



Communications Policy – October 2023

Version 1

Aim

To support St David's High School as a thriving and successful school we must communicate effectively with each other, with our learners, with their parents and with other members of the wider school community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

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. We should also remember the importance of listening.

Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications and needs to recognise that the quality of their communications reflects on the school's reputation.

For the purposes of this policy communication includes not only the message but also how that message is communicated; not only the responsibility for communication but also how effectively that responsibility is carried out.

Objectives:

All communications at St David's High School should:

- keep staff, learners, 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
- take account of relevant school policies in particular Equal Opportunities & Computer Use
- be compatible with our core values as reflected in our Mission Statement and Strategic Development Plan.

Internal Methods of Communication

Meetings

Meetings are carried out as indicated in the calendar of meetings. Meetings must have a clear purpose and an agenda which is shared in advance of the meeting.

All formal meetings should be structured and actions recorded and members invited to contribute to the agenda.

Availability of Actions from Meetings

Actions from meetings should be shared with all participants of the meeting as soon as possible. They should also be saved in the appropriate folder on **staff docs**

Email

Information and notification of initiatives are communicated through the use of e-mail where appropriate. E-mail 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 e-mail effectively, the following actions should be taken:

- Consider a quick telephone call
- Do not copy in more individuals than required
- Delete mail regularly
- Appropriate language is important in the use of email; emails should be proof read in order to check tone and appropriateness.
- Subject Headings should be used in order to allow emails to be found and filed easily.
- Email time should be blocked into your day if possible rather than allowing the received mail trigger to organise your day. Emails should only rarely be responded to during teaching time.
- Do not use email to avoid face to face contact
- E-mails should be checked each day.

Messages from the office, including phone calls from parents and other external calls, will be sent via email to your inbox.

Written Communications

These are placed in pigeon holes, in the main office, which staff should check on a daily basis. These messages should be only used where email is not appropriate.

Telephone Calls

All staff have access to a telephone and are able to make internal and external phone calls.

Staff Briefings

Staff briefings take place every Monday from 8:20am. They will be kept as brief as possible and will be used to communicate important information which cannot be communicated in the alternative ways outlined above.

Staff Handbook

A copy of the Staff Handbook is saved electronically on the Staff Library area: / Staff Handbook2023. This will be updated as appropriate and updates shared with all staff.

Friday Update

This should be the main method for communicating all forward planning. All important information should be communicated via the bulletin to ensure that staff are able to plan effectively for the following week. It is essential that the

bulletin is read fully by all staff. It may contain sensitive information, and therefore should be treated as a confidential document.

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 learners achieve more when schools and parents work together. Parents can naturally help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve and vice versa.

In our school 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 will always be addressed in a formal manner (i.e. Mr/Mrs) and staff will avoid developing close personal relationships with parents.

We try to make our written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of racial discrimination. We wish to recognise and celebrate the contributions made to our society by all the cultural groups represented in our school.

Communications with Parents/Carers

Letters

Staff will endeavour to reply to parents' letters as quickly as possible. Any letter of complaint should be referred to the SLT or Pastoral Leaders for advice. Letters to parents must be approved by a member of the SLT before posting.

Letters going out to groups of learners must be checked by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher and must have bilingual opening and end to the letter. All letters to groups of parents must go on the school website via H. Edge. Each letter will have a code which identified the person who typed the letter, the author and the person who checked the letter.

E mail

Parents are increasingly using e mail as a method of communicating with staff. Staff will respond as soon as possible after proof reading to check tone and appropriateness of their e mail. A member of the SLT, Pastoral Leader and / or Curriculum Leader should be copied into any response to a parent's email where appropriate. Staff may forward e mails from parents to a member of the SLT to deal with if preferred and should always do so if the content is a complaint.

Text Messages

We do have the facility to send group text messages to parents and other stakeholders. Messages are submitted to the Main Office who will then arrange for them to be sent.

Information for the Press.

Positive messages in the community are a very important part of making sure all associated with the school can be proud of its achievements. Tracy Peers is responsible for all links to the external press.

Twitter/ Facebook

The school has increasingly used social media as an excellent way to communicate with parents and the wider community. Please send any information to be posted to Hannah Edge.

Telephone calls

Staff will check their phone messages each day which will be communicated by email and endeavour to respond to parents' phone messages within 24 hours (and no later than 48 hours).

Social Networking Sites/Blogs etc.

Staff should not communicate with parents or learners via social networking sites (such as Facebook) or accept them as their "friends". (please see EWC guidance on the Use of Social Media.)

Use of Communications

It is essential that we consider the audience when we are communicating about any other member of the school community. In the current climate copies of any written information can be requested and **MUST** be divulged in any circumstance.

We must ensure that all communications are highly professional and do not compromise ourselves as individuals or the school as an organisation.