



# Cambridge International School

## Communication Policy and Procedures

NAME OF POLICY	Communication Policy and procedure
APPROVED BY	Principal
DATE APPROVED	2017
SCHEDULED REVIEW DATE	2023
SUPERSEDES	Version 2021
RELATED POLICIES	

## Introduction

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, conferences, reading student planners and Phoenix Classroom. Each year we provide termly written reports to parents on each 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 Consultations' at least three times per year. Parent Orientation evenings and subject workshops on 'how to help your child at home' are conducted early in Term 1. 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 these 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 or upload this on the school portal. 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 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. Regular 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 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.

## Key provisions relevant to schools - excerpts of Federal Decree-Law no. (5) state:

21	Invasion of privacy, including photographing others, or creating, transferring, disclosing, copying or saving electronic photos (just taking a photo or video of someone without their permission, or saving a photo they have posted, is enough). Defamation. Publishing news, photos, scenes, comments, statements or information, even if true and correct. Amending or processing a record, photo or scene for the purpose of defamation of or offending another person or for attacking or invading his privacy.	Up to 6 months' imprisonment +/- fine of AED 150k – 500k
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**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 letter or note in the learner's communication book or homework diary
- 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
- Interview requests via the communication book or homework diary must be cordial and respectful, without divulging information that could be harmful
- 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
- The ladies in the front office will convey to the parents from the teachers the approximate expected time of the return call
- The ladies in the front office 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 ladies in the office when making appointments
- Rude remarks in the communication book or homework diary are unacceptable and will not be tolerated
- Sending sensitive messages in the communication book, homework diary or anywhere else where children are able to view the information is unacceptable
- 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
- 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 asap
- Make themselves available
- Reply to messages in communication book or homework diary
- Provide professional follow up should it be required
- Keep appointments
- Use a sealed envelope for contentious/sensitive replies to parents

**Teachers will not:**

- Accept verbal abuse
- 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

- 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:** (can include time lines for responses)

1. 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)
2. Head of Year
3. Relevant HOF depending on which Phase the child is in
4. Vice Principal
5. Principal

If, in relation to a particular matter, a parent believes that it would be inappropriate to follow the aforesaid 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—students, parents, teachers, or the principal—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 two other faculty members 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
- If the letter/note is hand written, make sure that it is legible. If it is typed, make sure that it is at least standard 12-point Aerial font
- Copies should be printed and filed of any correspondence via electronic form
- 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. Be organised with your thoughts
- 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. Don't place a formal teacher's desk between yourself and the parents. Use the same type of chair
- Be prepared! Have your agenda ready. Have materials available that show the good and/or bad of the student
- Always start the conference out with something positive
- Be attentive and listen
- Never talk about other students or teachers
- Avoid the use of jargon
- End the conference with something positive
- Let them know that you care about their child
- If the situation becomes difficult, call the office for assistance immediately
- Keep a conference journal. Record the date, time, reason, and key points discussed in the conference

### **Miscellaneous**

- All parents need to receive positive information regarding their child at least once per term. This communication is logged and given to the Head of School
- 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!