

SMMIS Communication Home Policy

1. GUIDELINES REGARDING PARENT/CARER – SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

This guidance describes the different ways we communicate with parents/carers in school and how parents/carers should communicate with school. It should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

1. Complaints, Attendance & Punctuality
2. Anti-Bullying
3. Behaviour Management
4. Managing Allegations of Abuse against Teachers & Other Staff

Communication between parents/carers and school happens at different levels including:

- Communication between a parent/carer and their child's class teacher about matters concerning their child's progress or pastoral well-being.
- Communication between a parent/carer & other staff concerning their child's progress or pastoral well-being for example, with the SENCO, VP or Principal.
- Communication from parents/carers to school about their children's home learning for example via the yellow reading record book parent entries, Daf Parasha feedback etc.
- G1 – G5 test booklets (spelling, times tables, number bonds) are sent home each week so that parents/carers can monitor their children's test results and progress and support them with their home learning and preparation accordingly.
- Communication between parents/carers & the school office regarding non-learning specific issues eg alternative collections, attendance, school trips, after school clubs.
- Formal written communications to parents/carers about children's progress for example the end of year annual report, the twice-yearly Parents' Evenings written reports.
- Formal meetings with parents/carers, for example the twice-yearly Parents' Evenings.
- Formal meetings pertaining to specific children for example IEP (Individual Education Plan) reviews as well as Annual Reviews for children with EHC plans.
- General written communication sent to all parents/carers for example: the weekly whole school newsletter, weekly class newsletters, general flyers etc.
- Specific written communications sent to all parents/carers for example emails with information about specific forthcoming events or issues in school.
- Information Pack for new parents/carers.
- Face to face information events for parents/carers eg the Welcome Evening; specific information events such as e-safety parent workshops; as well as information events pertaining to children's specific subject learning eg a Maths Information Evening.
- The school website provides much information about the school. When new or reviewed school policies are uploaded to the website, as well as other documentation, we let parents/carers know via the newsletter, including the website link.

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- From time to time, we invite parents/carers into school to participate in their children's learning so that they can get a taste of school lessons and activities.

2. If parents/carers have a general question about their child's learning or care

Class teachers are available at the end of the day for parents/carers to speak to. In addition, parents/carers may write a note in their child's reading record diary (if the question is about their child's reading) or on their child's homework (if the question is about the homework). Alternatively, if parents wish to communicate with their child's secular or Jewish Studies class teacher, they should email the appropriate year group email and will receive a reply (a written note, brief chat, a telephone call or an email) within two to three days.

Staff can receive and reply to messages from parents/carers in their non-teaching time but need to prioritise lesson preparation during the day, so may not be able to access messages until the end of the school day. If it is urgent that a teacher receive information as soon as possible (for example to inform school of a change in family circumstances such as a serious illness or death of a family member, or to express concern about suspected bullying), we ask parents/carers to send an email to the school office and to follow this up with a telephone call to alert the office staff to the email so that it can be prioritised.

Questions regarding homework or reading books are not considered emergencies. Please note that these class email addresses are not monitored during the school holidays. We ask parents to use these class email addresses to request a telephone call or meeting, to send a message or to ask for something to be sent home that a child has forgotten etc. We ask that parents not use the email address for prolonged email conversations as we want to prioritise the teachers' time for planning quality lessons, teaching & marking etc. Thank you.

If parents/carers have a safeguarding concern

If parents/carers have a safeguarding concern regarding how their child is being treated or cared for at school, they should send an email to the school office at the time of their concern, marked for the urgent attention of the Principal. The office will treat this as confidential, acknowledge its receipt & pass it on immediately to the Principal, notifying the Principal verbally that they have done so. If the Principal is not available, the concern will be passed immediately to a Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The Principal/ DSL will contact the parent/carer to acknowledge its receipt. The allegation will then be investigated following the procedures outlined in the school's policy: Managing Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff.

