

# Communication with Parents & Carers

## Guidance

Academic Year	2018-2019
Written by/on	KCG
Responsibility for updates	KCG
Last review date	July 2018
Next review date	October 2019

## **Communication with Parents and Carers**

### **Guidance Notes**

#### **Rationale**

Smith's Wood Academy recognises the importance of clear and effective communication with all stakeholders (students and parents/carers, governors, Local Authority, outside agencies, national bodies, etc), and is committed to being open and accessible for all who have an interest in the school or a need to communicate with the school.

The key stakeholders for a school are parents and pupils and these guidance notes address the main ways in which the Academy ensures effective two-way communication between home and school.

Communications can take a variety of forms: verbal (through meetings or by telephone), written (through letters, notices issued through MyEd, the school electronic communication system, or email for example). Occasionally a communication may be received second hand or through an intermediary.

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be problematic in a school, where teachers may be teaching full-time and running clubs, or otherwise working with pupils at lunchtime or after school. Parents may be exasperated if they feel that a message elicits no immediate reply, when in fact there has been no available opportunity for the member of staff to reach a telephone to return a call. For this reason, the school is proactive in encouraging use of modern communication methods, with staff email contacts being made available. Parents/carers are asked to provide an email address for prompt and effective communication.

Parents also have access to MyEd through an online app, as well as the Academy website and the social media account, Twitter to view general school information as well as to view information specific to their child.

#### **Aims of these guidance notes:**

1. To improve the quality of service given to students at Smith's Wood Academy by ensuring that effective communication and consultation takes place between the school, parents, students and other stakeholders;
2. To improve the quality of service by ensuring robust processes for consultation between the school, parents and pupils on key service areas.

#### **Communication Methods**

Communication between the school and parents currently operates in the following ways:

1. Prospective parents are invited to an Open Evening in the Autumn term preceding the year of entry to the Academy. All prospective parents receive an Academy prospectus;
2. Prospective parents are invited, along with students, to an induction meeting in July where the main channels of communication are outlined and information about the Academy is presented;

3. Parents are invited to attend Progress Days and Parents' Evenings to review their child's academic progress. Other parental meetings are calendared as appropriate and necessary eg. Year 11 Preparation for GCSE Meeting;

4. Communication about pupil progress takes place formally for each pupil through progress reports, reports following end of mid-year and end of year examinations and Parents' Evenings;

5. MyEd provides parents with access to a range of school communication and documents. MyEd can be used to access real-time data about a child's attendance and is used to send out all letters, newsletters etc. Traditional post is used very infrequently so it is essential that parents and carers register with MyEd;

MyEd allows parents to initiate communication themselves with the Academy through a messaging service;

6. The Academy website contains up to date information and news bulletins. It also provides access to key Academy policies and information about the taught curriculum and extra-curriculum activities;

7. The Academy uses the Vivo system as part of the rewards structure. Parents are able to log on to this system to view their child's Vivo account;

8. Details about events at the school are published in the school's newsletter 'In The Know' which is published fortnightly. 'In The Know' is emailed to parents via MyEd, posted on our website, and Tweeted. The school newsletter is a key vehicle for communicating in a variety of ways; alerting parents and pupils to forthcoming issues, celebrating the life of the school, petitioning for parental views, publishing the results of consultations, etc.;

9. The Academy uses Twitter regularly – please ensure that you 'follow us'. Twitter is particularly useful for celebrating good news stories and providing real-time updates and reminders;

10. The Head of Academy and other senior leaders host Parents' Forum, usually half termly. This is a key meeting in the Academy calendar as it allows leaders to share key developments, respond to feedback parents may have and importantly, to seek parental opinions on proposed new initiatives;

11. During the course of the Academic year a number of events are scheduled to support parents; examples include attendance team coffee mornings and parental workshops to support parents in safeguarding their children.

