



Communications Policy

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1. Principles

Rugby Free Secondary uses a variety of channels to maintain effective communication with all stakeholders; - parents and carers, other schools, the wider community, and outside partners. This list is not exhaustive. Depending on the nature of the communication, the school will use the most appropriate means to contact the recipient. Communication on issues that affect the safety and wellbeing of a student will be treated as a priority. The school holds emergency contact details for all students and families are asked to alert the school immediately if contact information needs to be revised. Staff will always seek to establish friendly relationships with students, parents and carers, but they will ensure relationships are professional.

The Communications Policy embraces the principles of the school's Equality Statement and Online Safety Policy (copies available on the school website).

2. Introduction

Rugby Free Secondary recognises the importance of clear and effective communications with all stakeholders (students, parents and carers, staff, trustees, the local and wider community outside agencies, 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, carers and students and this Policy addresses the main ways in which the school will ensure there is effective two-way communication between home and school. Parents and carers have a key role to play in their child's education. The school will make every effort to encourage and make arrangements for parents and carers to contribute to creating a shared view of their child's needs.

3. Aims of the policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that effective communication and consultation takes place between the school, parents, carers, students and other stakeholders and that there are robust processes to facilitate this.

The school recognises that engaging and working with parents and carers is a vital key in providing their child with an excellent education. Parents and carers are offered opportunities throughout the year to convey to us what they expect from and think of



the school. Our wish is to involve as many parents and carers in their child's education as possible.

Our aims include the following:

- To make our school as welcoming and inclusive as possible.
- Communications will be clear, informative and positive.
- Communications will be as proactive as possible.
- All written and telephone enquiries will be dealt with promptly and parents and carers can expect an acknowledgement within 2 working days.
- A variety of forms of communication with parents and carers for example, telephone contact, e-mail, post and text.
- Parents and carers are contacted for positive as well as negative reasons.
- Information is given to parents and carers on what students will be taught and tips for helping their child will be provided.
- Parents and carers will be encouraged to help or support their child's learning at school and at home. Information will be provided in a timely way to enable this support to be effective.

4. Communication with parents and carers

4.1 Choosing the correct member of staff to address a query.

Please see Appendix A which details who to contact and how to progress any query that is not successfully resolved.

4.2 Letters

Staff will always reply to a letter or email from parents and carers as quickly as possible. A response to acknowledge receipt of a letter will be made by telephone, letter or email within 2 working days and responded to within 5 working days. Letters to parents/carers must be processed through the school administration team and approved by the Headteacher and/or a member of the Senior Leadership Team before posting/emailing. Letters/emails being sent out to all parents/carers should be approved by the staff member responsible for communication and sent out using ParentMail.



Any letters of concern or complaint should be dealt with in accordance with the school's Complaints and Suggestions Policy (copy available on the policy page of the school website).

The school will use standard templates for letters where possible.

Whole school information is included in a fortnightly newsletter. A link to an electronic copy of this is emailed to all parents and carers as well as being published on the school website.

Parents and carers are encouraged to provide the school with a current email address for prompt and effective communication. However, if we are unable to obtain a current email address for any parent or carer, hard copies of the communications will be supplied upon request.

4.3 E-mail

E-mail is a quick, effective way of communicating necessary information and is the school's preferred method of communication. Emails received will be treated in the same way as letters: acknowledged within 2 working days and responded to within 5 working days.

Parents and carers may wish to contact the school via email for a general enquiry as an alternative to telephone or letter. An email reply will state that the enquiry will be forwarded to the appropriate member of staff who will then reply within 5 working days. The school email address is: info@rugbyfreesecondary.co.uk.

4.4 Telephone Calls

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school, where teachers may be teaching full-time, running clubs or working with students at lunchtime or after school. Parents and carers may be frustrated 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. Messages will be delivered to the relevant member of staff on the same day. In a non-emergency a return call will be made within 2 working days, with any follow up action from the request /query/problem being dealt with within 5 working days.



4.5 Absence

If a child is absent, parents and carers are asked to contact the school as soon as possible on the morning of the absence, for full details please refer to the Attendance Policy (copy available on school website).

