



# Cambridge International School

## Communication Policy and Procedures

NAME OF POLICY	Communication Policy and procedure
APPROVED BY	Principal
DATE APPROVED	September 2023
SCHEDULED REVIEW DATE	September 2025
SUPERSEDES	Version 2021
RELATED POLICIES	

## **Rationale**

Good communication between the school and the home is essential. Children achieve more when schools and parents work together. Parents can help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve, and how they can help. In our school, we aim to have clear and effective communications with parents and the wider community. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values through keeping parents well informed about school life. This reinforces the importance of the role that parents play in supporting the school in educating their children.

The objective of this policy is to ensure that all parents and teachers understand the procedure for communicating issues, which affect the education of the children. Teachers have a need to communicate with parents at regular intervals, and parents are invited to communicate with teachers whenever it may be required.

We communicate with parents through a range of different strategies; face to face communication, emails, phone calls, parent/teacher meetings and Phoenix Classroom. Each year we provide written reports to parents on their child's progress in the various areas of learning from FS1-Y13. These reports also identify areas of strength and areas for future development.

The school website and our Phoenix classroom site contain an extensive range of information, giving parents a full picture of provision at our school. We update these regularly with information for the week ahead, important dates and home learning.

## **Public access documents**

The school makes available a range of documentation for parents. We keep a master set in the school office, and we make this available on request. It contains copies of all school policies and general communication documents.

## **Home-school communications**

As well as receiving written reports, parents are invited to 'Parent-Teacher Meetings' throughout the academic year. We also conduct a rolling programme of coffee mornings for each year group throughout the academic year to update parents and to listen to their feedback.

All of these opportunities give parents the chance to celebrate their child's successes and support the child with any areas of development. Parents are able to look at their child's work during parent teacher meetings. We encourage parents to contact the school if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being.

The school sends a weekly update of events and announcements and termly newsletters to parents via email. It contains general details of school events and activities. Where possible, all communication from the school is electronic in the form of email and SMS. Throughout the year all teachers provide information to the parents via the *Phoenix classroom*, home learning, family learning newsletter, important dates and trips circulars. We also use Class DoJo in primary as a way of communicating with parents at a class and school level. We invite parents to support their child's work through a range of suggested activities to be shared with the child at home.

The school encourages parents to share any issues about their child at the earliest opportunity. Teachers see parents immediately, if at all possible. Where this is not possible, the parent makes an appointment. Parental workshops are held throughout the year to equip parents with tools to help extend learning at home. If a child is absent from school for two consecutive days, and we have had no indication of the reason, we contact a parent by telephone/email, to find out the reason for the absence.

## **Social Media**

Parents or staff should not send emails or post comments on any form of social media with the intent of scaring, hurting, defaming or intimidating someone else. Parents and staff are reminded that in the UAE there are extreme consequences for online defamation of character of person or organisation.

**Acceptable means of communication between parents and teachers:**

All legitimate and fair concerns need to be addressed between parents and teachers in the following manner:

- A polite telephone call via the school office.
- A polite email to the concerned teacher.
- A pre-arranged meeting at the school.
- Where confidential or sensitive information is communicated, it must be sent in a sealed envelope to the recipient.
- Telephonic contact via the School office is acceptable provided that parents understand that teachers cannot return calls immediately. Calls will be returned as soon as possible, and within 48 hours as per GEMS policy.
- The front of house staff will convey to the parents from the teachers the approximate expected time of the return call.
- The front of house staff will facilitate communications between parents but do not wish to be informed about the issue. Academic issues should never be discussed with the office staff.
- When dealing with an issue, the appropriate channels must be followed. In this regard, refer to sub-heading 'Channels'.

**Unacceptable means of communication between parents and teachers:**

- Communication which is demeaning and derogatory in nature.
- Notes on scrap paper will not be accepted nor responded to
- Interviews will not be conducted in the classroom without a prior appointment.
- Confidentiality will be observed by the front of house staff when making appointments
- Whilst cell phones facilitate better communication between people, they do invade privacy. Cell phones (whether an SMS or a call) should be used with discretion and for urgent issues only and should not be used during lessons.
- A parent should never contact a teacher on his/her cell phone or home telephone unless expressly invited to do so by a teacher in a specific instance.
- Interviews will be arranged at times that suit both parties. Where either party is unable to attend the interview, the other party needs to be notified timeously. Should the interview be missed an appropriate apology to the other party must be offered.

