

Communication and Contact Policy

Freemantle Church of England Community Academy Trust



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1. Introduction and aims

At Freemantle, we place great importance on working in a positive, reasonable partnership with parents and carers, and we believe that clear communication between home and the academy is essential. We also recognise that it can sometimes be challenging for families to contact teaching staff due to their full timetables, and that parents and carers themselves lead very busy lives.

The aim of this policy is to promote clear and open communication by outlining how the academy communicates with parents and carers, setting out clear standards and expectations for responding to communication from families, and helping parents and carers reach the member of staff best placed to address their query or concern so they can receive a timely and appropriate response.

In the following sections, we will use 'parents' to refer to both parents and carers.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with academy policy
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)

Staff will **aim** to respond to communication during core school hours 8am until 5pm Monday to Friday, or during 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.

2.2 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

Abusive or aggressive behaviour – in person, by phone or email – will not be tolerated. Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be investigated.

Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours or during school holidays, whilst also respecting that some staff work part time, or have a shared teaching/leadership commitment.

3. How we communicate with parents and carers

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 or ParentMail and letters home

We use these online platforms to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, INSET days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities, such as educational visits, or teacher requests

3.2 Parent Information Bulletin (PIB)

We send out a PIB every Friday during term time. This provides information about upcoming events, highlights attendance and safeguarding matters, and shares recent events or activities that have taken place in school.

3.3 Reports

Parents receive regular reports about their child's learning, including:

- An end-of-year report outlining their achievement across the curriculum, their progress, and their attendance
- A report on their Year 1 Phonics Screen and KS2 SATs outcomes

We also arrange meetings at points across the year where parents can speak with their child's teacher(s) about their achievement and progress (see the section below).

3.4 Meetings

We hold parents' evening(s) in the autumn and spring terms. 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 other area of concern.

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

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.

3.5 Phone calls

We may contact parents and carers by telephone for a range of reasons, including matters relating to attendance, behaviour, and other important information that requires timely communication.

3.6 School website

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

- School times and term dates
- Important events and announcements
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information
- Information about before and after-school provision

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

Face to face conversations with teachers/and or senior leaders at the beginning/end of the day are the quickest conduit for contact, alternatively communication by email, phone or letter are appropriate.

Notes via pupils or an informal discussion at 'drop off time' are by far the best way to get a message to a teacher promptly and should be used for the majority of everyday communication. The pupil is responsible for showing the note to their teacher. This is the best way to ask them to contact you if you require a more detailed conversation.

Safeguarding and Welfare Concerns

Any communication relating to a safeguarding, child protection or significant welfare concern will be treated as a priority and responded to as soon as possible in line with the academy's safeguarding procedures and statutory guidance, including *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)*.

Parents and carers should not wait for a response via routine communication channels if they believe a child is at immediate risk of harm, and should contact the academy immediately by telephone or, where a child is at immediate risk of harm, contact emergency services.

4.1 Email

To report a child's absence, parents should either phone the academy reception on 02380227925 or email adminoffice@freemantleschool.co.uk

For enquiries regarding SEND, these should be emailed to SenCo@freemantleschool.co.uk or through talking to Laura Allen, SENCo, or Aaron Banning, Deputy SENCo.

All other enquiries should be directed to school via info@freemantleschool.co.uk From this email inbox, emails will be redistributed to the relevant staff member.

Emails sent directly to teacher emails may not be responded to, and these should be directed through the email addresses outlined above. This enables our leadership team to also have oversight of communications.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within 3 working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 5 working days. Part time staff may take longer to reply.

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

Please note lessons will never be interrupted for teachers to take calls.

Please note that safeguarding, child protection and welfare concerns are exempt from these response timescales and will be prioritised and responded to promptly in line with school safeguarding procedures.

4.2 Phone calls

If parents need to speak to a specific member of staff about a non-urgent matter, they should email the school office and the relevant member of staff will contact them within the time scales noted above.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will respond to schedule a phone call at a convenient time.

If the issue is urgent, parents should call the academy office.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

For more general enquiries, please call the academy office.

4.3 Meetings

The day-to-day care, welfare and safety of your child is managed by the person who is placed closest to them. In the first instance, please approach the following members of staff who are responsible for your child in the following order:

1. Classroom Teacher (if query is relevant to a specific subject)
2. Admin Team (if related to school meals, medication, attendance matters or other admin tasks)
3. Assistant Headteacher (specific to key stage)
4. SENCo (if query is relevant to a child's SEND needs)
5. Headteacher

Meetings should always be pre-arranged with members of staff and can only be 'ad-hoc' if staff are ordinarily available and have no prior commitments.

If you urgently need to see someone, for instance if there is a serious family emergency or a child protection issue, please phone ahead and the office team will do their best to find a senior member of staff to see you, however operational demand may mean a delay.

For non-urgent meetings we will aim to meet with you within five working days. The academy will determine the level of urgency at its discretion, to enable it to manage multiple demands.

4.4 Home-school communications

Our preferred method of contacting you is via ParentMail.

We use our social media and website to promote pupil achievements, subject information and generic educational information.

Individual communication books

The academy does not routinely operate daily or weekly individual home-school communication books for pupils.

We recognise the importance of strong communication between home and school, particularly for pupils with SEND. Information about a child's learning, wellbeing, behaviour, attendance or support needs will be communicated through the academy's established communication channels, including ParentMail, email, telephone calls and meetings where appropriate.

Significant incidents, safeguarding concerns, behavioural matters or welfare concerns will be recorded and managed through the academy's internal recording systems and relevant school procedures. A communication book should not be relied upon as a formal record of such matters.

5. Monitoring and review

The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy annually.

Communication with parents and carers is important to us, and we will continue to monitor this policy and our approach to improve the process further.

The policy will be approved by the board of directors.