



Wilson's Hospital School

Communications Policy

Rational

This is a whole school policy for students and staff in the school. It deals with communication within the school and between the school and our partners. To contribute to ensuring inclusivity and co-operation this policy emphasises maintaining and improving the current channels of communication among the users of the school and with the partners in education.

Relationship to school mission statement

Good communication is essential to maintaining a positive working and learning environment. Creating an atmosphere of mutual respect in a happy, caring and supportive environment means that people feel included, consulted and informed. This requires that we use of a variety of channels of communication so as to ensure that the relevant people receive the necessary information.

Goal- what is the policy intended to achieve?

The goal of this policy is to contribute to effective communication within the school, with the School Management Board, with parents and with the whole school community, so as to maintain a good working, social and personal environment. This will promote efficiency and contribute to achieving the objectives of the school.

Overall approach to effective communication

All parties will be communicated with through a variety of agreed channels of communication. The target audience will be involved actively rather than passively where possible in the communication. There will be provision for reinforcement (and repetition). There will be opportunity for feedback to check that information is being received and understood.

Means of communication

This policy encourages the use of the most effective communications mechanisms, depending on context, while ensuring the rights of staff, students and parents/guardians. The school encourages openness in internal communication and the sharing of relevant and appropriate information through a variety of mechanisms. The school is committed to consultation with staff and students over school matters, in a way that is consistent with effective management. The staff recognise the importance of face-to-face communication, in that it can frequently be more effective than written communication. The school seeks constantly to improve communication and will consult with staff, students and parents to seek their views. All internal communications should be expressed clearly. As far as possible staff and/or students are informed of important school issues no later than the media or other external bodies. Use of email and social media are frequently used modes of communication for all staff, students and parents. Clear guidelines are provided by the school on the use of electronic media, this is outlined in our AUP. IT access is made available to the widest possible number of staff and students, and provision is made for communicating with those who do not have IT access. The school website is the primary source of information about our

school and it provides the necessary information for effective communications. Best practice is promoted and followed in the production of web pages, notably with regard to clarity of structure and currency of information.

Personal and confidential information

Since May 2018 personal data is protected in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Some categories and items of information regarding both staff and students need to be kept confidential. All staff are bound to take care with the handling and transmission of confidential information, with regard to how and to whom the information is transmitted. Internal communications using electronic media must be conducted under the acceptable usage policy of our school.

Policy in relation to some significant communication channels

Teacher with Teacher

Recognising its importance, the school encourages best practice in communication at intra-departmental level; between year heads and class teachers and subject teachers; and between senior management and all subject teachers. Also, good personal relationships between staff members are encouraged. Department meetings will be held at least 3 times a year per subject. The minutes are recorded and posted on TEAMS. Year Heads meet once per week during a scheduled class period. Meetings between the year heads and class teachers are held regularly. New teachers are offered an induction course at the start of the year with the Deputy Principal. They are also supplied with an updated staff handbook. Notices are posted in the staffroom in an accessible area for teachers and are updated regularly. Announcements made in the staffroom at breaktime are also e-mailed to all teachers.

Administration staff:

The administration staff is involved in a wide range of supporting activities for all staff, students and parents. They assist with the smooth running of the school on a day to day basis.

Ancillary staff

The ancillary staff are very important in supporting the teachers and students in having an orderly, safe and clean school environment. Maintaining courteous and professional relationships with the ancillary staff is important for all members of the school community. In particular, teachers are requested to instruct and supervise students leaving the classroom tidy in order to facilitate room cleaning.

Special Needs Assistants (SNA's)

SNA's are recruited to assist in the care of students with special educational needs within the school. They play an important role in ensuring that the student understands his/her school tasks and can thus participate to the best of his/her ability in the school. It is the policy of the school to support effective communication between the SNA, student, parent and teachers, taking into account the particular special educational needs of the students involved.

Teacher with Student

The quality of the relationship between teachers and students is very important in supporting and promoting learning in the school. This relationship is best when based on mutual respect. Students must establish and maintain good communications and relationship between themselves and staff. To assist in creating and maintaining a safe and comfortable environment for learning students are required to treat all school staff and other students with due respect. The Student Council is an important communication mechanism between the students and other school partners.

