

Communication Policy

Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Penrith



Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'The B. Foster'.

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Contents

1. Introduction and aims	2
2. Roles and responsibilities	2
3. How we communicate with parents and carers.....	3
4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school	5
5. Inclusion.....	6
6. Monitoring and review	6
7. Links with other policies	8
Appendix 1: school contact list	9

1. Introduction and aims

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/carers has a positive impact on pupils' learning because it:

- Gives parents/carers the information they need to support their child's education
- Helps the school improve, through feedback and consultation with parents/carers
- Builds trust between home and school, which helps the school better support each child's educational and pastoral needs
- All written and telephone enquiries will be dealt with promptly and parents and carers can expect an acknowledgement within 2 working days

The aim of this policy is to promote clear and open communication by:

- Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers
- Setting clear standards for responding to communication from parents/carers
- Helping parents/carers reach the member of school staff who is best placed to address their specific query or concern so they can get a response as quickly as possible

In the following sections, we will use 'parents' to refer to both parents and carers

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- Regularly reviewing this policy

2.2 Staff

All staff are responsible for:



- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's ICT and internet acceptable use policy
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)

Staff should not be expected to respond to communications outside of school hours 8.45am-3.45pm, their working hours (if they work part-time), or during school holidays.

2.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance
- Respond to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school

3. How we communicate with parents and carers

The sections below explain how we keep parents up-to-date with their child's education and what is happening in school.

Parents should monitor all of the following regularly to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child.

As a school we have a statutory duty to communicate the school record with both parents with parental responsibility in the case of a split family.

Parents should contact us to discuss any issues with gender specific salutations in school communications.

3.1 ParentMail & EduLink

We use Edulink and parentmail to keep parents and students informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests including your child's homework
- Payments
- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Our half-termly Newsletter

3.2 Text messages

We will text parents about:

- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)

3.3 Social Media -



We use the following media to convey news, celebrations and to reinforce key messages sent out as above.

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter

3.4 School calendar

Our school website includes a full school calendar for the whole school year.

Where possible, we try to give parents at least 2 weeks' notice of any new events or special occasions not indicated on the school calendar at the start of the academic year (including non-uniform days, special assemblies or visitors, or requests for pupils to bring in special items or materials).

3.5 Phone calls

Staff have discretion to make a phone call to parents/carers to discuss issues related to both academic and pastoral concerns. It would normally be the case that academic issues will be raised initially via edulink and a phone call would be used as follow-up or to clarify any concerns or developments.

When dealing with pastoral issues, a phone call is usually the most effective way to introduce an issue. A record should be kept of any phone calls made either on SIMS or in an email to the relevant Head of Department and/or Head of Year. A confirmatory email to confirm topics covered and outcomes may be sent as soon as possible after the call when there are key issues to confirm in writing.

3.6 Letters

Very little communication is now sent using post, however, we will send the following letters home, often in addition to an electronic version:

- Achievement Postcards
- Progress
- Celebration Invitation
- Exclusion notifications

3.7 Reports

Parents receive reports from the school about their child's learning, including:

- Once a year a report covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing with a written comment from each subject teacher and their form tutor and their attendance
- Termly data reviews
- A report on the results of public examinations

We also arrange annual meetings where parents can speak to their child's teacher(s) about their achievement and progress (see the section below).

3.8 Meetings

We hold one parents' evening per academic year per year group. During these meetings, parents can talk with subject teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum or schemes of work, their



child's wellbeing, or any other area of concern. Year 7 parents also have a Year 7 Settling in evening where they meet their child's Form Tutor in September, to discuss how they have settled in.

The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings between parents' evenings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing. These include Attendance and Early Help meetings. An email following the meeting may be felt to be necessary as per 3.5 above.

Parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these additional needs.

We also run information evenings such as the Year 11 Exam Success Evening and parents will be notified at least two weeks in advance of such events.

3.9 School website and EduLink

Key information about the school is posted on our website and EduLink, including:

- School times and term dates
- Important events and announcements
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information

Parents should check the website before contacting the school for information.

4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

Please use the list in appendix 1 to identify the most appropriate person to contact about a query or issue, including the school reception number (01768 864621) and email address (reception@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk).

4.1 Email

Parents should always email the school, or the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance, rather than making a phone call, as staff are often not available.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within 2 working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 5 working days. By 'working day' we mean a day when the relevant member of staff is in school. We have a large number of part-time staff and they are not expected to respond to messages or queries when they are not working. If working patterns are likely to extend these time for a full response, the recipient should notify the sender.

If a query or concern is urgent, and you need a response sooner than this, please call the school and explain the circumstances to reception.

4.2 Phone calls

If you need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, please email the school reception and the relevant member of staff will contact you within 2 working days. A record should be kept of the phone call, either on SIMS or via an email to relevant Head of Year or Head of Department.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will get in touch with you to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure you have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within 5 working days of your request.

If your issue is urgent, please call the school reception.

Urgent issues might include things like:



- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

Also, for more general enquiries, please call the school office on 01768 864621.

