



COMMUNICATION POLICY

Approval & Review

Author: MTH
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Status of Policy: Key

Reviewed by (Committee):	Governing Body
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Signed: 
(Chair of Governing Body)

Objectives: All communications at Ickniel Community College should:

- keep staff, students, parents, governors and other stakeholders well informed
- be open, honest, ethical and professional
- use jargon free, plain English and be 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
- be compatible with our core values

Internal communications

Staff bulletin Planned events, items of information and notification to all staff should be communicated through the use of the staff bulletin (email to Lisa Best by Thursday 2pm). The staff bulletin will then be circulated every Friday (or the weekend following the Friday). Whole staff information that cannot wait until the next staff bulletin, where possible, should be passed on to the Head's PA for circulation. The bulletin is not the vehicle to share information about individual students. Please can this be sent to Student Action Meetings (SAM) (see page 5 for email addresses).

Email Short items of information and notification should be communicated through the use of targeted emails where possible. Email is a quick effective way of communicating information, however, it does not replace face to face meetings where some discussion is required. To ensure that each member of staff is using email effectively, the following actions should be taken:

- Use email to give information to a targeted individual/group (it is very rare for a message to be relevant to all staff, teaching and non-teaching). The staff bulletin should be used to bring information to the attention of all staff.
- Do not copy in more individuals than absolutely required (particularly in a way which may be perceived to be 'threatening').
- Appropriate language is important in the use of email; emails should be proof-read by the sender in order to check tone and appropriateness.
- Subject lines should be as informative as possible to allow recipients to judge the priority of incoming mail. Flags such as "urgent" should not be used.
- Email should, under most circumstances, be checked once per school day at a time convenient to each staff member.
- Where possible, initial responses to emails should be made within 48 hours of receipt.
- Do not use email to avoid face to face contact; email is not a suitable conduit for discussion, debate or disagreement.
- In rare circumstances, blind copying can be useful and appropriate but please be mindful when doing so.

Please note that an email sent one day may not be received until the day after, and, with a one day response guideline, you may not get a reply until the second day after sending. Please consider other forms of communication if a faster response is required.

Calendar Key dates, events and deadlines are on the school calendar. Any additions, deletions or changes to the calendar should be emailed to Lisa Best so that it can be updated and so that staff may be informed of any changes via the Staff Bulletin.

Individual staff calendars are used to communicate meetings and so that timetables and calendars can be easily shared. Some useful points:

- Items on the calendar can be copied to individual staff calendars by dragging and dropping the item across
- Regular events can be created using the 'recurrence' tab in the arrange appointment section
- A reminder 15 minutes before an appointment will automatically be set up when each appointment is created
- The reminder can be changed or removed in the 'reminder' tab in the arrange appointment section
- Staff can be invited to meetings via the 'Invite Attendees' tab when creating appointments. The meeting will then go into their Outlook calendar too

OneNote There is a lot of important information communicated through the OneNote application. This includes:

- Staff Handbook
- SEN handbook
- Data packs
- Faculty handbooks
- Link meeting minutes and action points

Use of pigeon holes

Staff pigeon holes are the best way of exchanging information as hard copy. Staff should check pigeon holes regularly. Pigeon holes are excellent for circulating information, for giving out forms to which a response is required and for external information.

- Pigeon holes should be checked daily for new items, preferably before school.

Pigeon holes are for exchange of information, not storage, and should be cleared at the end of each day to comply with GDPR guidelines.

Staff briefings and GDPR

Briefings should be used for items which cannot be foreseen **and** which are relevant to the **majority** of staff.

- If you are unable to attend a briefing then you should inform your line manager and check the notes emailed to you.
- Please do not use briefings to give messages that are only relevant to a few people, or to give too much detail (draw attention to where detailed information can be found).

- Please do not use briefings to give information about individual students unless it is urgent. This information should go to SAM (Student Action Meetings) or RAP (Raising Achievement Panel) meetings. Please note this information is confidential and, under GDPR guidelines, should not be left open on computer screens, nor read to or discussed with students. The minutes from these meetings are published in OneNote along with the bulletin and need to be read by all staff. Staff should tick off any actions they have resulting from these meetings in OneNote.
- Staff can send information to the SAM's using the following e-mail addresses :
 - Year 7 SAM ["Yr7sam@icknield.oxon.sch.uk"](mailto:Yr7sam@icknield.oxon.sch.uk)
 - Year 8&9 SAM ["Yr89sam@icknield.oxon.sch.uk"](mailto:Yr89sam@icknield.oxon.sch.uk)
 - KS4 SAM ["KS4sam@icknield.oxon.sch.uk"](mailto:KS4sam@icknield.oxon.sch.uk)

Voicemail

Voicemail can be an effective way to communicate with other staff. This applies to many staff as per the telephone list. If the person you are telephoning does not have a telephone that alerts them to the voicemail message then retrieving the message may take time, so other forms of communication should be considered for urgent or important messages. As a general rule, if someone usually answers their telephone extension, but is not present when you call, then a voicemail is appropriate. If someone does not usually answer telephone calls, or does not have a mailbox, then other forms of communication should be considered.

