



## Parent Communication Policy

*The best way to keep in touch*

Policy owner	Senior Leadership Team
Author	Greg Sadler, Executive Principal

### Approved by

Consultation Group	Senior Leadership Team
Approval Committee	Academy Committee
Implementation Date	March 2025
Review Date	March 2028

### Version Control

Version	Summary of Changes	Consultation Group	Effective Date
1.0	New Policy - no changes	Senior Leadership Team	March 2025

## **1) Principles and Values**

In general, Schools and Academies have many methods of communication to maintain with parents/carers, other Academies, the community and external agencies. At Raleigh & Admirals Academies we recognise the importance of clear and effective communication with all stakeholders. We are committed to being transparent and accessible for all whom have interest in the Academy, whilst still upholding the values of discretion, confidentiality and UK-GDPR.

There will be times when, as the parent/carer, you may disagree with some of the Academy's decisions; but it is important to acknowledge that any decisions made are in the best interests of ALL the children in the Academy.

Members of the SLT are always happy to meet with parents/carers to discuss reasoning behind the decisions. In this policy, the term 'parent' refers to parent(s) and / or carers.

## **2) Objectives**

a) As an Academy, we want to:

- i) Make sure all communications are professional in their presentation and their content.
- ii) Communicate to parents and children in a timely fashion.
- iii) Ensure that communications are dealt with appropriate levels of confidentiality.

b) With regard to parents, we feel it necessary that:

- i) All communications, including newsletters, emails and texts issued by the Academy to be read and acted upon fully (for example, attending parents' evenings, returning slips promptly).
- ii) Any issues or concerns to be raised with the Academy at the earliest opportunity; these are to be communicated in an appropriate manner, avoiding speaking in front of any children.
- iii) social media to be used in a productive and non-judgmental manner (for example, to share a lost piece of homework or double check a date). It should not be used to discuss individual members of our community, staff or children.

## **3) Forms of Home-Academy Communication**

In the unfortunate event of communication being considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening, it will be treated in line with our Violence, Abuse and Harassment against staff policy. Additionally, parents should not expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core Academy hours or during Academy holidays.

#### a) Communication with Class Teachers

We greatly value the communication between home and Academy, and hope that, even in difficult situations, all parties are treated with respect and kindness as per our Academy values.

***Class teachers should always be the first point of contact for parents if they have any questions or concerns about their child.***

Teaching staff are available for messages at the end of the Academy Day. Members of the SLT or Pastoral Team are always available on the playground before the Academy Day and will happily engage with parents to assist with any issues or concerns and pass on messages to staff as requested.

If parents/carers require a longer conversation, please organise a meeting/telephone call with the class teacher via the Academy office. Depending on the nature of the question or concern, a meeting may include a more senior member of staff to support the conversation. A record may be kept and, where appropriate, notes shared with all parties. Parents/carers will only be invited to discuss their own children, and Staff will not talk about other children to other parents/carers.

Staff will aim to respond to communication during core Academy hours of 8.25am- 4.00pm or their working hours (if they work part-time) during term time. In line with promoting staff wellbeing and helping our staff find a suitable work-life balance, staff may work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond outside of these hours, but they are not expected to do so.

#### b) Office

The Academy office is open from 8:15am – 4:00pm on weekdays, term time only. The Academy office staff have many years of experience in positively supporting parents and external visitors, and they can deal with a wide range of queries. Often acting as third parties with the responsibility for passing on messages, they will be treated with utmost respect, as with all members of our staff, and spoken to in a courteous and kind manner. One member of the Office team, is also a trained Designated Safeguarding Leader and operates within the Safeguarding team.

#### c) Letters

Letters from parents can be handed or posted to the Academy office. Please ensure that letters are addressed to the appropriate member of staff wherever possible. We aim to respond to a letter within 10 Academy days (term time only). If the content of the letter is more complex, we reserve the right to respond within 15 Academy days.

When correspondence is made to an individual parent/carer on an important matter, the letter will be sent by post (hand delivered or recorded delivery) or handed directly to the parent/carer to ensure confidentiality and security. For day to day or routine matters,

correspondence will be sent via email or text but may occasionally need to be sent home with a child.

d) Email correspondence

Emails will be used to send appropriate, often urgent, messages to home to keep parents/carers updated. Please ensure the Academy has the preferred email address for these instances. Parents should send all email correspondence to [office@ral.eastern-mat.co.uk](mailto:office@ral.eastern-mat.co.uk) or [office@adm.eastern-mat.co.uk](mailto:office@adm.eastern-mat.co.uk) address. It is important to clearly state the name of the member of staff to whom the email is addressed, and from whom a response is required. These emails will be treated in confidence.