Meeting with parents and carers

Parents and carers wishing to meet a member of staff must contact the school to make an appointment. This request should be responded to within 2 working days. Parents and carers should report to reception prior to meeting with a member of staff. A member of staff may ask a senior colleague to accompany them. Staff should call a meeting to a close in the event of the parents or carers becoming angry or abusive. This should be reported immediately to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

The Trust and school also have a duty of care for both staff and students to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

The Trust and school will not tolerate parent/carer's behaviour that is unacceptable and has a detrimental effect on the good order and safety of any of the schools within the Trust.

5 Parental conduct

This policy outlines the behaviours that are unacceptable and what sanctions are available to deal with such behaviour.

- The principles in this policy also apply to any other family members of students or other visitors to the school.
- This policy does not affect the right of parents/carers or other parties to make complaints to the school and this policy should be read in conjunction with the Complaints Policy.

5.1 Unacceptable Conduct

The following behaviours are considered unacceptable by the school:

- Swearing or the use of other abusive, offensive or threatening language
- Intimidation



- Aggressive or disruptive behaviour
- Threatening violence or acting violently, including damage to property or injury to individuals
- Racist, sexist or other discriminatory conduct
- Behaving in a way which makes others feel distressed, humiliated or threatened
- Frequent, unwarranted and/or unnecessary correspondence which is hindering
- The proper running of the school
- Making deliberately false, malicious or vexatious accusations
- Consumption of alcohol or use of illegal drugs on the school site, or accessing the
- School site whilst intoxicated
- Incitement of others to do any of the above

This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour.

This policy covers any of the above conducts which are committed:

- In the school buildings or on the school site
- By telephone to the school
- By email to the school
- On social media referring to the school
- In any other setting which, in the reasonable opinion of the Headteacher, Chief Executive Officer or chair of Trustees, should be regulated by this policy.

5.2 Procedures

The Trust has a range of strategies to employ with any parent/carer who engages in unacceptable conduct. Whilst these sanctions are set out in this policy by way of a sequential process, they can be initiated at any stage if, in the reasonable judgement of the Headteacher, Chief Executive Officer, or chair of Trustees, the severity of the behaviour warrants such a level of intervention. Where the behaviour is so extreme that it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of staff or others, the matter will be referred immediately to the police for action.

5.2.1 Verbal warning

A parent/carer who displays any of the behaviours described above will be asked to desist.



5.2.2 Mediation meeting

Where appropriate, the parent/carer may be asked to meet with the Headteacher and/or chair of Trustees to discuss the matter in person.

