

## Southlands School Communication Policy – Jan 25

At Southlands school we value open and effective communication with parents and carers. We aim to build a strong partnership to support the education and well-being of all our young people. To enable us to communicate effectively with all parents, it is important that we have up to date contact details in the form of phone numbers, emails and home addresses. As a school, we will ask parents to update these annually. We ask that families inform school immediately in the event that contact information needs to be changed.

We refer to 'families' as all those individuals who have a role in the up-bringing and care of the child. At Southlands School we welcome involvement with parents and offer many formal opportunities for parents and carers to visit school, we also encourage parents and carers to make appointments at any other time to talk about their child's progress, ask questions or provide us with information.

Communication is a two way process. Purpose of General Methods of Communication from school to home:

**Twitter (Now named 'X')** – For positive communication about what our young people have been learning in school, or for achievements. Whilst parents can post on 'X', school does not respond to any comments on this platform and reserves the right to block anyone using this method of communication inappropriately.

**Teacher to Parents** - This is for emailed letters to parents and carers around school visits, clubs or events and allows us to explain any requirements and to allow parents and carers to provide permission or make payments.

**School website**- Information about all aspects of school life, this is updated regularly for general information, regularly for dates and annually for policy information. Please have a look at the website.

**Half-termly newsletters** - give an overview of events that have happened each half term.

General information letters are sent as emails but are also placed on the website. If any parent would prefer paper copies of letters, rather than emails, please notify the office who will print these for you.

### **Individual Methods of communication between school and home:**

#### **Informal conversation, pre-arranged meetings, email and phone:**

Our preferred method of communication is face to face. This is because the tone of emails can be misread. Reading and responding to emails can take up more time in the day before a resolution is found. Responding to concerns on the phone can take time as staff in school are busy teaching during school hours, phone calls can also make it difficult to have an open two-way conversation. Meeting face to face allows time to be allocated with the correct staff; it also allows all parties to be able to have a discussion so that everyone can go away with an understanding of the outcome of the meeting.

The school's main office should generally be the initial point of contact, and the office staff will direct the communication to the relevant teacher or senior leader. All staff are here to help. Whilst we always aim to get back to parents and carers quickly, due to the volume of young people at Southlands and the workload of staff, we cannot always respond as quickly as we would like. Emails, letters and phone calls will be triaged and you will receive a response within 5 working days for non-emergency matters. Safeguarding matters will be responded to in school immediately and you will receive follow-up information on the same day.

**Other opportunities for communication about your child:**

We offer a Parent's Evening in November each year to enable parents and carers to meet with class teachers to discuss academic progress and to get a picture of their young person within the context of school. We would always rather that parents raised queries or issues as they arise instead of waiting for Parent's Evening.

Each young person receives an annual school report to communicate information around achievements and progress within school; this is issued at the end of July. ·

All of our young people have an EHCP which is reviewed annually. You will be invited into school to discuss and review your young persons EHCP. The EHCP review process is scheduled into the school year.

Year 11 and year 9 – Autumn term

Year 10 and year 8 – Spring term

Year 7 – Summer term.

Emergency annual reviews can be called at any time during the academic year.

**Please consider the following points:**

At Southlands School, we fully appreciate that the young person in your care is precious to you and we want you to know that we take our responsibilities to all of our students very seriously, however, we are a large special school and have to be mindful that we have to be equally attentive to, and supportive of, all of our families.

School does not monitor emails outside of the normal working hours evenings, weekends or holidays. Whilst parents/ carers may compose emails at hours to suit their own needs, they can only be addressed during working hours. To support our staff we kindly request that all email communication is directed to our office email address at - [office.admin@southlandsnt.org.uk](mailto:office.admin@southlandsnt.org.uk). Email's will be triaged by our office staff and directed to the most appropriate member of staff. Please be mindful that we aim to respond to non-emergency emails in 5 working days.

Parent and carer communication must be conducted in a respectful and constructive manner, free from abusive, rude, or offensive language. We expect that adults show respect and conduct themselves in a respectful manner at all times on school premises.

Our staff are not required to speak to people who are being verbally aggressive in tone either by phone or in person and can choose to terminate a call or meeting.

If an email is received which is aggressive in tone, sets unreasonable demands or could otherwise be interpreted as harassing, or if the email exchange is not moving forward constructively, school may choose not to respond and to seek professional advice.

**Confidentiality:**

Southlands School recognises the importance of maintaining confidentiality and will handle all parent communications with utmost care and discretion.

**Respect and Integrity:**

Our school values the relationship between home and school. We take any parental concerns very seriously and are pleased that the vast majority are resolved by the class teacher. We politely ask that our parents and carers consider their use of social media as a way to communicate about school. Social media is something that has become more prevalent in recent years and is not helpful. It is a fact that people will comment on social media in a way that is not necessarily the way they would communicate in person. It is very easy for social media to be misused and become a forum for some members of our school community to openly comment on school issues, which is not appropriate. We would therefore like to remind you that using social networking sites is not the correct forum to raise any issues or concerns about the school, staff, other parents or pupils. Any negative remarks on these sites can be seen as defamation of character, harassment or slander. If at any time you have an issue, your first port of call should always be the school office who will triage your issue. If your concern remains unresolved, then contact the Head Teacher or a member of the senior leadership team. If you are still dissatisfied, then you should put your complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors. This is in accordance with the school's complaints policy.

**Photographs and Video Clips:**

It is not acceptable to upload photographs or video clips of your young person taken at school, which includes other children onto social networking sites without the permission of the parents' or carers. We all have a responsibility to safeguard children. We are looking to maintain the strong relationship that we have with parents and carers and wish to work with you on this issue.

**Feedback and Continuous Improvement:**

The school welcomes feedback from parents regarding their communication experiences, as it helps us to continually improve our communication practices. Parents are encouraged to provide constructive feedback and suggestions, either through surveys, meetings, or other designated feedback channels. By adhering to this communications policy, we can ensure effective and respectful communication between parents, carers and school.