

Communication Principles

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COMMITTEE: Learning & Inclusion

LAST REVIEW/UPDATE: March 17

LEVEL OF CHANGE: Minor

NEXT REVIEW: January 2018

Positive communication between school and home and also school and the local community are vitally important. We communicate regularly with all parents/carers in a multitude of ways including our regular 'Tapton Update', text messages, the school website, Twitter, termly tracking data, letters, Parents' Evenings and other information events.

The 'Tapton Update' is primarily to share news, key information and the dates of upcoming events within school. Our Twitter feed (@taptonschool1) has a different focus. Instead of a series of reminders and prompts for parents and students it used to celebrate achievements and activities within our community.

If there are issues or concerns or indeed we wish to share good news we also phone parents and send more specific texts, letters, postcards and emails. We also meet many parents and carers face to face. Parents/carers and members of the local community phone and email the school and email addresses for Subject and Team Leaders, Year Managers and members of the Leadership Team are shared.

Tapton School is a responsible employer who values the work-life balance of all our staff. Our email server is consequently turned off between the hours of 7pm and 6am on weekdays and all day on weekends. Any emails sent during this time will not be read until the next working day.

We are always keen to discuss any concerns with parents/carers and members of the local community. If, at any time, you have any concerns, then please do not hesitate to contact the school and, if necessary, make an appointment to see relevant staff members to discuss any issue. We believe very strongly in working closely with all our community and would hope that if there are any areas of grievance then a discussion with school is the best way forward. Therefore we would recommend that any concerns or issues are not discussed on social media sites as this could be potentially damaging for the school and students.

Keeping these channels of communication open are key to supporting young people and we hope these principles clarify the importance of positive communication.

The two key components of these principles are,

1. All members of Tapton School will communicate appropriately, professionally and in a timely way with parents/carers and members of the community. We will endeavour to answer their questions and address their concerns and most importantly work in partnership to ensure all students achieve all that they can.
2. Parents/carers and members of the local community should always communicate with Tapton staff in a respectful and appropriate way. This includes conversations when visiting the school, telephone calls, emails and letters.

If parents/carers have concerns or questions that they do not feel have been fully answered or addressed they have recourse to the Complaints Procedure. This policy (and a guide for parents/carers) is to be found on the school website and can also be obtained on request by phoning or emailing the school office.

Equally, colleagues in school have the right to appropriate and respectful treatment. If parents/carers do not treat colleagues in school in this way we will implement the 'Vexatious Communication Procedure'. Again this procedure is to be found on the school website and can also be obtained on request by phoning or emailing the school office.

Communication within Tapton School and between Tapton School and parents/carers or the local community should always be,

- Courteous, professional and appropriate
- Timely – we aim to respond to all emails and letters in two working days. In the first instance this may be simply to acknowledge the email and outline the next steps. We cannot put phone calls through to teachers during school hours but they will receive a message and someone from the school will respond in two working days. *NB some colleagues work part time and if the matter can only be dealt with by a specific colleague who does not work part of the week then the response will be within two of their working days.*
- Measured. If, for example, an email exchange goes beyond three emails (and the email exchange is becoming unproductive) the next step is to arrange to speak face to face. There are also some email principles prepared by the Unions to address volume of emails in school.
- Safe (We are currently working with Sheffield City Council to develop an approach to communicate and transfer data via email in a safe and secure manner).

This information is shared and disseminated via the website, the Staff Handbook and briefings/meetings, posters in reception, information available in the school office.