5.2.3 Formal written warning(s)

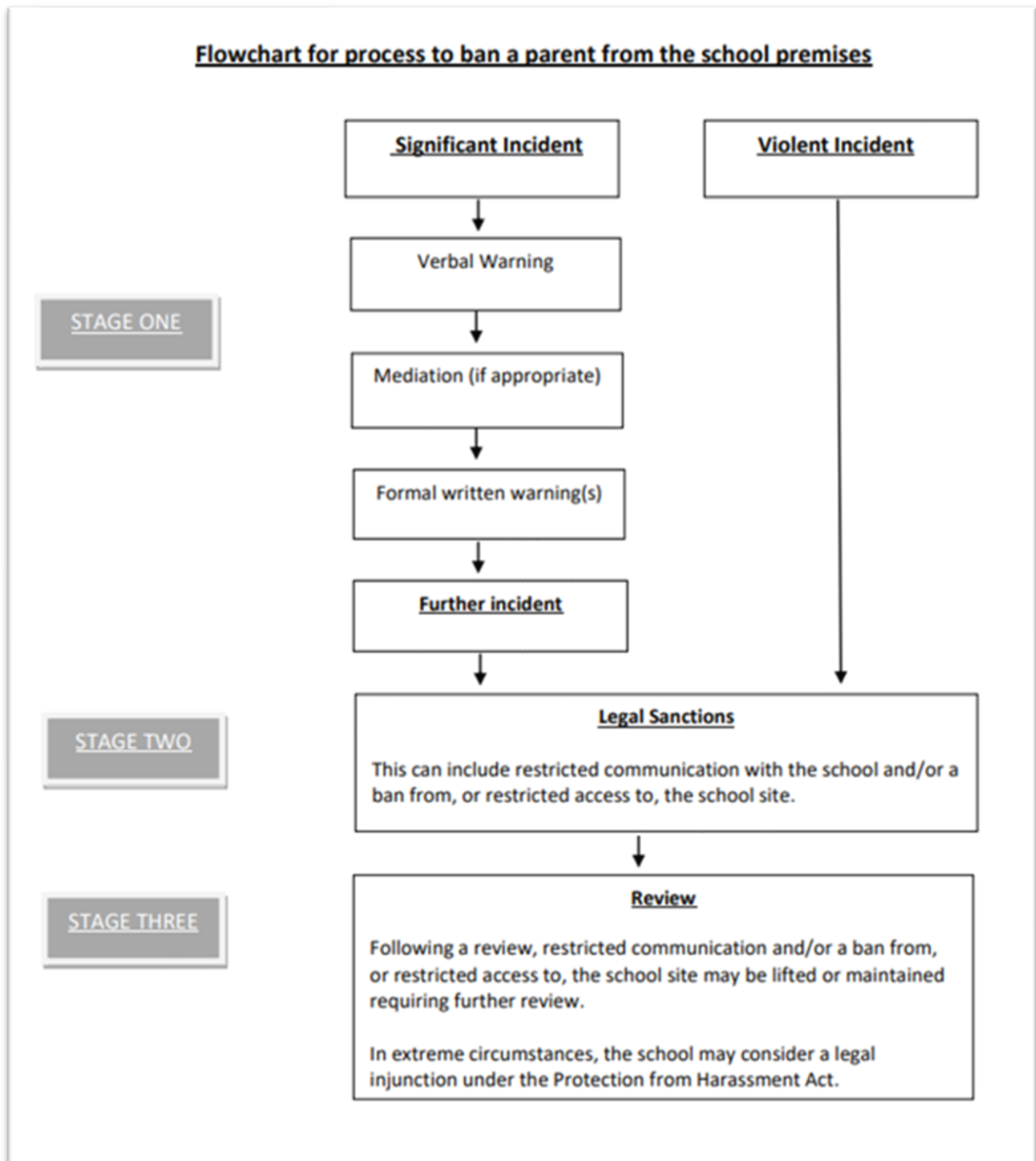
Formal written warning(s) may be sent to the parent/carer by letter to their home address. Any letters sent will be circulated to relevant internal parties to ensure that an informed and consistent approach can be adopted. Any letters sent will be kept on the student's school file for a period of twelve months.

5.2.4 Legal sanctions

Legal sanctions will be used in extreme circumstances e.g. if a parent/carer continues to exhibit conduct in breach of this policy or has committed a serious breach of this policy.

- Restricted communication with the school. Communication with the school can be restricted e.g. requesting contact in a particular form (for example, letters only), requiring contact to take place with a named person only or restricting telephone calls to specified days and times. Any parent/carer in breach of the restrictions may have their right to access to the school site removed.
- Ban from, or restricted access to, the school site. A parent/carer's common licence to access the school site can be removed or restricted for a specified period. In such circumstances, parents/carers may need to make alternative arrangements for bringing children into school. Any entry onto the site in contravention of such a ban and where a nuisance is caused would be a criminal offence under section 547 of the Education Act 1996. Any parent/carer in breach of the ban will be removed from the premises by the police or an authorised member of staff.
- Injunction under the Protection from Harassment Act. The school may seek a legal injunction requiring the parent/carer to desist from behaving in the manner in question.

Flowchart for process to ban a parent from the school premises



5.3 Monitoring and Review

- The Headteacher will report to staff from time to time, and to the governing body annually or earlier if the chair so determines, on the number and type of incidents and behaviours displayed by parents/carers received and their outcomes.
- The governing body will review this policy every three years.



6 Social media

The general RFSS Twitter/Facebook/Instagram accounts are used to provide summary updates to parents and students who wish to subscribe to this. All accounts should direct subscribers to the RFSS website as the central point of reference. Subscription is not compulsory. Any key messages will be relayed through formal school communication channels – ParentMail and email.

Subject-specific accounts (such as RFSS Art, PE and RFSS Duke of Edinburgh) are managed separately by relevant departments.

7 Reports and progress

Parents and carers receive an interim progress report each half term which provides information about their child's progress in each academic year.

In addition, parents and carers can meet their child's subject teachers once a year, at parents evening. Parents and carers should contact the school if issues arise about their child's progress or wellbeing. The first point of contact should be the child's Form Tutor. We welcome the presence of any other adult a parent or carer wishes to invite to a school meeting for support or to act as an interpreter.