### **Communication - Service Standards**

Smith's Wood Academy warmly welcomes students, parents and other visitors onto our school site. The majority of visitors to Smith's Wood Academy are aware of, and respect, that our employees have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and to work in an environment that is free from any form of discrimination, abuse, bullying or harassment. This helps to promote the best possible learning environment for the students at the Academy. Therefore, Smith's Wood Academy does not tolerate discrimination, bullying, abuse or harassment of any kind towards any employee by any visitors, parents, employees or other third parties.

Parents are discouraged from using social media to express any concerns or dissatisfaction that they may have in relation to the Academy. Instead they are asked to raise any issues in a more professional and respectful manner using the channels set out in the guidance notes. Any allegations of discrimination, bullying or harassment will be investigated and appropriate action taken.

When communicating with children about school please remember that we all have bad days, and we all have days when we get home and need to offload to our family – children are no different. Please do bear in mind that the version of events you hear at home may not be the same as the reality. For this reason, we would encourage families to wait before judging a situation and seek out the truth before reacting. Our children need to know that the adults at home and school will handle issues with consistency and with a team approach. Please support our staff in reiterating this message at home and trusting that our staff will handle issues in school with fairness and in accordance with our policies

The school has published the following service standards to ensure a prompt response for communication requests by parents. These standards are reviewed on an annual basis by the school's administrative team.

The following response times are our targets and are usually adhered to:

#### **Responding to parents**

Parents may contact the Academy via email, MyEd, telephone or by letter. Please do not attend reception and expect to see a member of staff there and then. Schools are busy environments where both teachers and support staff work to tight schedules; it is unlikely that staff members will be able to come to reception to meet you without a prior appointment.

The Academy aims to respond to these communications within 48 hours (2 working days) during term time. Communications received out of hours or at weekends will be dealt with during school working hours.

**Any parent that believes the nature of their communication to be related to a child protection or safeguarding matter they should make this clear in their initial communication. They should seek to contact Mrs Phillipa Brookes, the Academy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay.**

#### **Communication with the Senior Leadership Team**

It is often the case that subject teachers, subject leaders or pastoral leaders are better placed to respond to questions and queries posed by parents. Once these avenues have been exhausted the Senior Leadership Team can be contacted by letter, 'phone or email.

A request for a meeting with the Head of Academy or one of the Deputy Heads of Academy will usually be arranged within 72 hours (3 working days).

#### **Complaints Procedure**

Please refer to the complaints procedure which can be found on the Academy website. In the first instance, all concerns should be addressed to the most appropriate member of staff (See Appendix A for staff contact details).

There is a system in place for monitoring the nature of complaints received by the Academy in order to identify trends and address any recurring issues.

Please note that all key communications with parents will be logged within SIMS, the Academy's pupil information management system.

### Appendix A: Key points of contact within the Academy

To discuss <b>curriculum related matters</b> , including progress in a subject, Study, behavior in a particular subject area, please contact your child's classroom teacher in the first instance. Should you then require additional support please contact the relevant Subject Leader.			
Teaching staff	To contact your child's classroom teacher please send a message via MyEd or to the General Office <a href="mailto:office@smiths-wood.com">office@smiths-wood.com</a> . Please ensure that the correspondence is marked For the Attention of (name the member of staff that you wish to liaise with).		
Subject Leaders	Subject area	Subject Leader	Email address
	English	Mrs M Corrigan	corrigan.m@smiths-wood.com
	Mathematics	Mr D Clarke	clarke.d@smiths-wood.com
	Science	Mr S Thorpe	thorpe.s@smiths-wood.com
	History	Miss N Hashmi	hashmi.n@smiths-wood.com
	Geography	Mr D Giles	giles.d@smiths-wood.com
	Religious Education	Miss D James	james.d@smiths-wood.com
	Spanish	Mr S Casanova	casanova.s@smiths-wood.com
	Drama	TBC	
	Music	Mrs L Hayward	hayward.l@smiths-wood.com
	Food Technology	TBC	
	Textiles Technology	TBC	
	Physical Education	Mrs L Ellis-Martin	ellis.l@smiths-wood.com
	ICT	Mr R Dodd	dodd.r@smiths-wood.com
	Business Studies	Mr R Dodd	dodd.r@smiths-wood.com
	Travel & Tourism	Mrs W Seward	seward.w@smiths-wood.com
	Media Studies	Mr D Heeley	heeley.d@smiths-wood.com
	Health and Social Care	Mrs W Seward	seward.w@smiths-wood.com
To discuss issues related to the <b>behaviour</b> of your child please contact:			
Academy Behaviour Lead – Mr J Craig		craig.j@smiths-wood.com	
Assistant Head of Academy (Behaviour) – Dr J Morris		morris.j@smiths-wood.com	
To discuss issues related to the <b>pastoral support</b> of your child please contact the relevant Excellence Leader in the first instance. Should you then require additional support please contact Mrs J Mace.			

