



Vyners School

Policy on Stakeholder Communication

Vyners School recognises the importance of clear and timely communication with its stakeholders (parents, students, governors, members of the local community and outside agencies) and is committed to being open and accessible to all those who have an interest in the school.

This policy sets out the ways in which the school will facilitate this two-way dialogue.

Methods of communication

There are a number of ways in which stakeholders can routinely access information about the school:

- The school's website (www.vynersschool.org.uk) contains a range of information about the school including copies of the school prospectuses, letters home and copies of key school policies.
- The school issues a short weekly newsletter (the Vyne Bulletin) every Friday, a copy of which is posted on the school website and emailed to all parents/carers for whom the school holds a valid email address.
- A more substantial newsletter – The Grapevyne Magazine – will be issued on a termly basis. The magazine will include reports on student activities and achievements, as well as updates about the term ahead. This will be also emailed home and posted on the School website.
- The school will issue a range of 'letters home' during the year. These cover more specific issues relating to individual departments or year groups, proposed trips etc. These letters will be emailed and posted on the school website. Hard copy letters will not be routinely issued to parents. The school undertakes to ensure that each letter contains a clear point of contact for further queries on the particular issue being communicated.
- Progress checks are issued three times each year for all students. This document contains key information on how individual students are progressing, and the attitude they are displaying towards their learning whilst in school.
- All parents are given access to the School's 'Parent Portal'. This gives you access to your child's school data online 24 hrs a day. The Portal holds the following:
 - i. Personal contact information for your child
 - ii. Behaviour and attendance information

- iii. A copy of your child's timetable
- iv. Details of external examination entries and results (Year 9 and above)
- v. Progress check data

The Portal also enables parents to book slots at Parents' Evenings.

- The School holds a Year Leader/Tutor Evening for all Year Groups in the autumn term, and a Parents Evening for each year group (in the spring term). These events are a key opportunity for parents to come into school and learning about key event in their child's education that year and to discuss their child's progress directly with member of the teaching staff. The events also provide an opportunity for parents to raise any other issues with member of the Leadership Team. **We expect all parents to attend these events.**
- We also run targeted open evenings at key points in your child's education (Year 6 into 7 transition, Year 8 and Year 9 options processes, Year 11 options). **We expect all parents to participate fully in all the events arranged.**
- The school subscribes to an automated texting service, which is used to send parents notification that their child has not been registered in school or that they need to attend an after school detention. **These are important messages and it is important that school holds an up to date mobile phone number for the primary point of parental contact at all times**
- Details of Home learning tasks can be found on Google Classroom or marked in the student planner. These are both key methods of communication and parents are asked to check them both regularly. The Student planner may be used to communicate non-urgent messages to a child's tutor, or to Student Services.

Other methods of contacting the school.

Should the communication channels above not provide you with the information you require, or you have a specific issue to discuss with a member of staff, please contact the school as follows:

Concerns over pastoral / curriculum issues	- Relevant subject teacher or form tutor
Issues regarding a form tutor or subject teacher	- Year Leader / Subject Leader
Concerns relating to a Year Leader / Subject Leader	- Assistant Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher
Matters concerns the administrative running of the school	- Business Manager

Queries or issues can be raised by telephone (01895 234342), by email office@vynersschool.org.uk, by letter or in person (an appointment will be required).

All Year Leaders, Subject Leaders and form tutors can additionally be contacted via the 'contact us' page on the school website.

Feedback / consultation

The school is, from time to time, required to consult parents on specific matters relating to the operation of the school. Recent examples include our uniform policy, the structure of the school day and our admissions policy.

These consultation exercises will be clearly communicated via both a letter home to all students and via prominent posting on the school website. **Parents are actively encouraged to contribute to these exercises before the stated deadline.**

The school will also run periodic feedback surveys. Please do take the time to contribute to these; your views are important to us.

Response times

During term time, the School undertakes to send a substantive reply to most queries within **5 working (ie School)** days. In many cases, we will be able to respond to you much more quickly.

An initial acknowledgement will be sent within the first 2 working days reassuring you that your query has been received. If it is not possible to send a full reply within 5 working days (for instance, information needs to be sought from a third party in order to be able to fully answer your question), you will be informed of this.

In the interests of staff wellbeing, the School does not expect its staff to respond to emails or make phone calls home either before 8am or after 5pm. In the interests of providing the highest level of support to our students, many staff will work outside these times. Parents should not, however, expect this as the norm.

During school holidays, staff will access their email much more infrequently, though the school aims to pick up emails sent into the main school office at least weekly.

Expectations of parents

The school understands that parental concerns are important and that a failure to immediately speak with the relevant member of staff can cause anxiety and frustration. Many members of the teaching staff will however be teaching all day and offer additional support to students through running afterschool or lunchtime activities. Both these activities, by their nature, limit the ability of teaching staff to respond immediately to parents.

Parents are asked not to contact members of staff via unofficial channels. This respects the privacy of our staff outside school hours, and also enables them to respond effectively to you, with all the necessary information to hand. Parents are also asked to maintain an appropriate standard of courtesy towards its staff. The School will not tolerate aggressive, abusive or discriminatory treatment towards any of its staff.

When contacting the school about an issue, please give us as much information as possible. Information about the nature of your concern or what has happened, when it took place, who was involved and what you would like us to do to resolve the issue is all very helpful and will enable the school to respond to you quickly.

Parents are reminded that the school has a duty of confidentiality to all its students. Particularly where pastoral issues are concerned, a parent should not expect to receive detailed information about other students.

Parents who wish to meet with a member of staff regarding an issue are asked, if at all possible to make an appointment to do so. Particularly for members of teaching staff, their teaching timetable prohibits them taking 'ad hoc' meetings. If you feel the issue is urgent, the School will endeavour to deal with the issue as quickly as possible. Parents should not, however, expect to be seen immediately if they turn up at School Reception without an appointment.

It is very important that the school maintains up to date contact details for parents (particularly mobile phone number and a valid email address). This enables us to contact you quickly if your child is unwell. It also enables the school to communicate effectively with you via electronic means. The school asked all parents to check their contact information in the autumn term of every school year. **When you receive this data sheet, please return it to the school as soon as possible. Confirmation that your contact details are unchanged is just as important to us as being notified of changes.**

Parents with Dual Roles

A number of parents also hold positions as School Governors, or as members of staff.

Where this is the case, it is important that both the School and the parent respect the boundaries of each role. The following protocols should generally be followed:

- Scheduled appointments should be made to discuss issues relating to the student. This gives both parties the opportunity to prepare properly for the discussion.
- Unless of a very general nature, discussions about individual students should be conducted in private, not in public areas such as corridors or the staff room.
- Unless relating to an emergency, parents are asked not to use paid school time to undertake parental responsibilities.

Formal complaints procedure

The school encourages all stakeholders to raise their concerns on an informal basis in the first instance as, in many cases, concerns can be quickly and satisfactorily resolved this way. Where stakeholders feel that this route is not addressing their concerns, they may have recourse to the School's formal complaints procedure, a copy of which is available from the School's website.

Agreed by Curriculum and Student Support Committee – May 2017

To be reviewed – May 2019