8 Accessibility

We will endeavour to make any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary to enable a parent or carer with a disability to participate fully in a meeting or to receive and understand a communication.

Documents printed using a larger font can usually be provided and requests should be made via Reception.

If a translation of a document is required, in the first instance parents/carers should access Google Translate and a link to this will be included in the main languages of the school community in documents sent out to parents. Key school information will be translated into community languages where appropriate and possible and where required a translator provided to ensure effective communication. Before sending or posting information electronically staff should test to ensure cross platform access.



9 School website

The school website provides a range of information about the school, including: Inclusion information, Student Premium information, Homework, Uniform list, Timetables, School events, Holiday dates and School prospectus.

It is used to promote the school to a wider audience and is updated regularly.

10 Communication between students and staff

Two-way communication between students and staff is an important aspect of school life. The school welcomes and encourages students to engage in conversation with all members of staff within the school which will be via phone or their school email address.

11 School trips, visits and activities

The school will endeavour to publish all proposed trips, visits and activities on the school calendar at the start of each academic year. Parents and carers will be notified by letter of trips, visits and activities that their child/children may wish to participate in as early as possible, and within at least six weeks of the proposed trip, visit or activity. Occasionally opportunities arise during the academic year to offer students additional trips, visits or activities that were not known or available when the school calendar was published. The school will always ensure parents and carers are notified of any additional opportunities for their child as soon as possible to ensure parents and carers have adequate time to plan for such events. (See also the separate Trips Policy, copy available in the Policy Folder in the Whole School Team Drive or on the policy page of the school website)

12 Severe weather and emergency closure

In the event of emergency closure communication will be made to parents and carers via text or email. Parents and carers should also tune in to local radio and check the school website and social media channels (e.g. Facebook).

13 Prospective parents/carers

The school prospectus is published on the website. Prospective parents and carers may request a printed copy. Prospective parents and carers are invited to an Open Evening in the October of the year preceding their child's year of entry to the school and to attend published tours to enable them to see the school operating.



Prospective parents and carers are also invited, along with their child, to an induction evening in March where the main channels of communication are outlined, and important information will be shared.

14 Parents & Carers Advisory Committee (PCAB) and Friends of Rugby Free

These groups are led by current parents and their focus is to develop engagement and provide forums for parents and carers.

15 Supporting parents and carers of students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The school recognises the importance of positive relationships with parents and carers of all students with additional needs. The SEND Code of Practice emphasises the importance of positive, supportive attitudes to parents and carers and user-friendly information and procedures. All staff will make every effort to ensure effective communication with parents and carers. All staff within the school are expected to help parents and carers understand how to contribute effectively to their child's education and will make every effort to ensure that parents understand their rights and responsibilities. All relevant information will be provided in a way for all to understand and respond to. When students who have special educational needs are making less than the expected progress or if they are experiencing behavioural difficulties, we would expect to meet with parents and carers more regularly. Parents and carers are encouraged to communicate immediately where they have a concern about their child's needs being met and should also refer to the Inclusion section of the website.

16 Communication with other schools outside agencies

Prior to students joining Year 7, students are visited in their primary schools to gain further information about them to help and support their transition to Rugby Free Secondary. We recognise that children have diverse needs, and where required we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals including medical services (such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy), educational psychologists, health professionals and specialists and various welfare-focused services, such as Educational Welfare and the local authority Children's Services Single Point of



Access. We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our school must provide a safe and secure environment (see the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy copy available in the Policy Folder in the Whole School Team Drive or on the policy page of the school website). We hold information on all students in our school and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. All personal data is held and processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (for full details see our Data Protection and GDPR Policy, available on the [trust website](#)).

17 Investigating incidents

When investigating an incident involving students, school members of staff interview all students involved and ask them to complete a written account. The school will only share any information that would identify any students in accordance with data protection regulations and legislation and our policies (a copy of our Data Protection and GDPR Policy is available on the policy page of the [Trust website](#)).

18 Monitoring, evaluation and review

Our Parents & Carers Advisory Committee (PCAB) will review this Policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The Policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.



Rugby Free

Secondary School

Appendix A – Key Contacts

Please visit [the school's website](#) for school contact information.