



Communication (with Parents/Carers and Students) Policy

Introduction

Marling School recognises the importance of clear and effective communication with all stakeholders including students, parents/carers, friends of the School and Governors, and is committed to being open and accessible for all who have an interest in the school.

The key stakeholders for Marling School are the students and parents/carers and this policy addresses the main ways in which the school ensures effective two-way communication between home and school.

Communication can take a variety of forms: verbal (through meetings or by telephone), written (through letters or email). Occasionally a communication may be received second hand or through an intermediary.

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be difficult in a school where teachers may be teaching full time and running clubs or otherwise working with students at lunchtime or after school. For this reason, Marling School proactively encourages the use of modern communications methods, with staff email contacts being publicised on the website and all parents/carers being encouraged to give an email address to support effective communication.

Responsibilities

The Principal is responsible to the Governors of Marling School for ensuring that all communication from the school is appropriate, professional and follows procedures as set out in Governor approved policies. All staff have a responsibility to ensure that they use the correct templates and follow approved procedures, in line with the Trust Data Protection Policy, in a timely, professional and accurate manner.

Aims of the policy

1. To improve the quality of service given to students at Marling School by ensuring that effective communication and consultation takes place between the school, parents/carers, students and other stakeholders.
2. To improve the quality of service by ensuring robust processes for consultation between the school, parents/carers and students on key service areas.

Communication

Marling School operates an annual programme of in-school and virtual events. Each year parent surveys are conducted to ascertain the most appropriate blend of face to face and virtual events for each year group. The following list outlines some of the ways in which Marling School communicates with parents/carers:

1. All prospective parents/carers receive a school prospectus which includes details of previous examination results.
2. Prospective parents/carers are invited to an Open Evening in term one preceding the year of entry to the school.

3. The school hosts various other open events, for prospective and confirmed students, during which staff are available to answer questions.
4. Year 6 parents/carers are invited to an induction evening in July where the main channels of communication are outlined and information about the school is presented.
5. Year 6 students attend an Induction Day in term six which introduces them to the procedures and layout of the school. Year 12 students attend two days of induction in term 6.
6. Parents/Carers are invited to attend a Consultation Evening each year to review the academic progress of their child/children.
7. Parents/carers of each year group may be invited into school for an Information Evening, to cover issues relating to the relevant year group of their child (e.g. Study Skills for Y11, Core subjects for Y10, Options for Y9, UCAS for Y12).
8. My Child At School (MCAS) is used as a key vehicle for communication between parents/carers and the school and this platform is introduced at the induction evening for new parents/carers in July and to all students as they start at the school. The expectation is that MCAS is monitored on a weekly basis by both parents/carers and the student's form tutor.
9. Communication about student progress takes place formally for each student - through a tracking sheet and a full report.
10. MCAS is used to communicate with parents/carers on issues of behaviour and attendance.
11. The school will email parents/carers regarding the unforeseen cancellation of clubs and events, non-urgent changes to fixtures will be communicated to parents/carers via MCAS.
12. The school communicates internally with students via the school intranet and through messages delivered in tutor time and during assemblies.
13. Homework is set for students via their class Team. This includes details of the task set and the deadline.
14. The school maintains Twitter and Facebook pages to inform followers of events and news.
15. Details about events at the school are published in the Principal's newsletter which is sent to parents/carers through MCAS and published on the school website.
16. The Principal's newsletter is a key vehicle for communicating in a variety of ways: alerting parents/carers and students to forthcoming events; issues of student and school management; celebrating the life of the school; petitioning for parental views; publishing the results of consultations, etc.
17. The Sixth Form magazine 'Spotlight' is sent to parents/carers three times a year, and the Head of Sixth Form writes to parents/carers termly.
18. The school has all newsletters, events and key information on the school website.
19. Queries about events at the school may be made by phone to the school or by e-mail.
20. Parents/carers should communicate with teachers via email addresses;
 - reception@marling.school
 - studentservices@marling.school
 - info@marlingsixthform.org

Service Standards at Marling School

The school has published the following service standards to ensure a prompt response for communication requests by parents/carers. These standards are reviewed on an annual basis by the school's leadership team.

Responding to parents/carers

Communications from parents/carers to the school will be dealt with promptly. Many can be dealt with immediately or within the same day, however some may take longer, and the following timescales have been set out below. Parents/carers should not try to communicate with school staff by responding to MCAS messages.

