

The Hayfield School Policy Statement: COMMUNICATION
Reviewed: February 2010

RATIONALE AND PURPOSE:

Our customers are students, parents and others who have reason to visit, or contact the school - in person, by letter or phone; or e-mail. We seek to respond with courtesy and helpfulness to all queries and questions and encourage parents to contact us if they have a concern or a problem. Good relationships depend upon a commitment by all of us (teaching staff; ancillary and support staff) to respond in a helpful and courteous manner.

BROAD GUIDELINES:

Internal Communication

We seek to ensure teaching staff communicate on issues relating to pupils/parents in a variety of ways:

- Daily briefing for all teaching staff and key support staff at 8.40 am.
- Meetings of Leadership Team, Curriculum Leaders and Year Tutors on a regular basis to discuss pupil problems and successes, parental contacts etc.
- Updating our pupil database by staff on a regular basis as a record of events including parental contacts.
- Bespoke reports for pupils causing concern to be signed by staff and parents.
- Reports by teaching staff to Heads of Departments and by Group Tutors to Year Tutors where a problem has arisen possibly needing parental contact.
- Monitoring of student planners by parents and Group Tutors.
- Parental Survey, three reports per year and parents evenings over the academic year.
- Daily 'white board' to record events out of school and return times etc to help keep staff informed if a query from a parent.
- A Staff Consultative Committee meets formally to discuss staff concerns and needs.
- Group Tutor/Year Tutor reviews of Tutor Group individuals including parent contact.

Incoming Contacts from Parents, Community and Outside Agencies

- All parents are asked to sign a Home School Agreement when pupils join the school
- We seek to respond to a query in writing or by phone within 48 hours (2 school days) and if the response time is extended to explain to a customer why there is a delay to allow for appropriate consultation on data collection.
- Queries are channelled as appropriate and available - by hand if urgent; e-mail, memo, or by internal phone system.
- We ask parents wherever possible to make an appointment if a query requires face-to-face discussion, and in addition to this, the Headteacher holds half termly surgery, which provide another forum for parental engagement.
- Support staff are asked to:-
 - Answer the phone promptly
 - Apologise for any undue delay
 - Respond warmly and helpfully
 - Avoid becoming emotional even if the caller is irate: seek to be non-confrontational, calm and rational
 - Record accurately the name of the caller, phone number, organisation and reason for call, plus appropriate time to phone back
 - Pass on telephone call information clearly to the appropriate link in the school checking they have received the message if clearly very important
 - Be sensitive to callers own time management problems
 - Avoid making controversial statements
- Phones are normally manned from 8.00 am to 5.00 pm seeking to ensure that a member of the ancillary staff is in this area throughout
- We have a statement on our policy on our website.
- Visitors arriving on site are asked to 'sign in' in the Visitors Book, and if proceeding further will be issued with a visitors badge. The secretary in reception will contact the member of staff to be seen. We seek to treat a visitor with courtesy and to offer them a seat etc. Visitors are escorted by a member of the support staff or a student to their contact on site.
- The Site management, or the Head of FE and Community will take phone calls after 6.00 pm. We have cover on site from 6.00 to 10.00 pm, but not always in their office or reception area due to other duties. Site Staff have two-way radios for ease of contact during the school day by school staff, or a visitor related to site matters.
- We seek to arrange appointments with school staff at mutually convenient times between staff and 'customers'. We are willing to see parents out of school hours within reason.
- We seek to hold discussions with visitors in a private area or room wherever possible.

- We encourage young people on site to be helpful to visitors (opening doors, giving directions, helping to carry materials (given Health and Safety factors etc) and to be personable and courteous off site.
- We have made major improvements to car parking provision on site over the last four years with an extra staff car park, short stay visitors bay, a Sixth Form car park. The car parks are covered by lighting and security cameras as is the internal foyer area and other areas of the site.
- We review support staff on a regular basis including aspects of their reception duties, telephone manner, and transmission of information.
- We seek to make available to support staff (by note or 'white board') the whereabouts and return time of after school groups (e.g. sports fixtures, trips out) in order that they can respond to parental queries. We also have 4 mobile phones, which can be taken by a trip or sports group leader.
- A large number of staff (all teachers and some support) have been trained in Basic First Aid and we have an M1 room and disabled toilet in the Foyer area and a school nurse is on site once a week.
- We designate an emergency parking area in case of a need for an emergency service (ambulance, fire engine) or a special delivery.
- We have a main foyer door lock/intercom system for site and personal security in the holidays.

Correspondence

- Direct correspondence with external agencies or parents is normally via:
 - Heads of Department
 - Year Tutors
 - Leadership Team
 - Staff i/c various resourcing areas
 - We seek to respond in an informative way with a clear indication of the name of the respondent for further contact. The aim is to be logical, rational, and helpful and where necessary with a sense of humour and occasionally a sense of firmness.
 - We keep copies of all key correspondence and circulate on a need to know basis to internal colleagues.
 - Letters of complaint are kept by Year Tutors in pupil files, or by the Deputy Head (Quality Control) and are responded to. Complaints are taken seriously even if we feel they are unfair - it is what the customer believes! We seek to record any complaint about an individual for investigation by a member of the Leadership Team.
 - We correspond with all our parents and community by our bulletins, letters and the web site.
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