



PURPLE OAKS ACADEMY

Family Engagement & Communication Policy

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Introduction

Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It involves:

- Respectful listening
- Respecting confidentiality
- Developing and sharing understanding
- Building trust
- Management of relationships and appropriate involvement of people
- An awareness of attitude and behaviour as well as the clarity of the message
- Coordinated, timely, and effective action if required

Aim

At Purple Oaks Academy, we are committed to working in close partnership with parents, carers and the wider community to ensure a consistent, supportive experience for every student. We know that strong relationships are built on clear, effective communication.

Consistency is at the heart of our practice. Whether in the classroom or at home, we aim to ensure that communication is clear, predictable and meaningful for all members of our school community. This includes sharing information in ways that reflect our structured approach, using clarity of expectation, routines and, where appropriate, visual communication to support understanding.

We use a range of communication methods—some required, and others chosen because they reflect what we believe is most effective for our students and families. Our approach ensures that messages are not only timely and professional, but also accessible and consistent with the strategies we use in school to support our students.

We recognise that students thrive when there is alignment between school and home. By working together and maintaining consistent approaches, we can reduce anxiety, build independence and support every child to achieve their best.

Objectives

At Purple Oaks Academy, we believe children do best when school and home work together. When parents and carers understand what we are aiming for and how we support students in school, they are better able to reinforce this at home—and together, we can make a real difference.

We are committed to keeping communication open, clear and supportive so that everyone feels informed and involved. Across our school community, we aim for communication that:

- Keeps staff, pupils, families, governors and others well informed
- Is honest, respectful and professional
- Is clear and easy to understand, avoiding unnecessary jargon

- Is timely, so that questions and concerns are responded to appropriately
- Uses the most suitable method for the message and the audience
- Reflects our wider school policies and consistent ways of working

By working together and communicating well, we can create a consistent and supportive environment where every child feels safe, understood and able to succeed.

Roles and Responsibilities

This section details the responsibilities of the different groups within the school.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

- To ensure information is made available to staff in a timely manner and via appropriate channels, where practicable face to face and making use of Microsoft Teams and Outlook emails.
- To ensure that staff have the relevant information available to communicate with colleagues effectively
- To maintain open channels of two-way communication and to listen to feedback and comment from all staff
- To ensure communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- Monitor the implementation of this policy All Staff

Staff

- To communicate regularly with each other, preferably face to face, to ensure information is available and understood within the context of the classroom and working environment.
- To ensure they are informed and have access to information in order to be as effective as possible in their role and to support their work within the school
- To respond to communication from parents in line with this policy
- To work 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 8:30am to 5:00pm 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 and carers

- To ensure that communication with the school is honest and respectful at all times
- To make every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance
- To respond to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- To checking all communications from the school

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with our parent code of conduct.

Parents should not expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours 8:30am – 5:00pm, or during school holidays.

Internal Communication

- All staff receive an induction with important information about organisation and procedures within the academy.
- Copies of key policies and information are available online.
- All staff have access to the school calendar online.
- There is an integrated programme of meetings to facilitate the involvement of staff both formal and informal: e.g. informal briefings for important information, teachers' meetings, Office meetings, Phase meetings, whole staff meetings.
- There is a weekly bulletin that goes out on the Thursday before the coming week to staff so that they are aware of upcoming events and key information and training opportunities.
- All formal meetings are structured and minutes taken. All members are invited to contribute to the agenda prior to the meeting.
- Email is a quick, effective way of communicating information however it should not replace face-to-face (or virtual) meetings where discussion is required.
- Emails should not be sent past 6pm or over the weekend.
- Injury information is shared online via Medical tracker directly from the first aider when First Aid is given. If the injury is caused by another student then a phone call to the parent/carer must be made prior to the Medical Tracker information being sent to give context.
- Email is the preferred method used for communication of information to parents directly with the class team to give information to families about care needs, learning and achievements on a day-to-day basis. Email correspondence with parents must be saved onto CPOMs by class teams.
- A weekly newsletter is emailed to parents and carers each Monday with information about upcoming events, links to letters for classes and key information.

