Home-school communication policy

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1. Introduction and aims

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/guardians has a positive impact on learner' outcomes because it:

- Gives parents/guardians the information they need to support their child's education;
- Helps the school improve, through feedback and consultation with parents/guardians;
- Builds trust between home and school, which helps the school better support each learner'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/guardians;
- Setting clear standards for responding to communication from parents/guardians;
- Helping parents/guardians 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 guardians.

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
- Including this information in the parent pack for all new starters ☐ Including this policy on the website.

2.2 Staff
All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's *ICT usage policy*, *Social media compliance policy* and the *Staff code of conduct* (available on the website in Policies)
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)

Other than at school organised parent events, Staff **will not** respond to communications outside of school hours (8:50-4:00), or their working hours (if they work part-time), or during school holidays.

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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
- Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school
- Uploading videos or annotations on Earwig (online assessment app) to contribute to the evidence of progress made by their child outside of school
- Emailing a daily update about the pupil to the class team (Appendix 2 – template)
- Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive, or threatening will be treated in line with our *Parent code of conduct* (available on the website in Policies).

3. How we communicate with parents and guardians

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.

3.1 Email

We use email to keep parents informed about the following things:
- Daily highlight about pupil - additional information options include behaviour scale, toileting info, food diary
- Home learning
- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests
- Weekly school newsletter
- Termly Grapevine newsletter

Class teachers will ensure that the class inbox has been opened every day before the pupils arrive at school

3.2 Text messages

We will text parents about:
- Payments
- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- Annual Review reminders
- Confirmation that we have received their voicemail about pupil absence

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3.3 School calendar

Our school website and newsletter include a full school calendar for the month and year. Click on the calendar icon on the website to ensure you know what is happening on a specific date.

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

Any such event will be included in the school calendar.

3.4 Phone calls

Our staff will contact you via phone for the following reasons:
- In the event of an emergency, concerning your child
- To discuss any safeguarding concerns
- To alert you to any injuries resulting from accidents at school
- To discuss medical information and updates
- To discuss behaviour

3.5 Arbor

Arbor is the cloud-based Management Information System used at Strathmore School. Information that can be accessed via Arbor:
- Information about trips and visits
- Consent forms
- Pupil attendance information
- Payment portal for lunches and trips

3.6 Reports

Parents receive reports from the school about their child's learning, including:
- An electronic annual review report, covering their achievement against the EHCP outcomes, how well they are progressing overall, and their attendance
- Online, ongoing formative assessment via Earwig Academic Timeline (parents can see evidence of progress via photos and videos, with annotations)
- Regular meetings where parents can speak to their child's teacher about their achievement and progress (see the **Meetings** section below).

3.7 Meetings

We hold one parents' consultation per term. During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum or schemes of work, their child's wellbeing, or any area of concern.

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

It is crucial that parents contribute to, and attend, the Annual Review meetings. Parental input is a requirement for Education, Health and Care plan document, and vital to the learner's progress.

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Annual Reviews are mainly held in Spring Term 2 (between February half term and Easter break), apart from Yr 14 leavers, who will have theirs in Autumn Term 2, to ensure transition plans are in place for their post 19 placement.

3.9 School website
Key information about the school is posted on our website and this should be parents' first point of reference. Information includes:
- School times and term dates
- Important events and announcements
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information
- School's Ethos, Aims and Values
- Admissions Arrangements
- Exclusion / Behaviour Policy
- Ofsted Reports
- Governors' Information
- FAQs

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

4.   How parents and guardians 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 office number and email address.

4.1 Email
Parents should always email the, info@strathmore.org.uk about
- Planned medical appointments (including a photo/scan of the appointment letter).

Parents should email [class]@strathmore.richmond.sch.uk for **non-urgent** teaching and learning issues, including (but not exclusively):
- Daily updates about how the pupil has been at home
- Information relating to how they are (if they have not slept and this is likely to impact their ability to learn)
- Weekend news
- Requests for resources
- Requests for support with behaviour
- Request for appointment with therapist

We aim to acknowledge all emails within 2 working days, and following this, to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 3 working days.

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

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4.2 Phone calls

If you need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, please email the school office; the relevant member of staff will contact you within 2 working days.

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 2 working days of your request.

If your issue is **urgent**, please call the school office.

Urgent issues might include things like:
- Absence (please follow the absence procedure found here) https://www.strathmore.richmond.sch.uk/page/?title=Pupil+Policies&pid=95
- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues
- Immediate changes to transport arrangements
- Early collection or late drop off of pupils
- Changes to medication / medical needs

For more general enquiries, please call the school office.

4.3 Earwig Academic Timeline

Parents are expected to contribute to the evidence of progress of their child by logging on to Earwig regularly and uploading videos, photos and comments about what their child has achieved at home and also to feedback on what they have seen them achieve at school.

We have used a similar tool very successfully for some years in the Early Years and Key Stage 1 classes, and the feedback and engagement from parents was so overwhelmingly positive, we have now invested in it across the entire school.

This can be accessed on a desktop computer, tablet or internet enabled phone. It is fully GDPR compliant and parents only have access to their child's timeline.