- Check for voicemail regularly and delete messages when listened to in order to leave room in the mailbox for new messages.
- Retrieve stored mail promptly
- Once a message has been retrieved, an initial response should be made by the end of the following school day.
- When putting a call through, receptionists should state that non-urgent messages can be left on voicemail.
- If you have a planned absence and/or a prolonged absence, please change your message to reflect this
- Voicemail messages can be changed/checked remotely by calling the school number and dialing # before your extension
- All mailboxes should be password protected as you can access voicemail from all school extensions

External Methods of Communication

Schools have many lines of communication to maintain: with parents and carers, other schools, the community and with outside agencies. 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. At ICC, we aim to have clear and effective communications with all parents and with the wider community.

Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values through keeping parents well informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents play in supporting the school. 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 should always be addressed in a formal manner (taking care to include the correct salutation: Mr/Mrs etc). We try to make our written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible.

Letters Staff will endeavour to reply to parents' letters as quickly as possible. Letters to parents must be approved by line managers before forwarding to Finance Office. The process of checking and typing makes letters slower than other forms of communication; if there is likely to be a significant delay then an initial response should be made via email or telephone.

Email Staff should respond as soon as possible and proof read to check tone and appropriateness of their email. Initial responses should be made within 48 hours after receipt. Staff email addresses are published externally via the website.

Website The school website should be used to publish information that parents, carers and other interested parties may find useful. Any letters sent home to groups of students should be forwarded to the Finance Office for inclusion in the "letters home" section of the school website. The website is publicly accessible, so content should be appropriate for a wider audience.

Social Media The school uses social media to share information that is relevant to all parents. All staff should use their line management structures to check the appropriateness of how they use social media.

Newsletter The weekly newsletter is distributed via email. This is distributed externally via Bromcom and the school website. Notices should be written in a manner that takes into account the wider audience.

Telephone calls Staff will check their phone messages regularly and endeavour to respond to parents' phone messages within 48 hours after receipt. Telephone calls to parents should be made during working hours wherever possible

Messages left for parents should be brief and, whenever possible, reassuring. Please always leave your name when leaving messages for parents. We expect staff to communicate with parents in a business-like, professional manner. We expect the same from parents. Any communication from parents that falls below the standard expected should be referred to your line manager.

Salutations

Staff Staff should call other staff at our school by their first name.

Students/staff Students should call staff by the appropriate salutation and their surname eg. Mr Smith, Sir, Miss.

Staff/student Staff must call students by their first name, never by surname only.

Parents Staff should call a student's parent by their appropriate salutation and surname.

Information for parents: Home-school communications

We recognise that education is a partnership between home and school. Students learn best where parents are actively engaged in supporting learning and where communication between home and school is as efficient as possible.

We will keep parents informed about events and progress through parents' evenings, information evenings, student attainment reports, twitter and weekly newsletters. We also welcome specific enquiries from parents about any aspect of schooling.

Telephone messages:

The school switchboard is open from 8.00am to 3.30pm daily. Teachers are unable to accept telephone calls whilst teaching, so callers may be asked to leave a message. Callers should leave their preferred contact details and times at which they are available to be contacted.

Appointments:

We welcome face to face discussions with parents. Although the teaching day ends at 3.00pm, staff often have other commitments such as meetings, clubs and activities; we therefore ask parents to make an appointment if they wish to see a member of staff. It may be that a Teams call is more appropriate than a face to face meeting.

A note about timing:

Teachers set aside time regularly to check communications. The time of this will vary depending on teaching and other commitments. Messages that parents leave during the day may not be received until the following day. Also, if staff are absent due to illness or through attendance at training courses then they will not be able to check for messages until their return to school. Similarly, part-time staff will not receive messages on days when they are not at work. For these reasons we undertake a "within 48 hours" response from when a message is received, rather than from when the message was sent.