols govern them as other channels of communication. Respect and kindness.

If a parent/carer has any concerns about the school or a member of staff the concern should always be directed back to the school rather than posting on social media which can be very damaging for the school and individuals. We would very much like the opportunity to discuss and deal with any concerns that you have.

8. Other policies

This Communication Policy and Protocols document should be read in conjunction with the school's Complaints Policy.

Part Two

1. Information Sharing

1.1 Weekly Headteacher's Letter

We understand how important it is for parents/carers to feel informed about what is happening at the school on a regular basis. The weekly letter from the headteacher provides an opportunity for us to capture some of the highlights of what has been happening at the school but will also notify, in advance, of what can be expected during the following week.

The headteacher's letter is organised around key headings to help parents/carers find the information most relevant to them. This is shared by email.

1.2 Parent Pods

Parent Pods are informal gatherings of parents/carers with the Headteacher and members of the SLT organised throughout the year and focus on a very specific matter such as options; assessment, exam arrangements; transition support etc.

As far as practicable they are held at a time that suits the school and the majority of parents/carers and organised in such a way as to make the process more of a dialogue – although there may be some element of information sharing through presentations.

Parent Pods can also be organised on an ad hoc basis at times when the school would like to draw on parental/carer views on any new proposed developments or changes.

In either case, parent Pods will always allow for a question-and-answer session. They are followed up with a brief summary document to capture key points made/agreed which is available electronically.

1.3 Parent-Teacher Association

The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) represents a partnership between parents/carers and the school, and is a valuable way to share ideas, views, feedback and to make suggestions for improvement.

The core team comprises parents, teachers, and support staff from around the school as well as members from the leadership team. The PTA will support all communication initiatives run by the school as well as providing a parent voice to the leadership team.

The PTA team will meet on a termly basis. The meeting minutes and actions will be shared electronically. Any parents or teachers wishing to contribute will be welcomed.

Part Three

Appendix

To whom should my query or concern be addressed?

Your first point of contact should be your child's tutor or class teacher.

If your query or concern relates to something **academic or relating to the curriculum** the best person to contact would be Vic Walker - Deputy Head Academic
victoria.walker@undershaw.education

If your query or concern relates to something **pastoral or your child's health or well-being** the best person to contact would be Gemma Briggs – Deputy Head Pastoral
gemma.briggs@undershaw.education

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