Parents and carers should receive limited emails from school:

1. Information from the class team re: their child's day
2. Weekly newsletter information emailed on a Monday.
3. Information email from medical tracker should first aid be needed.
4. *Critical information about your child: For example: regarding medication needs or following staff needing use physical intervention to keep their child safe. This will usually be from a member of the Pastoral Team.*

Student forum (student voice)

The School Council is made up of two children from each class who are voted for by their peers at the beginning of each school year

The School Council meet with the Principal/Head of school or Deputy Head at least once each half-term.

Prior to each meeting School Councillors take comments from their peers on school issues and following each meeting, they feedback to their class

Minutes and actions of these meetings are taken and are shared with School Council members and class teachers.

Parent and Carer Forum (Families voice)

The Parent and Carer forum is made up of interested parties who wish to have their input into school life. The Forum meets with the Deputy Head at least once each half term.

Prior to each meeting the agenda for the meeting is set for the meetings and shared via the Weekly newsletter for parents and carers.

Minutes and actions of these meetings are taken and shared with the wider family community via the weekly newsletter for parents and carers and via the Weekly bulletin for staff.

External Communication

How we, the school, communicates with parents and carers:

Emails

At Purple Oaks Academy, email is our main way of sharing information and updates with parents and carers. Class teams will email parents and carers directly to give feedback on a day to day basis about a child's care, learning and achievements.

We use Arbor to send out Weekly parent and carer newsletters on a Monday and end of term celebration newsletters.

We recognise that while email is an important communication tool, it does not replace the value of personal interaction. Where needed, we will always prioritise face-to-face conversations or more direct communication to ensure clarity, understanding and strong relationships.

While most communication is shared electronically,

We are also mindful that not all families access communication in the same way, and we will adapt our approach to ensure that all parents and carers can remain informed and involved.

Our aim is to communicate in a way that is clear, consistent and supportive, helping to build strong partnerships between school and home and ensuring the best outcomes for our students.

Letters

All letters are sent via the weekly parent and carer newsletter. If parents and carers prefer a paper copy of the newsletter then please contact the office they will print it and send it home each week. Parents should not receive letters outside of the parent and carer newsletter.

Telephone Calls

The school will phone parents if there is an urgent issue concerning their child or specific issue. A member of staff will call the first named emergency contact as listed. Where the contact is unavailable, a call will then be made to the second named contact and so forth.

In the event that no live contact can be made, the member of staff will either leave an answer phone message or ensure that repeat calls continue to be made to the contact numbers where possible.

Communication with separated parents

Requests from split parents for separate communication are accommodated

Newsletters and documents are available to both parents and carers with other necessary documentation either e-mailed or posted out on request.

Separate appointments to see the class teachers at parents' evenings and during Annual Reviews are accommodated if necessary

Additional annual reports are posted on request.

Parent Visits to school

The dates of the following opportunities are communicated via the Parent Carer newsletter. Parent teacher meetings take place three times per year, these are booked by the parents via Arbor and an email will be sent to parents to confirm that bookings are open. This gives them the opportunity to celebrate their child's successes and to support their child in areas where there is a particular need for improvement.

Families are welcome to request additional meetings should they have further concerns regarding their child's progress or well-being throughout the year.

Families are invited to attend visits and trips with their child throughout the year.

Parents and carers are invited to attend Parent Forums each half term, as arranged

Families are invited to join the school for enterprise events, sports days, carol concerts, family learning week and other events publicised via the Parent and carer weekly bulletin.