Emails will be responded to by the appropriate member of staff and sent back to the parent via the member of staff who will use their internal email address to respond, particularly if the content is sensitive. We aim to respond to emails within 10 Academy days (term time only). If the content of the email is more complex, we reserve the right to respond within 15 Academy days.

e) Texts

Academies are busy places, and there may be occasions when the Academy wants to remind parents/carers of upcoming events or changes in the Academy Day. It is at this point we would use the text facility.

f) Telephone calls

We have several options on our telephone line so parents can leave messages. If a communication is deemed urgent, please wait to be connected to a member of the office team on **01842 753993**. We ask that those receiving and making the call are always courteous in tone to ALL parties. We do reserve the right to stop a telephone call if there are signs of aggression. Teaching staff aim to respond to telephone messages within a 24-hour period. It may sometimes be the case that a member staff may need to speak with a parent/carer as a matter of urgency e.g. an issue has arisen in Academy during the Academy Day. Please be mindful that this may not necessarily be the class teacher.

g) Newsletters

We aim to send a half termly newsletter that updates on the teaching period just gone and any future events. This correspondence will also outline any reminders that affect the parental body. A calendar of term dates is featured within each newsletter and updated regularly.

Our newsletters showcase what is happening in and around Academy and often include articles about events in which our families can participate, as well as our children's achievements. It may also signpost our families to places of support.

#### h) Seesaw/Tapestry

Dojo and Tapestry are online platforms that are used in Academy to support and aid learning. We ask that these are not used to send messages to staff. Please use one of the above methods e.g. telephone **01842 753993** or email [office@ral.eastern-mat.co.uk](mailto:office@ral.eastern-mat.co.uk) or [office@adm.eastern-mat.co.uk](mailto:office@adm.eastern-mat.co.uk) to ensure messages are not missed. Staff will NOT be sending messages home using this platform other than in response to learning/work.

#### i) Written reports

Teachers write an in-depth report in the summer term, issued in July. It is expected that parents read this report. Other reports may well be written across the year, particularly if your child requires additional support or there are safeguarding concerns.

#### j) Website

This is updated regularly. It covers statutory requirements but also aims to support all stakeholders in their understanding of the Academy ethos, curriculum and calendar. If there is an Academy closure, the website will be updated accordingly with an alert page that takes over the homepage. Please ensure that you refresh the page regularly. We will also endeavor to send parents a text message and may alert local radio stations if appropriate, for example: if the Academy is closed due to adverse weather conditions.

#### k) Social Media

There is an expectation that all stakeholders use social media sensibly and fairly. Before posting, consider whether you would be prepared to say this to the person face-to-face. If you would not, we respectfully ask that you do not submit the post. Social media can quickly damage the reputations of parents, staff and the Academy. We therefore request that its use is restricted to supportive communications. Academy staff do not respond to posts online. Any concern raised in these forums can be discussed and addressed in Academy with the appropriate staff members. If a parent has a concern, please speak to the Academy to see if a resolution can be sought. Please also be aware that vexatious social media posts can be legally challenged and can also affect the outcomes of internal investigations.

### 4) **Academy Council (Governor) Communication**

a) Information about the Governing Body can be found on the Academy website.

b) The role of an Academy Councillor is to provide strategic support to the Academy. The operational 'day to day' duties of running the Academy are delegated to the Executive Principal and the staffing team. Therefore, any communications where the content relates to the day to day running of the Academy (such as SEND provision or a playground incident) should be addressed to a member of staff. Matters relating to the strategic development of the Academy can be addressed to the Governing Body via the clerk's email address: [melanie.ashby@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:melanie.ashby@norfolk.gov.uk)

## **5) Community**

The parent-teachers volunteer association, known as the PTFA, also issue regular updates. They welcome you to join them to raise funds that enable all children to participate in Academy life from those 'little extras' as well as organising events throughout the year such as bake sales and the annual fete.

## **6) Separated Families**

Requests for communications from split parents are accommodated. Please ensure that the Academy office is aware of the parental separation. We ask that you share all appropriate contact details needed to be able to send communications effectively. Please understand that we are only allowed to discuss a child with adult(s) with legal parental responsibility.

## **7) Privacy**

### **a) Confidentiality**

We include confidentiality as part of our induction process for paid and unpaid staff, volunteers and external contractors and is part of our Academy Code of Conduct. It is an expectation that everyone within the Academy works to the highest levels of confidentiality. If this confidentiality is broken, it will be investigated by the Senior Leadership Team or HR.

## **8) Inappropriate Behaviour**

Everyone has the right to be treated with respect. Consequently, we have a zero-tolerance rule on aggressive, rude or inappropriate behaviour, which includes persistent communications; it applies to all stakeholders. We will consider each incident carefully and decide on an appropriate outcome.

The options that we may consider –

Organising a meeting to discuss the behaviour displayed.

Banning the person from Academy site for a period of time.

Calling the police.

Calling the MASH team if it is a safeguarding issue.

Disciplinary procedures.

Blocking email correspondence.

Redirecting inappropriate correspondence to the Trust to deal with accordingly.

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with our parent code of conduct.

## **9) Informal and formal complaints**

As stated above, we greatly value the communication between home and Academy, and are aware that, at times, challenging issues may present themselves. In order to resolve the situation successfully, we ask that all parents/carers follow the Academy Complaints Policy.

This gives the parent/carers the opportunity to outline their concerns and their anticipated solution.

### **10) Parent responsibility**

It is the responsibility of all parents to ensure that their personal details are kept up-to-date with the Academy office; this can be done by via parents updating Pupil Asset themselves, via a form available from the Academy office or by verbally notifying the Academy office of any changes.