

South Shore Academy

Communication Policy



Approved by:	N Kay
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Communication policy

The following outlines the school policy with regard to communication between home and school.

1. Within 72 hours – receipt of a communication will be acknowledged (during term time but not over a weekend)
2. Within 10 working days – provide a response to the email by telephone or in writing (including email). This may include informing the sender that more time is required to provide a full response. If this is the case staff should indicate a timeframe in which a response should be expected.
3. If a member of staff is not able to deal with the query directly then they will pass it onto the most appropriate person and inform the sender that they have done so.
4. Staff will not be expected to monitor or respond to emails out of their normal working hours (including weekends and published school holidays). To protect staff wellbeing, please note that the school does not operate a 24-hour service. If parents email staff outside of standard school hours, such as during evenings and weekends, those emails will never be responded to or actioned. Whilst parents may compose emails at all sorts of hours to suit their own needs I would ask that emails are not sent outside of a member of staff's normal working hours. Mobile phones and other electronic devices that enable staff to access their school emails when away from school can make it difficult to 'ignore' a message from a parent. This can negatively affect them, leading to unnecessary worry and anxiety during their personal time.
5. Whilst this is rare, if a member of staff receives an email or has a telephone conversation which is of an aggressive tone, sets unreasonable demands or could otherwise be interpreted as harassing, they will refer this to a senior line manager in the school. They will decide if consideration needs to be given to dealing with further communication under the schools 'Persistent Complaints and Harassment Policy'.

The reason for implementing this policy:

In recent years communications between home and school have shifted quite dramatically from pen and paper to email; with email becoming the preferred and predominant mode of communication. Email provides us with a quick, cheap and easy means of communication. As a result it is used for such a wide range of communications, it has also become increasingly difficult to distinguish between formal and informal communications.

The ease of communication via email has many advantages but these are proving to have ever diminishing returns, as the expectation for almost instantaneous reply, in a well- informed, considered and timely manner appears to be on the increase, with complaints following when this has not been the case.

As a school our first priority is to deliver high quality teaching and learning. The ability and ease of email communication directly with your child's teacher is a privilege. Many schools would not make this facility available to parents, as frequent requests for updates and information can distract teachers from their primary focus, teaching.

The school (and you) expect teachers to be fully prepared, focused and engaged with pupils and supporting their learning. Whilst administration staff, support staff and senior leaders, may be able to access emails/messages more routinely, their primary function is to support teachers and pupils. Constantly monitoring and responding to email/messages leads to what is commonly referred to in the aviation industry as 'task fixation' Whilst less dramatic, in a school it leads to staff focusing on the immediate task of responding to a parent instead of concentrating on the delivering and supporting teaching and learning.

Regular communication by school to Parents/Carers is paperless, we use an email system in addition to Class Charts. Our Facebook page posts reminders of all important information and can be accessed by all, you are not required to have a Facebook account to access this.