**Teachers will endeavour to:**

- Listen to parents and remain calm and professional.
- Respect the parents and their concerns.
- Meet the needs of the child first.
- Never victimise a child after a meeting.
- Return calls and/or reply to emails as soon as possible and within 48 hours.
- Make themselves available as soon as possible.
- Provide professional follow up should it be required.
- Keep appointments with parents unless there is an unavoidable emergency situation.
- Use a sealed envelope for written replies to parents of a sensitive or private nature.

**Teachers will not:**

- Accept verbal abuse in any form.
- Discuss children or their parents in public areas.
- Accept parent's excuses for the child's responsibility.
- Be rude in response to parents.
- Ignore messages (if they are received)
- Victimise children if a parent has raised a concern.
- Ignore genuine concerns.
- Tolerate classroom interruptions.
- Wait more than 10 minutes from the allocated time for appointments.
- Respond to anonymous letters.

**Parents will endeavour to:**

- Recognise and respect the professional status of teachers.
- Treat teachers and teaching assistants with respect at all times, particularly in the presence of children.
- Communicate with teachers and teachers' assistants in a courteous and dignified manner.
- Avoid discussing their individual concerns with other parents or third parties.
- Refrain from entering the teaching areas during school time, unless invited to do so for purposes of a pre-arranged meeting with a teacher. In all instances, a parent must first report to the school's reception.
- Keep appointments.

**Channels for addressing concerns:**

- Meet the teacher to discuss matters, irrespective of what the issue is (in difficult matters, the teacher may request the Head of Year to attend)
- Meet the Head of Year
- Meet the relevant Head of Faculty depending on which Phase the child is in
- Meet the relevant Head of School
- Meet the Vice Principal
- Meet the Principal

If, in relation to a particular matter, a parent believes that it would be inappropriate to follow the aforementioned channels, the parent must discuss the matter with the Principal who will then decide on the process to be followed.

**Meetings and Minutes**

In every meeting, written minutes will be kept.

**Email**

Teachers endeavour to respond to emails within 24-48 hours.

**Communication Tips**

No matter who you are talking with, it helps to be courteous, professional, and well prepared. Written communications should always be proofread and written or typed neatly.

**How Teachers Will Communicate With Parents and Guardians****Electronic/Written Form**

- All letters or notes to parents should be proofread by at least one other faculty member before the note is sent home. Be sure to run spell/grammar check on any electronic communications.
- All written communication should be professional, courteous, and have contact information to get back in touch with the teacher.
- Avoid the use of jargon.
- All written communication should be typed and a copy saved electronically.
- Make sure that all text/graphics are large enough to be seen or read.

**Phone**

- Be polite and courteous.
- Before you make the call, write down everything you need to communicate with that parent.
- Keep a phone log. Record the date, time, and reason for calling that parent
- Be direct and mindful of the parent's time.
- If the parent is unable to talk to you at that time, politely ask when would be a good time to call them again.
- If you receive a voicemail; identify who you are, what you are calling about, and leave information for them to return your phone call.

### **Parent Teacher Meeting (PTM)**

- Dress professionally
- Create a comfortable atmosphere. Avoid placing a desk between yourself and the parents.
- Be prepared! Have your agenda ready. Have materials available that show the positives and the areas for development of the student
- Always start the conversation with something positive
- Be attentive and listen
- Never talk about other students or teachers
- Avoid the use of jargon
- End the conversation with something positive
- If the situation becomes difficult, call for support from a senior colleague immediately
- Keep a record of the meeting - date, time, reason, and key points discussed

### **Miscellaneous**

- All parents need to receive positive information regarding their child at least once per month via Pulse as well as any other appropriate forms of contact.
- All correspondence with parents should be documented
- Do not discuss other students or teachers with parents. Be professionally mindful
- Develop a positive relationship with parents. Try to gain their trust and let them know that you have their child's best interest in mind at all times
- Always avoid the use of jargon. Use language that will make parents feel comfortable and at ease. Keep it simple!