

Parent Information Policy

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Approved by: Council of Trustees
College of Management

Date: January 2018
Date:
Date: 1st February 2018

History of review: This is the first policy of its kind at the South Devon Steiner School, written by Kaycee Fordham.

Date for next review: November 2019

Policy Statement

South Devon Steiner School recognises the importance of effective communication between pupils' homes and the school. Ensuring positive lines of communication between home and school, is an essential element of the work of all schools. Effective communication enables pupils to receive continuity of education, care, support and management within home and school settings.

Procedure: The school tries to limit formal communication to parents to once per week.

Personal contact details: Home address, telephone numbers, email.

The school holds emergency contact details for all pupils, and parents are contacted on an annual basis to ensure that these are updated. Families are encouraged to alert the school immediately in the event that contact information needs to be revised. Depending on the nature of the communication, the school will use the most practicable means to contact a parent/carer.

Forms of communication used at South Devon Steiner School to provide effective communication.

Class Contact Messages

- Each class has a Class Contact; a class parent who serves as an intermediary between the school and the parents, for class related matters. Usually, the Class Contact is elected by the class parents during the first parent evening of the academic year. The role may 'roll over' into the next academic year, or the class may decide to vote a new representative into the role each year.
- The Class Contact takes responsibility for distributing central school email communications to the parents in their respective class. They also liaise with the teacher to plan parent interview schedules, organise parent support for class educational visits, provide general teacher to parent communication (equipment reminders for example) and create class cleaning rotas.
- The Class Contact is a key Parent Volunteer role which supports the school to communicate effectively. The Class Contact will approach all parents to ensure he/she has an up to date and accurate record of contact details.

Meeting: Termly All School Meeting

- All parents and College students are invited to attend the termly All School Meeting, which provides the community with an opportunity to hear about the school's direction and news, ideas and raise concerns which can be heard and discussed in an open forum.
- The school uses these meetings to consult with the parents on important matters, such as the School Direction Plan (formerly the Strategic Plan).
- The All School Meetings are advertised in the weekly Friday Flier and on the school online calendar. Additional notices are placed on the school noticeboards.

Meeting: Termly Parents' Evenings

- Every Kindergarten Teacher, Class Teacher and Upper School Sponsor holds a termly parents evening, for the parents of children / students in their class.
- The meetings are just for parents/guardians, and allow the teacher to present a picture of the whole group to parents, to introduce what the class is learning, to talk about the child development picture and pedagogy, and to raise awareness in the parent body of specific issues alive within the various classes i.e. behavioural challenges, mobile phones, inter-student relationships etc.
- The Class Contact will usually be asked to take and circulate the minutes of such meetings to ensure that parents who were not able to attend have the relevant information to support their child.

Meeting: Annual Parent Conversations

- In addition to the whole class termly parents' evenings, teacher's throughout the school offer individual Parent Conversations on an annual basis.
- The purpose of these meetings, is for the teacher and parent to be able to discuss the individual child in depth, looking at areas for development, achievement and educational experience as a whole.
- The content of the Annual Parent Conversation informs the child's educational experience going forwards, providing both the teacher and the parent with a clear picture of the pupil.

Publication: Weekly Friday Flier Newsletter

- The school publishes a weekly newsletter each Friday during term time. This is distributed to parents via email, and is the school's main method of direct communication with parents.
- Parent email addresses are automatically added to the mailing list upon their child's admission to the school, ensuring they receive regular and up to date information about school news and events, and to share related resources (local workshops, events etc.).
- The Friday Flier is occasionally printed, usually for the Advent and Summer Fair, and for Open Day events. We are working on the possibility to print the flier more regularly as we are aware of the issues experienced with the electronic format.
- The Friday flier is always available via the archive link on the school website (used the link in the header of the website)

Website

- The school has a comprehensive website, www.southdevonsteinerschool.org which provides up to date information about the school's leadership & management, faculty, policies, admission procedures, term dates, safeguarding and more. The website is regularly updated, especially the Policies page and the Safeguarding page. We try to minimise updates to the Parent Handbook and other parent information to major releases which we generally advertise. The school website is an invaluable tool for parents, which also serves as a promotional tool for the school.