Should you need additional support in accessing your child's timeline, please contact the class via [class]@strathmore.richmond.sch.uk and they will be able to help.

4.4 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 book an appointment.

We try to schedule all meetings within a week of the request although factors such as number of professionals required, or school holidays will impact on our ability to achieve this.

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While teachers are available at the beginning or end of the school day if you need to speak to them urgently, we recommend you book appointments via the class email [class]@strathmore.org.uk to discuss:

- Any concerns you may have about your child's learning
- Updates related to pastoral support, your child's home environment, or their wellbeing.

5. Inclusion

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

The website can be translated into any language but clicking on the globe icon in the orange bar:

We are currently investigating technology to make whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) available in other languages.

Parents who need help communicating with the school can request interpreters for meetings or phone calls. We can make additional arrangements if necessary. Please contact the school office to discuss these.

6. Monitoring and review

The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every year. The policy will be approved by the governing board. The policy will be compliant with any GDPR and Data Protection Regulations.

7. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:
- ICT usage policy
- Social media compliance policy
- Parent code of conduct
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints

Appendix 1

School contact list:

Roles	How to contact
General Office (located Strathmore @St Richard Reynolds)	info@strathmore.richmond.sch.uk 0208 948 0047 ext 101
Office – Strathmore @ The Russell Office – Strathmore @ Grey Court For any Darell Campus enquiries	0208 948 0047 ext 201 0208 948 0047 ext 301 0208 948 0047 ext 101
Pupil Absence	0208 948 0047 ext 104
Safeguarding Strathmore Campuses	Contact the office at your child's campus and request the Safeguarding Lead Laura Wrigglesworth (DSL) / Lauren Crew Adriana Martyr / Amy Upton / Luis Ferreira
Annual reviews	annualreview@strathmore.org.uk
Strathmore @ SRR Campus	
Nova Class	nova@strathmore.org.uk
Phoenix Class	phoenix@strathmore.org.uk
Perseus Class	perseus@strathmore.org.uk
Vega Class	vega@strathmore.org.uk
Capella Class	capella@strathmore.org.uk
Andromeda Class	andromeda@strathmore.org.uk
Strathmore @ Russell Campus	
Delphini Class	delphini@strathmore.org.uk
Luna Class	luna@strathmore.org.uk
Hercules Class	hercules@strathmore.org.uk
Leo Class	leo@strathmore.org.uk
Strathmore @ Darell Campus	
Astra Class	astra@strathmore.org.uk
Strathmore @ Grey Court Campus	
Aquila Class	aquila@strathmore.org.uk
Pegasus Class	pegasus@strathmore.org.uk
Mira Class	mira@strathmore.org.uk
New pupils coming to Strathmore	transition@strathmore.org.uk
Trust Data Protection Officer (GDPR)	dp@aurigaacademytrust.org.uk
Speech and Language Therapy Richmond Speech and Language Therapy Telephone advice line: Richmond Speech and Language	hrch.richmondsaltadviceline@nhs.net 020 8973 3512

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Therapy enquiries: General enquiries / administration hub: Children's SLT services manager - Claire Schneider.	020 8614 5333 020 8973 3480 020 8614 5331
Physiotherapy Sasha Lewis General enquiries/administration hub:	sasha.lewis@hrch.nhs.uk 020 8891 8150 020 8973 3480
Occupational Therapy Alison Garces	agarces.318@lgflmail.org
Family Support Worker Natalie Arciero	familyworker@strathmore.org.uk

Staff daily record – completed by XXXX	
Date:	
General behaviour and well-being:	XXX had another calm morning. She became slightly frustrated in the afternoon and went to hit and shout at an adult. We offered her white noise and a foot spa which calmed her immediately. She had a successful afternoon following on from this.
Highlight of the day:	XXX was amazing in literacy today; she travelled with her PECS for the first time to a new adult and requested the foot spa independently.
Medication record As required	Name of meds: Dose given: Time given:
Phone call:	YES	<mark>NO</mark>
Reminder	Please remember PE kit tomorrow / early finish tomorrow / swimming kit tomorrow / labelled sun cream / send in labelled water bottle.

Parent daily record – completed by Mum / Dad / guardian
Date:

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Anything we need to know? Different examples – short sentences of info are gratefully received. Information that means we can talk to the learner or understand why they may behave in a certain way is very useful. Knowing if you have sent in things in their bag is good!	XXX was very distressed last night; cried for 3 hours and threw the iPad which is now broken. May be upset today. XXX had a tricky morning – wouldn't eat cereal so may be hungry. Please give her the extra snack in her bag. XXX had a lovely evening – her sister's birthday so we went to a restaurant and she chose pizza and ate the whole thing! Photo attached. XXX saw grandparents yesterday so will want to talk about them – went to the park and fed the ducks. XXX started her period yesterday – extra pads in her bag. XXX didn't come home with her jumper; please can you look for it?
Sleep info: As required: tell us if something is likely to impact the day	XXX didn't get to sleep until 1am – very tired today. XXX slept all the way through for the first time in a week! Hurray! XXX really didn't want to get up today – may be due a seizure / may be due period.
Medication record	Name of medication: Dose given:
Please let us know if you have given them any medication	Time given:

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