Reports

Once a year, we provide a full written report to each child's parents and carer on their progress and achievement throughout the year. This is sent to parents and carers in July. **This will be emailed to parents.**

As part of the Annual Review process, parents and carers will also receive a report on the progress made on the Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) throughout the previous year. This will happen yearly around the anniversary date of the EHCP being issued. Parents and carers will receive the report 2 weeks prior to the scheduled meeting with the EHC lead. This is the opportunity for parents and carers and students to have their say about what is working well and what is not working so well and celebrate achievements. This information is then shared with the local authority case worker to ensure that the students EHCP is as up to date as possible.

Annual Parent and Carer Survey

Once a year, the academy send a questionnaire via email to parents and carers and the results are analysed to inform the Senior Leadership team and used to improve the school.

How parents and carers can communicate with the school

Teachers welcome the opportunity to talk to parents and carers, and they should always be the first point of contact for parents if they have any questions or concerns about their child.

If the concern cannot be dealt with by the class teacher, or the parent/carer is not happy with the outcome, then the Assistant Principal for Primary or Secondary depending on the phase the student belongs to.

If parents/carers still feel the issue is not resolved then they should be contact the Principal/Head of Academy via the School Office.

If the concern is related to SEN, it may be appropriate to meet with the SENCO/Deputy Principal.

Families are encouraged to use e-mail as a means of providing a quick, effective way of communicating information about their child or to arrange a meeting with their teacher.

- If a parent communicates with the school using email with a concern or complaint the complaints policy and procedure is to be followed and forwarded to the Principal/Head of school. **The complaints Policy can be found here (add link)**

- Parents and carers are encouraged to contact the class team or office team with general requests using email where possible.
- Parents and carers are asked to contact the Designated safeguarding lead on dsl-safeguarding@purpleoaksacademy.org or by telephoning the academy office on 01604434471.
- Staff will endeavour to acknowledge and respond to emails in a timely manner, please remember that teachers are teaching and their priority is being with the children.

Telephone Calls

- Parents are encouraged to phone the school if there is any immediate information the school needs to know e.g. pupil sickness or to make an appointment with a staff member
- The school will endeavour to respond quickly and appropriately
- Office staff will not interrupt teaching for staff to answer a telephone call unless it is an emergency.

Mobile phones: Staff

- Mobile phones should not be used during lessons or when in contact with the children
- In exceptional cases, such as family illness, the circumstances should be discussed with the Principal/Head of school
- Non-intrusive work-related mobile phone use is acceptable during PPA or management time
- During trips and off-site provision, staff should ensure they can be contacted by either mobile phone or landline, at all times

Mobile Phones: Students

- Students who bring mobile phones/smart watches and other electronic devices etc to school must hand them into the office at the start of each day and collect them at the end of the day.

Mobile Phone: Parents and Carers

- Parents and Carers are requested to turn the sound off their mobile phones and keep them out of site whilst on school premises.
- If parents and carers need to take calls/make calls during their time at school, we request they make their way to the front of the building, back out through reception to the car park. This will provide privacy for the call and also allow a better signal.
- Parents are welcome to photograph or film school events such as shows, or sports day, but images that include any children other than their own should not be published (e.g. on social media sites).
- Parents and visitors are required to turn phones off when volunteering in classrooms
- Under no circumstances is mobile phone use permitted when helping with swimming.
- Making voice recordings on a mobile phone or other device during meetings or discussions with staff or governors is not permitted.

Monitoring and Review

We use parent and community feedback to continually self-evaluate and consider ways that our communication system can be improved. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or sooner if necessary.

Although it is a rare occurrence, when communication becomes inappropriate, aggressive, vexatious, persistent, or disproportionate and the school deems it is unacceptable, then actions will be put in place. This behaviour will not be tolerated and may result in a parent/carer being banned from the premises. These actions will involve: The Principal/Head of school, Senior leadership and the Trust, and if appropriate, the police. As stated earlier, 'communications should be honest, respectful, ethical and professional'. Staff will strive to adhere to this and expect this to be reciprocated by the wider school community.

Links with other policies

This policy should be read alongside:

Appropriate use policy

Codes of conduct (Parents and Carers and Staff)

Complaints Policy

GDPR