If the safeguarding allegation regards the Principal, parents/carers should send their written concern directly to the Chair of Trustees via the school office in a sealed envelope or via email to (Sam Sassoon email address) who will follow the same procedures above.

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3. If parents/carers have a concern or complaint

If parents/carers have a concern or complaint about any aspect of their child's education or care, they should follow the procedure outlined in the Complaints Policy: the first stage of communicating any concern or complaint is always for a parent/carer to communicate directly with the member of staff concerned. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved at this stage & will not need to be taken further.

If a parent/carer is not satisfied with how their concern has been dealt with, they should follow the next procedure outlined in the Complaints Policy which explains how a parent can take their concern to the Vice Principal & then to the Principal. All emails to senior staff are sent to the school office who acknowledge their receipt & forward them onto the staff member concerned. If a parent is unhappy with how the Principal has dealt with their concern, they can escalate their concern to the Chair of Trustees.

If a parent/carer sends an email of concern to a senior member of staff without having previously been in contact with the class teacher, or sends an email of concern to the Principal or Chair of Trustees without having first been in contact with another appropriate senior staff member, the concern will be redirected to the appropriate staff member who will be in contact with the parent.

Please note that we cannot deal with anonymous concerns or complaints.

If teachers have a concern about a child's behaviour

We aim to communicate with parents/carers as soon as possible regarding concerns about a child's behaviour, in order to prevent a further deterioration in their behaviour. If a child is moved to 'red' on the rocket or if there have been any other serious behaviour concerns during the day, we always try and speak to the child's parent/carer that day. This may be followed up with a meeting as soon as possible. Where a child's behaviour shows significant improvement, we will always ensure to communicate this to parents/carers.

Communication with parents who have children with additional needs

Where a child has recognised learning, behaviour and/or pastoral care needs that include the involvement of the school's Inclusion Leader, the Inclusion Leader maybe in direct email contact with parents/carers concerned, regarding their child's day-to-day management.

Parents who are divorced or separated

Where parents are divorced or separated & both have legal Parental Responsibility (PR), we send all communications (emails, school reports etc) to both parents. We ask that both parents give school a full set of contact details including their address, email, home, work & mobile telephone numbers. School cannot pass messages between parents. Divorced & separated parents can make separate appointments to see their children's teachers although we always encourage separated parents to attend meetings together if they can.

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4. Communicating with the school office

Parents/carers & office staff may need to communicate with each other regarding a variety of non-learning related issues. Parent/carers can email the office, telephone or come into the office at drop-off & collection times. We ask parents/carers to remember that drop-off & collection times are very busy times & to be appropriately patient and to respect the confidentiality of other parents' conversations with the office staff.

Parents/carers must communicate in a timely fashion with school regarding all issues concerning their children's absence as explained in the school's Attendance Policy. The office will contact parents/carers where the school is unaware of a child's whereabouts. This may involve telephone and / or email contact to parents/carers and other nominated contacts.

For reasons of Health & Safety, we ask parents/carers to ensure that they have provided the school with all requested contact details: home telephone numbers, mobile telephone numbers, work telephone numbers as well as two emergency contacts. Parents/carers are asked to let the office know if there is a change of collection arrangements for their children.

If a parent/carer wishes to email urgent information to the school that needs to be seen that day (for example to inform school of a change in family circumstances such as a serious illness or death of a family member, to express concern about suspected bullying or to provide change in collection arrangements), we ask parents/carers to send an email to the school office with all the information & to follow this up with a telephone call to alert the office staff to the email so that it can be prioritised.

Owing to the possibility of staff sickness or absence due to staff training, we cannot guarantee that all parent/carer emails are seen on the day. We consider an afterhours email as received from the first working day after it has been sent. Parents/carers who wish to thank school or specific staff members can send an email to the office who will acknowledge its receipt & forward it to the staff members concerned.

