



## **Home – School Communication Policy (DRAFT)**

### **Rationale**

Sir Thomas Fremantle School recognises the importance of clear and effective communications with all stakeholders (students and parents/carers, governors, Local Authority, outside agencies, national bodies, etc), and is committed to being open and accessible for all who have an interest in the school. The key stakeholders for a school are parents and students and this policy addresses the main ways in which the school ensures effective two-way communication between home and school.

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

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school, where teachers may be teaching full time and running clubs or otherwise working with students at lunchtime or after school. Parents may be exasperated if they feel that a message elicits no immediate reply, when in fact there has been no available opportunity for the member of staff to reach a telephone to return a call.

Our aim will always be to return a telephone call to a parent within 24 hours. All other calls will generally be returned within 48 hours. Return calls may be made by someone other than the person to whom the original call was made, should it be felt that this is more appropriate.

For this reason the school has been particularly proactive in encouraging use of modern communications methods, with staff email contacts being publicised on our website (staff page) and all parents/carers being encouraged to give an email address for prompt and effective communication. Surveys indicate that the majority of parents are satisfied or very satisfied with the two-way communications they have with school.

However, this does not mean that the school always gets things right and this policy aims to clarify the parameters within which we operate to ensure that communication is carried out with all stakeholders and interested parties effectively and clearly.

Some forms of communication are covered by the law or formal guidelines and the School will always comply with these requirements. In other cases this policy sets out the School's

intention and objectives recognising that in some circumstances the Headmaster and staff will use their discretion to vary the approach to respond to the specific situation.

### **Aims of the policy:**

1. To improve the quality of service given to students at Sir Thomas Fremantle School by ensuring that effective communication and consultation takes place between the school, parents, students and other stakeholders.
2. To improve the quality of service by ensuring robust processes for consultation between the school, parents and students on key service areas.
3. To be effective, communication must be open on both sides. Staff and parents are encouraged to ensure that all communication remains polite and professional. Where necessary, reference may be made to our Bullying and Harassment (Staff) Policy. Where parents/carers feel that standards of communication fall short of expectation, they are referred to our complaints policy.

### **Communication**

Communication between the school and parents operates in the following ways:-

1. Prospective parents are invited to an Open Evening in the September preceding the year of entry to the school. All prospective parents receive a school prospectus.
2. Prospective parents are invited, along with students, to an induction evening in July where the main channels of communication are outlined and information about the school is presented.
3. Parents are invited to a 'Year 7 Settling In Evening' in the Autumn term of Year 7 to meet the student's form tutor and review how the student has settled into the school.
4. Parents of each year group are invited into school to an appropriately themed Parents' Meeting, to cover issues relating to the relevant year group of their child.
5. Details about events at the school are published via our School Website, Facebook pages, and Twitter feed. Homework for most subjects will be found on Edmodo and/or the Department Web Sites.
6. Queries about events at the school may be made by phone to the school or by e-mail
7. The school has published the following service standards to ensure a prompt response for communication requests by parents. These standards are reviewed on an annual basis by the school's administrative team.

## Service Standards at Sir Thomas Fremantle School

**The following response times are usually adhered to:**

**Responding to parents** – any requests for information, any concerns, requests for references or progress are dealt with within 5 working days (term time only)

### **Complaints Procedure**

Initially, concerns should be addressed to the appropriate Form Tutor, Subject Lead or membership of the Leadership Team.

Concerns may be raised either via the Planner, or by letter, e-mail or phone call.

Notes in your child's Planner will be addressed within 3 working days providing your child ensures the note is shown to the appropriate member of staff.

Letters will receive either a verbal (usually by phone) response within 3 days or a written response within 5 working days. Verbal responses will generate a brief written note of the discussion and its outcome, to be held in the child's file for future reference.

Concerns raised by phone will be addressed within 3 working days.

Emails will receive an email response within 3 working days. Those sent at weekends may not be dealt with until the following working week, and emails sent in holidays will probably elicit no reply until term-time.

There is a system in place for monitoring the nature of complaints at the school in order to identify trends and address any recurring issues.

### **Consultation**

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

1. Questionnaires are issued to parents on a range of issues and through a variety of means (hard copy, through electronic surveys, email). They may be distributed at specific parental events or via "student post".
2. The consultation process via questionnaires addresses key service areas such as the school curriculum, the framework for parental consultation evenings, homework, the school's reporting system, primary school transition, the quality and accessibility of the school's materials, etc.

3. Parents and visitors to the school may make suggestions for improving the service and are encouraged to leave these with reception.
4. The relevant Governors' Committees meets once a term and is consulted on a wide range of issues.
5. School reports are issued with a reply slip inviting parents to comment on the report they have received.
6. The Student Leadership Team is consulted on a range of key issues relating to the school. Meetings take place at least every half term, with additional meetings for specific issues.
7. Members of the Leadership Team undertake "Learning Walks" regularly and discuss learning with students as part of this exercise.
8. As part of the school's system of Departmental Self Review, students are involved in Student Voice feedback to review the teaching and learning within the department and contribute their own thoughts n departmental strengths and areas for development.
9. Students have been trained as observers and may be asked by teachers to undertake formal observations of a specific lesson.
10. Students are encouraged to be constructive about how the school can improve provision.
11. Consultation between external agencies takes place with a view to improving the service provided by the school.
13. The Special Educational Needs Department works closely with individual students, parents/carers and external experts and meetings are held frequently to discuss best practice and provision for individuals and groups.

Agreed by the Full Governing body

To be reviewed every 3 years – next review Spring 2017

Signed by: ..... Chair of Governors

Date .....

Signed by: ..... Mr D J Lyon; Headmaster

Date .....