4.3 Meetings

If you would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, please email the appropriate address (see appendix 1), or call the school to discuss an appointment. Often a phone call is sufficient to address a query and school staff will determine the necessity of a meeting.

We try to schedule all meetings within 5 normal working days of the request.

5. Inclusion

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school.

We currently make whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) available in English.

Parents who need help communicating with the school can request the following support:

- School announcements and communications translated into additional languages
- Interpreters for meetings or phone calls

We can make additional arrangements if necessary. Please contact the school office to discuss these.

6. Communications between pupils and staff

Two way communication between pupils and staff is an important aspect of school life. The school welcomes and encourages pupils to engage in conversation with all members of staff within the school. When communicating with a member of staff pupils should:

- Stand in front of the member of staff they are speaking with;
- Address the member of staff using their formal name e.g. Mrs Smith, never referring to a member of staff by their first name;
- Be respectful, do not talk over, raise voice or walk away before the conversation has ended.

When communicating with pupils staff should use pupils' first names and full names of staff (Mr Surname and Ms/Mrs Surname) in front of pupils. Try to avoid generic terms of: Sir and Miss to convey politeness.

Pupils may also email staff on their school accounts in relation to their learning. All pupils are taught email protocol:

- Complete the subject line
- Use Ms/Mrs/Mr and Surname as salutation
- Use Standard English
- Avoid abbreviations
- Sign off with Thank you or Kind Regards.

Correspondence is to remain professional at all times.

Staff are never permitted to use personal email accounts when communicating with pupils.



Pupils are expected to check their emails/edulink daily and delete / archive regularly.

7. Communication between QEGS staff

Verbal

Staff are to use first names when communicating with each other and full names (Mr/Dr/Ms/Mrs Surname) in front of pupils. Avoid generic terms of: Sir and Miss to convey politeness.

Email

- Consider whether an email is appropriate when face to face communication may be more conducive;
- Avoid exclusive email correspondence without requesting or organizing a face to face meeting;
- Avoid send or reply all, unless necessary;
- Keep emails concise, use Standard English and bullet points if necessary
- Staff to check emails twice a day.
- Use group emails as appropriate. Email groups are as follows:
 - All Staff Teaching Staff
 - All Staff Admin Staff
 - SLT
 - ESLT
 - Every Department
 - Heads of Department
 - Heads of Year
 - Finance
 - Further pupil breakdowns are then available by emailing through SIMS.

All messages should indicate as a part of the message line if the message is urgent/non-urgent. Staff should not be expected to respond to emails sent outside of their working hours until they are back in school.

Staff should ensure they log rewards and sanctions via Edulink and staff with access to CPOMS must record any concerns on CPOMS as soon as possible.

Agendas for staff meetings are to be circulated at least five days in advance. The minutes of the meeting to be circulated to all relevant parties where possible within two weeks of the meeting. This is good practice and should apply to all internal meetings.

8. Dealing with the media

Any communications from media sources should always be referred to the Headteacher for comment or otherwise. Any material being sent to media outlets must also be approved by the Headteacher.

9. School trips, visits and activities

The school will endeavor to publish all proposed trips, visits and activities on the school calendar at the start of each academic year. Parents and carers will be notified by Edulink/parentmail of trips, visits and activities that their child/children may wish to participate in as early as possible, and within at least two weeks of the proposed trip, visit or activity. Occasionally opportunities arise during the academic year to



offer pupils additional trips, visits or activities that were not known or available when the school calendar was published.

10. Severe weather and emergency closure

In the event of emergency closure, communication will be made to parents and carers via ParentMail, EduLink or text. Parents and carers should also tune in to local radio and check the school website and social media channels (e.g. Twitter).

11. Prospective parents/carers

The school prospectus is published on the website. Prospective parents and carers may request a printed copy. Prospective parents and carers are invited to an Open Evening in the June of the child's Year 5 to facilitate registration for the entrance examination in September of Year 6. Prospective parents and students should also attend published tours during the spring term to enable them to see the school operating.

12. Monitoring and review

The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every 2 years. The policy will be approved by the governing board.

13. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- ICT and internet acceptable use
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints



Appendix 1: school contact list

Who should I contact?

If you have questions about any of the topics in the table below, or would like to speak to a member of staff:

- Email or call the school office on reception@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk or 01768 864621
- Put the subject and the name of the relevant member of staff (from the list below) in the subject line (for emails)
- We will forward your request on to the relevant member of staff

Remember: check our website first, much of the information you need is posted there.

We try to respond to all emails within 2 working days.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Subject staff
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Form Teacher
Payments	Finance
School trips	Finance
Uniform/lost and found	Reception
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, call the Attendance Officer.



I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
	<p>Outside of school hours, 8.30am – 4.30pm, please ring reception and leave a message which will be picked up the next morning.</p> <p>If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact reception.</p>
Bullying and behaviour	Form Teacher
School events/the school calendar	Reception
Special educational needs	SENDCo
Before and after-school clubs	Reception
Hiring the school premises	Finance
The PTA	FQEGS (friendsofqegs@gmail.com)
The governing board	Clerk to the Governors (Clerk@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk)
Catering/meals	Finance / School Business Manager

Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy on the website.