Year 7 Excellence Leader – Miss J Butcher	butcher.j@smiths-wood.com
Year 8 Excellence Leader – Mr C Barber	barber.c@smiths-wood.com
Year 9 Excellence Leader – Mr W Rose	rosezz.w@smiths-wood.com
Year 10 Excellence Leader – Mr O'Connor	oconnor.o@smiths-wood.com
Year 11 Excellence Leader – Mr Collins	collins.m@smiths-wood.com
Assistant Head of Academy (Student well-being) – Mrs J Mace	mace.j@smiths-wood.com
To talk to Academy staff about matters relating to <b>Special Educational Needs</b> or to the <b>safeguarding or child protection</b> of your child or another child:	
Academy SENDCo – Mrs C Dorrofield	dorrofield.c@smiths-wood.com
Deputy SENDCo – Mrs S McManus	mcmanus.s@smiths-wood.com
<b>Designated Safeguarding Lead – Mrs P Brookes</b>	<b>p.brookes@smiths-wood.com</b>
To discuss matters related to <b>attendance</b> please contact the relevant Deputy Excellence Leader. To report an absence or to request a leave of absence please contact the Attendance Manager.	
Year 7 Deputy Excellence Leader – post vacant.	
Year 8 Deputy Excellence Leader – Mrs L Hewson	hewson.l@smiths-wood.com
Year 9 Deputy Excellence Leader – Mrs G Elliot	elliottz.g@smiths-wood.com
Year 10 Deputy Excellence Leader – Mrs J Craddock	craddock.j@smiths-wood.com
Year 11 Deputy Excellence Leader – Mrs J Cronin	cronin.j@smiths-wood.com
Attendance Manager	Position currently vacant
<b>Academy Leadership Team</b>	
Mr A Deen – Deputy Head of Academy	deen.a@smiths-wood.com
Mr R Cornell – Deputy Head of Academy	cornell.r@smiths-wood.com
Dr J Morris – Assistant Head of Academy (Behaviour)	morris.j@smiths-wood.com
Mrs J Mace – Assistant Head of Academy (Behaviour)	mace.j@smiths-wood.com
Mrs M Corrigan – Associate Assistant Head of Academy (English)	corrigan.m@smiths-wood.com
Mr D Clarke – Associate Assistant Head of Academy (Mathematics)	clarke.d@smiths-wood.com
Mr S Thorpe – Associate Assistant Head of Academy (Science)	thorpe.s@smiths-wood.com
Mr D Giles – Associate Assistant Head of Academy (Humanities & Spanish)	giles.d@smiths-wood.com
Mrs W Seward – Associate Assistant Head of Academy (Work Related Learning)	seward.w@smiths-wood.com
XXXX – Associate Assistant Head of Academy (Performing & Creative Arts)	Position currently vacant
Mrs C Dorrofield – SENDCo	dorrofield.c@smiths-wood.com
<b>Mrs P Brookes - DSL</b>	<b>p.brookes@smiths-wood.com</b>

Please avoid addressing any correspondence to multiple members of staff as this can sometimes delay the response time.

Please note: if you wish to report or make an allegation regarding a member of staff then this must be reported, without delay, directly to the Head of Academy. The Head of Academy can be contact via her PA Mrs Sharan Kainth s215skainth@smiths-wood.solihull.sch.uk . Telephone 0121 7884100 extension 4762.