



High Storrs School

Communications Principles

Last Reviewed: April 2018

By: Judith Vaughan

Next Review: April 2021

Minor amendments: May 2019

Communication

Positive communication between school and home and also school and the local community are vitally important. We communicate regularly with all parents/carers in a multitude of ways including letters, text messages, tweets, the school website, the MLE, regular Progress Trackers, Parents' Evenings, and our regular email sharing the week's letters. If there are issues or concerns or indeed we wish to share good news we also phone parents and send more specific texts, letters, postcards and emails. We also meet many parents and carers face to face. Parents/carers and members of the local community are invited to phone and email the school as needed.

We are always keen to discuss any concerns with parents/carers and members of the local community. If, at any time, you have any concerns, then please do not hesitate to contact the school and, if necessary, make an appointment to see relevant staff members to discuss any issue. We believe very strongly in working closely with all our community and would hope that if there are any areas of grievance then a discussion with school is the best way forward. Therefore we would recommend that any concerns or issues are not discussed on social media sites as this could be potentially damaging for the school and pupils.

Keeping channels of communication open are key to supporting young people and we hope these principles clarify the importance of positive communication.

- All members of High Storrs School will communicate appropriately, professionally and in a timely way with parents/carers and members of the community. We will endeavour to answer their questions and address their concerns and most importantly work in partnership to ensure all students achieve all that they can.
- Parents/carers and members of the local community should always communicate with High Storrs staff in a respectful and appropriate way. This includes conversations when visiting the school, emails and letters.

If parents/carers have concerns or questions that they do not feel have been fully answered or addressed they have recourse to the Complaints Policy. This policy can be found on the school website and can also be obtained on request by phoning or emailing the school office.

Equally, colleagues in school have the right to appropriate and respectful treatment. If parents/careers do not treat colleagues in school in this way we will implement the 'Vexatious Communication Procedure' set out below.

Communication within High Storrs School and between High Storrs School and parents/carers or the local community should always be,

- Courteous, professional and appropriate
- Timely - We aim to respond to any communication by sending a holding reply within two working days and a full response within 5 working days of receipt.*
- Measured - If, for example, an email exchange goes beyond three emails (and the email exchange is becoming unproductive) the next step is to arrange to speak face to face. There are also some email principles prepared by the Unions to address volume of emails in school.
- Safe – Complying with data protection guidelines.

*Please note there are different timescales in the formal Complaints Procedure.

Vexatious Communication

Vexatious communication includes conversations (face to face or on the phone), letters or emails that are:

- Overly persistent – i.e. continuing to communicate with a colleague even when it has been made clear that they have responded to a complaint and dealt with it. If a complainant is still dissatisfied they have recourse to the next step in the complaints procedure. Our communications principles state that we will aim to set up a meeting in most circumstances if more than three emails are exchanged. If this meeting is offered but the complainant does not wish to meet then colleagues in school will politely end the communication.
- Inappropriate in manner – i.e. when pejorative, mean spirited, personal or inappropriate comments are made.
- Threatening – i.e. direct or indirect threats about what might be done or they would like to do. This may be threats of a physical nature or to do with what they will say to or about a colleague or the school. It may also include speaking to colleagues in an unpleasant or bullying manner or using abusive or threatening language.
- Prolific – prolific correspondence or excessive email or telephone contact about a concern or complaint

School procedure for dealing with vexatious communication

- Firstly colleagues in school will politely but clearly indicate that the communication is becoming vexatious. If it is a phone call or face to face meeting then they will politely end their side of the conversation. The parent, carer or member of the public will be sent a copy of this policy and asked to refer to it in future communications with school. A record will be made of this. At this stage it may be appropriate to insist that all future communications should be with a school leader (i.e. Subject or Team Leader or a member of the School Leadership Team).
- If vexatious communications continue then a letter of warning will be sent outlining our expectations for positive communications. A meeting with the Headteacher will be arranged to clarify the importance of positive communication.
- Any future reoccurrences will most probably indicate a break down in relationship between the school and the parent, carer or member of the local community. At this point the school may seek legal advice or discuss a school transfer for the benefit of all.

Please note there is also a procedure for dealing with vexatious communication that takes place as part of the complaint process as outlined in the Complaints Procedure.