Urgent communications

Should a parent/carer need to contact their son or daughter urgently, contact should be made by telephoning main reception (01453 762251). Parents/ carers should refrain from phoning their child's mobile phone directly during the school day, as this contravenes the mobile phone policy.

General Requests and Enquiries

Once the query has been received by correct member of staff via email, telephone or letter we expect to have answered routine enquiries within 3 working days. Communications sent during the school holidays will probably not elicit a reply until term time.

Curriculum/School work queries - contact the teacher concerned or Head of Department.

Pastoral/Student welfare queries - contact the Form Tutor, Student Support or Head of Learning Community.

Routine or Administrative queries - should be addressed to the school office.

Student absence

Parents/carers are expected to inform the school by 9am if their child is absent. Contact should be made by email to attendance@marling.school or by phoning the main school number (01453 762251 option1).

Concerns

Concerns should be addressed to the Form Tutor, Head of Learning Community or Head of Department. Concerns may be raised either via by letter, e-mail or phone call. We expect to be able to answer concerns within 3 working days although there is often some investigation that needs to take place. If this is the case, we expect to have acknowledged the communication and offered a timescale for full response.

Concerns addressed in the first instance to the Principal or Senior Leadership Team may be redirected to a more appropriate member of staff.

Complaints

Marling School takes complaints very seriously and maintains a record of complaints received and outcomes to identify trends and address any recurring issues. Our aim is to acknowledge the complaint within 3 working days. Please see the CBAT Complaints Policy for Parents and Carers on the school website.

Parents/Carers/ stakeholders' expectations of the school

Parents/carers/stakeholders who raise either informal concerns or formal complaints with the school can expect the school to:

- a) communicate in writing: how and when problems can be raised with the school and the existence of the school's complaints procedure,
- b) respond to acknowledge the communication initially within 3 working days;
- c) be available for consultation within reasonable time limits bearing in mind the needs of the pupils within the school and the nature of the complaint;
- d) respond with courtesy and respect;
- e) attempt to resolve problems using reasonable means in line with the school's complaints procedure, other policies and practice and in line with advice from the Local Authority (LA) keep complainants informed of progress towards a resolution of the issues raised.

The school's expectations of parents/carers and other key stakeholders

The school can expect parents/carers/stakeholders who wish to raise problems with the school to:

- a) treat all school staff with courtesy and respect;
- b) respect the needs and well-being of pupils and staff in the school;
- c) avoid any use, or threatened use, of violence to people or property;
- d) avoid any aggression or verbal abuse;
- e) recognise the time constraints under which members of staff in schools work and allow the school a reasonable time to respond;
- f) recognise that resolving a specific problem can often take some time;
- g) in the case of a complaint follow the School's Complaints Procedure.

Communication, which is deemed persistent as defined by the CBAT Complaints Policy for parents and carers will be dealt with in accordance with that Policy.

Consultation

Consultation between the school, parents/carers and students operates in the following ways: -

1. Questionnaires are issued to parents/carers on a range of issues and through a variety of means (hard copy, through electronic surveys, email).
2. Students are encouraged to email studentsupport@marling.school to report any instance of bullying or to speak directly to a member of staff.
3. The Student Council is consulted on a range of key issues relating to the school.
4. As part of the school's system of Departmental Evaluation, students are involved in Student Voice feedback to review the teaching and learning within the department and to contribute their own thoughts on departmental strengths and areas for development.
5. Students are encouraged to be constructive about how the school can improve provision and are actively involved in focus groups, notably those that meet the Principal.
6. The Governors hold regular Student Voice and Parent Voice events.
7. The Curriculum Lead Improvers (CLIM) and Pastoral Lead Improvers (PLIM) groups meet every term to share best practice in improving standards of Teaching and Learning and Pastoral Care.
8. 6th Form students work with and mentor younger students promoting cohesion and a sharing culture.
9. Consultation between external agencies takes place with a view to improving the service provided by the school.
10. The Special Educational Needs Department works closely with individual students, parents/carers and external agencies and meetings are held to discuss best practice and provision for individuals and groups.

Links with other policies

- Complaints Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Data Protection Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Review

The Principal, in consultation with staff, will undertake systematic monitoring and conduct regular reviews of the communication policy and procedures in order to evaluate them to ensure that the operation is effective, fair and consistent. The Principal will keep the Governing Body informed.

The School Development Board will regularly review this policy and associated procedures, to ensure its continuing appropriateness and effectiveness. This review will take place in consultation with the Principal, staff and students.