Communication Policy

Name of policy	Communication Policy
Date approved	September 2019
Date to be reviewed	September 2020

Introduction

Trinity Academy recognises the importance of clear and effective communication with all stakeholders – including pupils, parents and carers, governors, Local Authority representatives and other external organisations. Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications and to do so in a manner that is clear, professional, timely and effective in their purpose.

Principles

At Trinity Academy, communication aims to:

- Be effective, with any queries raised by a stakeholder directly addressed
- Be prompt, with responses to non-urgent phone calls, emails and letters within two working days
- Professional and clear, with all written correspondence easy to understand and to a high quality

Communication between the school and home

Communication by letter

Staff will always reply to a letter from parents and carers as quickly as possible. A response to acknowledge receipt of a letter (by post, email or by phone) should be sent within two working days and fully responded to in a reasonable amount of time thereafter. Any letters being sent to parents and carers from the school must be processed through the school administration team and approved by a member of the Senior Leadership Team before sending. All letters sent from the school must be on headed paper. Most letters will be sent electronically and where appropriate, a copy of the letter stored on the school management system (SIMS). All written communication must be written to a high quality and easy to understand.

Communication by Email

Email is a quick and effective way of communicating and is the preferred method of communication between Trinity Academy and home. The school will use email to distribute non-urgent notices, weekly updates and formal school reports. Parents and carers are encouraged to provide an email address for correspondence when starting at the school and to inform the school if contact details are changed. Email queries will be acknowledged within two working days. Emails should be formal, short and clear. School emails should be written with the same care and consideration as when sending a letter. The school does not expect teachers to respond to emails outside of their normal working hours. Under no circumstances should Trinity staff contact students or parents and carers using their own personal email addresses.

Telephone calls

Parents should call the school in emergencies and when reporting a child's absence – in accordance with the school's Attendance Policy. Non-emergency calls will be returned within two working days. Under no circumstances should Trinity Academy staff contact students or parents and carers using their own phones.

Texts

The school may contact parents and carers by text to inform or remind them of a particular event, for example a parents' evening or late arrival to school. Texts may also be used in the event of emergency closure. Under no circumstances should Trinity staff contact students or parents and carers by text using their own mobile phones.

The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

Trinity Academy's VLE is a powerful tool for involving parents in their child's or children's learning. It is a good source of curriculum resources and information about lessons and acts as a homework planner. The school will support parents in accessing material found on the school VLE.

Communication between staff and students

When communicating with a member of staff, students should speak clearly, make eye contact and address the member of staff using his or her formal name (e.g. Sir, Miss or Mrs Smith) and not his or her first name. Conversations between staff and students should be respectful at all times. Students will also receive daily notices by form tutors and senior staff during form time and line-up.

If a child wishes to contact a member of staff out of school hours, he or she may do so by emailing using their Trinity Academy email account (if they have been given one) or by using the parental email address linked to the school management system (SIMS). Any emails should be formal in tone.

Use of Social Media

Trinity Academy recognises that many students, parents and carers and other family members will have personal social network accounts, which they might use to discuss or share views with acquaintances on a range of topics. As a guide, individuals should not post any information regarding Trinity Academy – its staff, its students or anyone associated with the school – on social networking sites if:
- The post is raising a concern regarding the school, including to name individuals or to raise allegations. Please follow the Trust's complaints procedure instead
- The post is likely to cause emotional or reputational harm which would not be justified, particularly if the academy has not been given the opportunity to investigate any concerns raised
- The post contains images of students in uniform engaging in sanctionable activities as outlined in the Behaviour Policy. Instead, please contact the school directly so that an investigation can be carried out

Parents should also ensure that their children are not using social media in an inappropriate manner. It is expected that parents and carers explain to their children what is acceptable to post online and to monitor their online activity. Trinity Academy will support parents in doing so.

All staff must follow the Trust's Acceptable Use Policy (see the Cathedral Schools Trust's Employment Manual) before using any school IT resources and confirm they will adhere to the Acceptable Use Policy on the VLE

Policies Linked to the Communications Policy

- Attendance Policy
- Home school agreement
- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Cathedral School Trust Employment Manual

Monitoring and Review

The school will review this policy annually at the start of the new Academy and then bi-annually once embedded, assessing its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.