All communication for the Principal is sent and received via the office email: frontdesk@smm.edu.sg

Communicating with parents/carers if a child has been hurt or received first aid

If children are hurt in school & receive first-aid, a copy of the first-aid record is given to parents/carers in a sealed envelope.

TT – G1 children will have the envelope put directly in their bags by a staff member.

Children in G2 – G5 will have the envelope given to them at the end of the day to pass to their parents/carers. Children who have received first-aid may also be wearing a sticker 'I received first-aid today' or 'I received a bump on the head today' to alert parents/carers to look for the envelope but we ask parents/carers to be mindful that stickers can fall off.

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We always call parents/carers at the time to let them know if their child has received a bump on the head and in cases of a serious injury.

5. Communicating with the Principal

The Principal often meets & greets parents/carers at the start of the school day & at the same time, answers general queries & reminds them about on-going activities & upcoming events. S/He cannot deal with any specific concerns at 'meet & greet.' If the Principal is unavailable, the VP or another staff member will meet & greet in the morning.

The Principal meets parents/carers at collection time on a Friday afternoon as well as when available on other afternoons. S/He leads all aspects of attendance and punctuality and is in contact with parents/carers of children for whom there are concerns, meeting with them when necessary.

The Principal is available to meet parents/carers to discuss & assist with specific concerns (eg parenting, family matters, High School choices) & also meets with parents/carers when necessary as part of the Complaints procedure.

Reporting children's progress to parents

We hold Parents' Evenings twice a year (Autumn and Spring Terms).

Parents meet with their children's secular, JS and Ivrit teachers and are also given written summary reports with details of their children's current progress and targets. We also issue full written reports to parents at the end of the school year. If parents or teachers have any concerns regarding children's progress, they can arrange to meet at any time during the year. Children who have identified special educational needs will have their progress reviewed with their parents each term via a review of their Individual Education Plan (IEP), together with the school's Inclusion Leader.

Communicating with the School's Admissions Manager

Parents/carers who have any questions regarding the admissions process should be in contact with Mrs Tal Mashiah, our Admissions Manager.

Communicating with the Head of Administration

The Head of Admissions, Mr Patrick Thong may be in contact with parents/carers regarding any financial matters or matters relating to volunteer checks.

PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

6 Suggestion Box

We have an accessible parent/carer suggestion box in the Reception area for constructive suggestions (not complaints). We will always give feedback to the suggestion provider.

Surveying parental opinion

From time to time, we utilise Survey Monkey to investigate parents'/carers' opinions and preferences on specific issues to help inform our decisions. We will also use Survey

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Monkey to gather general parental/carer opinion about the school and disseminate survey results to parents/carers via the school newsletter.

Newsletters

We send a weekly school and class newsletter to all parents/carers with comprehensive information about school activities and upcoming events.

Parent Reps

We have an elected Parent Rep for each class who welcomes new families, encourages parents to assist in school, reminds parents of key activities & facilitates class social events.

Appropriate and respectful communication

We remind parents/carers that any concerns or complaints brought to the school must be regarding their own individual children. We cannot consider group concerns or concerns brought by parents/carers regarding other people's children. We ask parents/carers not to use Parent Reps as a vehicle for passing on a concern or complaint. Rather, all concerns and complaints must be brought to the school's attention by the child's parent(s)/carer(s), using the stages outlined in the Complaints Policy (as explained above). We also ask parents/carers not to use social media such as WhatsApp or Facebook groups for discussing any concerns, especially regarding individual members of staff. This is not in keeping with the school's value of respecting others, can bring the school into disrepute and could lead to claims of defamation of character.

Parents/carers and staff address each other by their title and first name. We ask that parents/carers and staff communicate respectfully and appropriately with each other using polite and courteous language. In order that we can maintain a healthy and open school community, the Principal or Chair of Trustees will speak to staff or parents/carers who do not communicate appropriately with or about the school. We thank all parents/carers for respecting this communication guidance.

Prepared by: Elaine Robinson

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