Teacher with Parents

Maintaining clear communication between teachers and parents is important in achieving the objective of educating our students to the highest standards. An important aspect of this relationship is the subject teacher, class tutor, or year head reporting the student's progress and behaviour to the parent/guardian. The student's journal is an important channel of communication between the teachers and parent/s. Communication may also occur between teachers and parents/guardians using other means for example phone call, letter etc as is considered necessary at the time. Teachers report to parents in the end of term reports, at parent teacher meetings and at other times deemed appropriate. Meetings occur between teachers and parent/s at the request of either party at a time convenient to both parties and this is arranged through the Year Head

Students with Students

Learning good social and interpersonal skills with one's peers is an important part of school life. The school Code of behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy outlines the implementation of the policy in relation to these matters. Students are required to treat all students with consideration and respect and to have regard for other people's rights and feelings.

The Board of Management with Teachers

The Board of Management (BOM) meets at least once a term. The Board includes two teacher representatives. The function of the teaching staff representatives is to: Represent views of staff at the BOM and to report back to staff on all matters pertaining to the functioning of the school.

Roles and responsibilities on each of the partners of communication

The following have a responsibility within the school environment:

Principal and Deputy Principal: To all the relevant parties for all events, thus ensuring that all communications re personal and confidential nature are treated accordingly.

Year Heads: Communicating with all relevant parties in relation to the year group Teachers Tutors (Class Teacher). Reporting to Admin Staff. Conducting and co-ordinating communications between - parents and staff and vice versa - parents and son/daughter - DE and school - Outside agencies and the school - Suppliers and the school - Local community and the school.

Resource Dept.: The resource dept. plays an important role in mediating between parents and staff particularly in relation to students with special needs. In relation to students with an SNA the resource dept. has an important role in initiating and supporting the relationship between the student and the SNA. The resource dept. also plays an important role in liaising with outside agencies such as Social Workers, NEPS etc.

Career Guidance Counsellor: The Counsellor play a critical role in communicating with students, staff and external agencies with regard to students' personal well-being and career planning. Guidance Counsellors have a responsibility to ensure that all communications of a personal and confidential nature are treated accordingly. They communicate with year-heads & class-tutors with regard to student welfare and academic progress Guidance counsellors regularly communicate with the Principal and Deputy Principal, they communicate with subject teachers in relation to academic progress of students and they meet with the Care Team weekly. The guidance counsellor will liaise with Programme Co-ordinators – LCVP, LCA and TY. The counsellor will communicate with SPHE Co-ordinator, resource and Special Education Needs teachers in relation to students with special needs. The counsellor will liaise with outside welfare agencies – Social Workers, Child and Family Centres, Education Welfare Officer, NEPS etc. and make referrals to private Counsellors when necessary. They will communicate with Parents/Guardians through one-to-one meetings. Counsellors will liaise with Employers, Colleges, Training Agencies and Professional Bodies.

Review and Evaluation

The changes made to improve communications in WHS are based on the feedback from a questionnaire distributed to parents and completed by the teaching staff, records of intra-departmental meeting per year, records of staff meetings and communications issues addressed each year in the school.

Please refer to WHS Complaints Policy when reading this Policy.

Approved by the Board of Management on 12th October 2021

Appendix 1

Range of Communication Methods Used:

Code of Behaviour signed by parents, verbal, telephone call, school journal, meetings (parent/teacher, staff, assistant principals, subject teachers, care team, etc., or private e.g. parent/principal, etc.) intercom letter, e-mail, text(Vsware), school reports, school brochure, advertisements, articles or photographs in local paper, public access to documents (e.g. policies available to parents in the school or issued to them from time to time), school website, staff handbook, school calendar, staff-room calendar, notice boards throughout the school, white board in staff-room, 'Pigeon hole' in staff-room, temporary or permanent school registers, sign-in/out book in reception, accident/incident book, minutes of staff and other teacher meetings in Deputy Principal's office, Parents Association meetings, meetings as per Guidance Plan, letter or report received regarding Child Protection concerns (see Guide lines on Child Protection), any communication with Social Services, DES, NEWB etc. (Intranet) MS Office applications e.g. TEAMS.

N.B. This list is not exhaustive. Also some elements may be at the planning stage as this policy is being drawn up