Whisper Button

- The school offers a Whisper Button on its website; a reporting service offered by [South West Grid for Learning](#) for schools. Pupils, parents and community members can use the button to report issues to the school. The information submitted (via an online form) is sent to a confidential email address, monitored by the Safeguarding Team. The service can be regarded as anonymous if the user chooses to withhold their personal information.

Parent Portal

- The school has a parent portal available via the PASS school management system, which allows parents to directly access their invoices (including online payment options) and their child(ren)'s attendance levels and accident record. The school calendar and contact details of other parents (permission dependent) are also accessible. Parents are provided with their parent portal log in details at the point of admission of their child(ren).

Email

- The finance office sends out termly invoices and statements by email.
- Communication with individual parents is also often via email.

Noticeboard

- The school has a large noticeboard located near the front gate, upon which is displayed information about the school including Safeguarding, Health & Safety and School Leadership and Management documents, information about upcoming school (and related) events, press cuttings and current fundraising initiatives.
- The school also provides a community noticeboard located near the Finance Office, upon which parents can place information on related, non-school events and classified advertisements. There is a small charge for this facility.
- Early Years have a dedicated noticeboard at the Kindergarten gate, upon which Early Years specific information is displayed.

Open Door Policy

- In addition to the structured Parent Evenings and Conversations, parents are welcome to visit the school to discuss their child's progress, ask questions, and gain support or to have an opportunity to talk about their child / home issues with either the child's class teacher or Educational Support staff as appropriate. Parents are asked to phone Reception to make an

appointment.

- Our aim is to see the parents as quickly as possible.

Meeting: Annual Reviews

- **For children on the Special Educational Needs Register:** During each child's annual review meeting, staff and parents have an extended period of time (up to 1 hour) to focus on a pupil's progress and to plan together for future needs. Parents receive a written report after the meeting, which highlights progress in all curriculum areas as well as social and personal development.

Individual Education Plans (IEP)

- Children on the Special Educational Needs Register, have an updated IEP at least every six months. Parents receive a copy of this in time to discuss it during the Annual Parent Conversation. Each IEP offers practical advice to parents on how they can work with school staff to support their child in achieving targets to assist the child's progress.

Meeting: Careers Education and Guidance (Upper School)

- From class 10, students are invited to attend an annual Careers Education and Guidance meeting, accompanied by their parents.

Letters

- The school distributes letters via Class Contact email. Not only is this a more environmentally friendly method of communication as it decreases paper usage, but it reduces photocopying and other costs in the school. We urge parents to provide us with a valid email address.
- Whilst most letters will be sent by email, occasionally it is necessary to send important communications via the Royal Mail postage service.

Telephone Calls

- Telephone calls will be made where immediate contact with a family member is required i.e. for pupil injury or pupil incident. A member of staff will call the first named emergency contact as listed by the parent on the enrolment form or subsequent annual consent form.
- Where no contact is made, a call will then be made to the second named contact. In the event that no live contact can be made, the member of staff will either leave an answer phone message (ascending order as before) or ensure that repeat calls continue to be made to the contact numbers, where possible.
- It is commonplace for class teachers and sponsors to provide a home telephone number to parents, to allow parents to contact them outside of school hours, should the need arise. Individual teachers will usually provide parents with a convenient time to call, during the week and parents are asked to adhere to these requests out of respect for the teachers' free time.

Parent Handbook

- The school publishes a comprehensive information booklet on its website for reference by all school parents. The document provides information on most aspects of daily school life, including but not limited to: school drop-off and pick up times, equipment lists, attendance and punctuality, behaviour expectations and the curriculum.

Other Ways to Build Relationships

- Parents and Teachers Association (PTA)
- Attending school functions i.e. class assemblies, school productions, social evenings etc.
- Fundraising initiatives
- Parent volunteering

Compliance:

- None, although according to PART 6 Provision of information - Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the school must provide certain information to parents.
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/pdfs/uksi_20143283_en.pdf

References:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- AGT Policy
- Data Protection & Information Sharing Policy
- Security Policy & Procedures
- Annual Consents, Permissions and Information form
- Parent Volunteer Pack
- Parent Handbook