



Academy Communication Policy

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1. Introduction and aims

We believe that clear, open communication between the academy 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 academy improve, through feedback and consultation with parents/carers
- Builds trust between home and academy, which helps the academy 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 academy communicates with parents/carers
- Setting clear standards and expectations for responding to communication from parents/carers
- Helping parents/carers reach the member of academy 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 all persons with parental responsibility, including a pupil's parents, carers and guardians.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- Protecting academy staff from any inappropriate communication from parents
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy
- Regularly reviewing this policy

2.2 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the related policies (see below)
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)
- Accurate and timely logging of all contact with parents

Staff will **aim** to respond to communication during core academy hours of 8:30am to 4:20pm 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. Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core academy hours or during academy holidays.

Please see also our Workload Policy, Staff Wellbeing Policy and ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy.

2.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

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

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be referred to the Headteacher.

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 the academy. Parents are advised to 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 or text

We use email or text to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Upcoming academy events
- Scheduled academy closures (for example, for staff training days)
- Academy surveys or consultations
- Class activities
- Requests for parents to contact us
- Progress reports
- Payments for lunches or trips
- Short-notice changes to the academy day
- Emergency academy closures (for instance, due to bad weather)

Emails may be sent from staff email addresses or via our academy communications application Arbor.

Text messages/SMS may be sent from staff work mobile phones (if a staff member has one) or via our academy communications application. Staff will not use their personal mobile phone to communicate with parents and parents should not be provided with a staff member's personal mobile phone number.

3.2 Phone calls

Parents can expect to receive weekly telephone calls from their child's form tutor and/or their keyworker to give brief updates on progress, engagement and behaviour. Where parents are not able to answer, staff may leave a voicemail message with a brief overview or may ask parents to call the academy. Staff will not use a child full name including first and surname in a voice message. Where a staff member chooses to use their personal mobile phone to communicate with parents, they will withhold their phone number. All phone calls are logged as being made in a pupil's contact log.

3.3 Letters

We send the following letters home:

- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms
- Information about literacy interventions
- Attendance updates
- Post 16 courses.

Letters may be sent home via email as an attachment or via the post. Please ensure that the academy has accurate and up-to-date contact details including email address and postal address.

Parents are advised to alert the academy office if they require specific adjustments to be able to access our letters such as a specific font, size of text or translation facility for overseas families.

3.4 Reports

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

- Half termly progress reports (6 times per year), covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, and their attendance and behaviour as a data report
- 3 times per year parents will receive an updated ILP (Individual Learning Plan) report which provides information about their child's individual progress. At each of these points, your child's keyworker will contact you to discuss this report including progress and achievement and set the next terms targets.

3.5 Meetings

Parents can talk with site leads, form tutors and teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum or schemes of work, their child's wellbeing, or any other area of concern, by any of the above methods. We do not hold whole-academy parents' evening(s) due to the distances that our pupils live from our sites in the north of Derbyshire.

The academy may contact parents to arrange meetings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing. Parents will also be invited to attend meetings if a pupil has been suspended and a reintegration meeting is required.

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. Pupils with an EHCP will be invited to attend Annual Review meetings.

For children in care, carers will be invited to PEP (Personal Education Plan) meetings. These may be online.

3.6 Academy website

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

- Academy times and term dates
- Events and announcements
- Curriculum information
- Mandatory policies and procedures
- Contact information including our SENDCo and designated Safeguarding Lead and pastoral members
- Post 16 destination and open events

Parents should check the website before contacting the academy.

Our academy website and induction packs for new pupils includes a full academy calendar for the academic year.

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

3.7 Academy social media

Our academy has a Facebook page and an X (formerly Twitter) page where news, updates and job vacancies will be posted. Staff will not communicate directly with parents via our social media sites about their child and will not accept friends requests from parents or pupils.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/EsteemMAT or www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089926302451

X: @NED_SC

4. How parents and carers can communicate with the academy

Parents should use the contacts on the academy website to identify the most appropriate person to contact about a query or issue, including the academy office number and email address.

Parents are asked to inform the academy via email if their child will be absent, including the reason for the absence. Parents can communicate with us via telephone call to the office or via email to admin about pupil absence.

If a child is absent from school, and we have had no indication of the reason, we will attempt to contact you/your second nominated emergency contact by message to find out the reason for the absence.

4.1 Email

Parents can contact the academy, or the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues via email in the first instance.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within 2 working days.

If a query or concern is urgent, and parents need a response sooner than this, they should call the academy office.

4.2 Phone calls

If parents need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should call the academy office on 01246 237640 and discuss the concern with the office staff. The academy office is open between 8am and 4pm, Monday - Friday during term-time. At all other times there is an answering service available to take your message. Office staff will pass your message on to the most appropriate staff member to respond to the concern. This may not be who the parent has requested to speak to. It will be unusual for a staff member to be able to take a call during the academy day due to teaching responsibilities.

If the parent feels that an issue is urgent, they should call the academy office and explain their concern. The office staff will triage the concern and respond accordingly.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

The Designated safeguarding Leads number can be found on the academy website along with the Pastoral Officers numbers and email addresses. They can be contacted directly.

4.3 Meetings

Meetings should always be pre-arranged with members of staff. We would advise you not to arrive at the academy with the expectation that you can be seen without an appointment as this is unlikely to be possible.

5. Inclusion

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the academy and in their preferred way. Parents who need help communicating with the academy can request the following support:

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

We can make additional arrangements if necessary. Please contact the academy office to discuss these. We welcome other suggestions.

6. Parent Voice

We welcome and value feedback from parents/carers about our academy policies and practices. We may invite parents/carers to contribute to formal surveys and report back on the outcomes. For instance this takes place to capture parent and pupil voice about our RSHE policy and curriculum, barriers to attendance and safety in the academy.

If there are times when you feel that you would like to say something about the service or treatment that you receive and you feel you need to complain, then please follow the procedure outlined here:

- In the first instance you should call the academy office to discuss your concern
- If you are still dissatisfied with our response, it may be that this needs to be escalated to a site lead if they have not been involved with the academy response so far. If a site lead has been involved, you may feel the need to escalate a concern to a member of the Senior Leadership Team such as an Assistant Headteacher of the Deputy Headteacher.
- If all of the above has not resolved your legitimate concern, then please refer to our complaints policy on the website and follow the procedure for making a formal complaint to the Headteacher. The above procedures should have been followed above prior to making a formal complaint. If this has not been followed, the Headteacher will advise that a site lead or more appropriate colleague attempt to listen and resolve a parental concern in the first instance.

Parents/carers should be advised that directly contacting individual school governors or the local authority is not a short cut to having an issue or concern resolved. The governors' and local authority's role is strategic and any complaints received by them will be directed back to the academy to be resolved through the academy's Complaints Procedure.

We also like to know what you are happy with, so please tell us if you would like to share positive feedback, using the methods above.

7. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every 3 years.

8. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- ICT and internet acceptable use
- Mobile phone policy
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints procedures
- Commissioning agreement
- Staff wellbeing policy
- Pupil wellbeing policy
- Workload policy