Lady Manners School

Home School Communication Policy

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Through our shared school values, we aim for all students to thrive, feel included and aspire to grow as individuals who contribute to society with empathy, integrity and positivity.

This document will be reviewed every three years by the Governing Board and sooner when significant changes are made to the law.

Guidance from the Department for Education about school policies can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/governance-in-maintained-schools/statutory-policies-for-maintained-schools

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EQUALITIES STATEMENT OF INTENT

Lady Manners School welcomes a diverse population of both students and staff. In order to consolidate and build upon this diversity, equality of opportunity and the absence of unfair discrimination is at the core of all the school's activities. The school will not unfairly discriminate in the recruitment or general treatment of staff or students.

The school is committed to promoting and developing equality of opportunity in all its functions and will seek to do this by:

- communicating its commitment to equality and diversity to all members of the school community;
- maintaining systems for implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review;
- treating acts of discrimination and other contraventions of this policy as a disciplinary offence.

The Governing Board has responsibility for ensuring that the school operates within the legal framework for equality and for implementing the policy throughout the school. In addition, each member of the school community is responsible for preventing unfair discrimination or harassment or victimisation which it is within their control to prevent; and challenging or reporting such inappropriate behaviour if it occurs.

1. INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/carers has a positive impact on students' 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

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

- Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers
- Setting clear standards and expectations 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

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents/carers are effective, timely and appropriate
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy
- Regularly reviewing this policy

2.2 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

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

Staff will **aim** to respond to communication within two working days and during core school hours (8.50am - 3.45pm), or their working hours (if they work part-time). In line with promoting staff wellbeing and helping our staff find a suitable work-life balance, staff may work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond outside of these hours, but they are **not expected** to do so.

Support staff with responsibility for school systems are responsible for:

Providing details to enable parents/carers to access school systems such as Parent Pay, Class Charts to monitor their child's behaviour, homework and attendance.

2.3 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring the school holds correct contact details
- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times and abiding by our Parent and Carer Code of Conduct
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance
- Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner

- Checking all communications from the school

Abusive or aggressive behaviour or language - in person, by phone or email - will not be tolerated. Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with our parent and carer code of conduct.

Parents/carers should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours (8.50am - 3.45pm), or during the school holidays.

3. HOW WE COMMUNICATE WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

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

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

3.1 Email

We use email to keep parents/carers informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events
- Emails about trips and visits
- Our half-termly newsletter
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests

3.2 School calendar

Our school website includes a school calendar detailing key events for the year.

Where possible, we try to give parents/carers at least 2 weeks' notice of any events or special occasions (including non-uniform days, special assemblies or visitors, or requests for students to bring in special items or materials).

3.3 Phone calls

We may, from time to time, phone parents/carers to discuss a child's progress or to inform them of an incident. Where appropriate a message may be left with brief information or to request a return phone call.

3.4 Class Charts and Parent Pay

We use Class Charts to set homework for students and to send brief announcements. Class Charts announcements are used by individual staff members to communicate messages to specific groups of students and their parents/carers, or to the whole school, where appropriate. The announcements may be relevant to parents/carers and, therefore, parents/carers should ensure that they allow notifications from Class Charts.

Class Charts has a messaging function which is only to be used for messages between the staff member and the student. This is not a forum to be used by parent/carers (Parents/carers are to use email or phone calls to communicate with school staff).

The school uses Parent Pay to communicate and request consent for school visits and trips. It is also the method the school uses for payment for resources, school meals, school events and trips

3.5 Reports

Parents/carers receive interim and summative reports from the school about their child's learning, including:

- An end-of-year report covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, and their attendance
- Progress reports

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

3.6 Meetings

We hold a yearly online parents'/carers' evening for each year group. During these meetings, parents/carers can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum or schemes of work.

The school may also contact parents/carers to arrange meetings between parents'/carers' evenings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing.

Parents/carers of students with special educational needs (SEND), or who have other additional needs, may be asked to attend further meetings to discuss these additional needs.

Parents/Carers of students who are eligible for the Pupil Premium grant are also invited to school for a 'thrive for success' meeting.

For transition points in a students' educational journey (e.g. Starting in Year 7, Year 9 Options or Post-16 progression) the school holds information evenings for parents/carers.

3.7 School website and Social Media

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

- School times and term dates
- Uniform expectations
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information
- Information about after-school provision
- Calendar of events including notification of any unplanned school closures

Parents/carers should check the website before contacting the school.

The school uses social media to communicate success stories in the school and also as an additional form of communication during a school closure.

4. HOW PARENTS AND CARERS CAN COMMUNICATE WITH THE SCHOOL

Parents/carers should use the list in **Appendix 1** to identify the most appropriate person to contact about a query or issue, including the school office number and email address.

4.1 Email

Parents/carers should always email the school, or the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within two working days, and to respond to the issue (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within five working days.

If a query or concern is urgent, and parents/carers feel they need a response sooner than this, they should call the school.

4.2 Phone calls

If parents/carers need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should email the school office and the relevant member of staff will usually contact them within two working days

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will respond to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure parents/carers have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within five days of your request.

If the issue is urgent, parents/carers should call the school office.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

For more general enquiries, please email your child's form tutor in the first instance using <form e,g, 8A>@ladymanners.derbyshire.sch.uk

4.3 Meetings

If parents/carers would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the appropriate email address (see appendix 1) or call the school to book an appointment.

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

If parents/carers need to speak to subject teachers urgently, we recommend they contact the child's form tutor or year Leader in the first instance.

4.4 Class Charts

Parents/carers can see information about their child's behaviour, homework and attendance on Class Charts. They can also access announcements that have been sent to Parents/carers.

Parents/Carers should use Class Charts to inform the school of a child's absence using the absence tab. This should be recorded by 8.30am on the day of absence.

5. ACCESSIBILITY

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

5.1 Parents/carers with additional communication needs

We aim to make communications accessible to all. We have taken the following steps to achieve this:

- All whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) can be made available in alternative formats
- All communications are written as clearly and concisely as possible
- Accessibility is considered when designing/updating the school website
- Staff will endeavour to provide information in an accessible format

Parents/carers who need help communicating with the school can request reasonable adjustments, such as:

- School announcements and communications in accessible formats
- Sign language interpreters or other interpreters for meetings

Please contact the school office to discuss these.

6. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- ICT and internet acceptable use
- Parent code of conduct
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints
- Home-school agreement
- Social media policy

Appendix 1: School Contact List

Who should I contact?

In the first instance, your child's Form Tutor should be your first point of contact. At the start of each academic year, you will be provided with their contact details.

If you remain unsure who should deal with your request, please refer to the table below, or contact the school office via email: info@ladymanners.derbyshire.sch.uk or via the phone: 01629 812671, clearly stating the name and form of your child, alongside brief details of your query.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/ homework	Your child's Form Tutor, in the first instance
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your child's Form Tutor or Year Leader
Payments	School Office
School trips	School Office
Uniform/lost and found	Your child's Form Tutor
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, please use Class Charts (see information above) If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact your child's Year Leader
Bullying and behaviour	Your child's Year Leader
School events/the school calendar	School Office
Special educational needs (SEN)	School Office
Before and after-school clubs	Your child's Form Tutor
Hiring the school premises	School Office
PTFA	School Office
Governing Board	Clerk to Governors email governors@ladymanners.derbyshir.sch.uk
Catering/meals	Your child's Form Tutor

Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy which is available on the school's website School-Complaints-Policy-and-Procedure-Final-FGB-08.07.26-3.pdf