Staff Communication Procedure – King's Oak Academy

Version 1.0   October 2018

History of most recent Policy changes

Date	Page	Change	Origin of Change e.g. TU request, Change in legislation
Nov 2017	Document Creation	Template for Academy use created	
Oct **2018**	Amends	Amendments RCK	

Contents

1 Introductory Statement

This procedure provides guidance for staff of King's Oak Academy when communicating with parents / carers and other stakeholders.

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the Communications Policy.

2 Definition

We define communication as the process whereby meaning is assigned, conveyed and interpreted in an attempt to create a shared understanding. It may be visual, non-verbal, oral or written. Good communications should be:

- interactive, all parties having opportunities and clear mechanisms for communication with one another;
- timely;
- responsive to all stakeholders' needs;
- personal or impersonal, as appropriate;
- correctly targeted at mass or small audiences, or individuals.

3 Communication Formatting

3.1 The Academy font is Arial.

3.2 Font size is 11.

3.3 All written communication should be in black if it is electronic and in black or blue ink if it is hand written.

3.4 All written communication to parents/carer must be in the form of a letter, text (using Academy texting system) or email. (Hand written notes etc. are not acceptable except in planners). See methods of external communication and guidelines below.

3.5 All communication relating to individual students must be recorded on SIMS regardless of the format of the communication. If a call has been made but had no answer, SIMS should still be updated to inform reception where to direct a return call.

3.6 All communication (both internal and external) should include the King's Oak Academy logo and Cabot Learning Federation logo. For forms, posters etc. the Academy logo should be in the top left and the Federation logo in the top right.

3.7 Please use the term 'students' (not pupils) and 'Academy' (not school).

4 Methods of external communication and guidelines

4.1 Letters home:

4.1.1 All letters home must be approved by Cate Gillman, Office Manager.

4.1.2 All requests for letters must be made to the Administration Team with 24 hours' notice. The administration department will seek approval if it has not already been obtained, this may result in a delay in your communication being sent.

4.1.3 The administration department will alter letters to ensure they fit the Academy style.

4.2 <u>Text messages:</u>

4.2.1 All text messages must be approved by Cate Gillman, Office Manager.

4.2.2 Text messages must be short and <u>only</u> sent to appropriate parents/carers.

4.2.3 Behavioural issues will not be communicated via the text system (except to alert parents/carers that their child will be late due to a detention); however, colleagues can request that a parent/carer contacts the Academy if they have been unable to leave a message elsewhere.

4.2.4 Only members of the Administration Team or SLT may actually send text messages (once approval has been received).

4.3 <u>Email Messages:</u>

4.3.1 All email messages must be completed in Arial point 11 in Black.

4.3.2 All colleagues must use the standard and agreed email signature attached to all emails

4.3.3 All emails must be written in a professional manner taking into account the following:

- Readers' literacy and EAL needs
- Layout – generally this should follow the same rules as when writing a letter i.e. use of paragraphs
- Style of language used. Whereas meeting face-to-face can support the use of appropriate tone via voice moderation, gesture, etc. the written word is less flexible. It is therefore important to review how your message may be misunderstood and adjust the language accordingly, ahead of sending the message.
- Correct use of grammar and spelling.
- If necessary, ask a colleague to read the email before clicking send.

4.3.4 Emails should include a salutation and be ended with an appropriate sign off i.e. Yours sincerely or Kind Regards.

4.3.5 Before sending your email, check that you have the correct email address and that you are only sending it to the appropriate people.

4.3.6 If sending an email to more than one external person addresses <u>must</u> be put in the BCC box to protect their personal information.

4.3.7 Avoid forwarding email chains to an increasing number of recipients. While it may be useful to cc colleagues into email communications with external parties, colleagues should not cc external parties in internal emails.

4.3.8 Colleagues must acknowledge receipt of a parents/carers email within **48 hours,** outlining a timeframe for their query to be answered, if unable to do so straight away.

4.4 <u>Telephone Conversations:</u>

4.4.1 Parent/Carer salutations must be used. If the call is being transferred, Reception will give this information.

4.4.2 Ahead of making a call, colleagues should familiarise themselves with any specific needs a parent/carer may have (e.g. EAL). Appropriate steps should be taken to overcome any potential barriers to effective communication (e.g. arranging for a colleague to translate).

4.4.3 Only the Academy telephone system or an Academy mobile phone should be used to contact parents/carers.

4.4.4 Colleagues must remain courteous during conversations with parents/carers.

4.4.5 Parents'/Carers' telephone calls will be returned within **48 hours** of the message being received, even if this is just a holding call whilst you investigate matters further. If a call requires an urgent response within 24 hours, this will be indicated within the message. If the query hasn't been resolved a time should be agreed for the next point of contact.

4.4.6 Colleagues must leave a message, if possible, including their name, Academy name and Academy contact number. Details such as student name or reason for the call must not be included.

4.5 Parents' Evenings and Parent Meetings

4.5.1 Colleagues should ensure that they know the name of the parent/carer and use it to welcome them when they arrive. In some cases this will be different to the child's surname.

4.5.2 Colleagues should be able to discuss the child in detail with the parent/carer, not only their progress academically but what they need to do to improve, their behaviour in lessons and their strengths and weaknesses.

4.5.3 Colleagues must record who they have seen and pass this information, and any feedback, on to the Head of Department or Head of House as appropriate.

4.5.4 When a meeting with a parent/carer is arranged it must take place in the meeting room (outside of timetabled parents' evenings) or another meeting room and reception must be made aware that it is taking place in advance.

4.5.5 Colleagues must not arrange parent/carer meetings during teaching times - these should be arranged for before or after the Academy day or during non-teaching periods.

4.5.6 Notes should be taken during informal parent/carer meetings so that an accurate summary of the conversation can be added to SIMS. If assistance is required, colleagues should approach their Head of House in advance of the meeting.

4.5.7 Students should be included in meetings, and be given the opportunity to contribute to discussions.

4.6 Progress reports and written reports

4.6.1 Colleagues must familiarise themselves with the reporting programme and meet all deadlines for data input.

4.6.2 When completing written reports staff must use the correct grammar and spelling and must proof read their own comments.

5 Internal communication guidelines

Communication between colleagues is an essential tool in supporting students through their academic career as well as for creating an outstanding environment in which they can learn. Internal communication should be taken as seriously as external communication. Colleagues should always communicate in a professional and courteous manner while following the guidance below.

5.1 Colleagues are encouraged, where possible, to have a conversation rather than send an email. This opens the door for a full conversation, reduces the risk of misunderstandings and encourages better sharing of knowledge.

5.2 If sending an email, colleagues should follow the guidelines for sending an external email.

5.3 If sending an email to more than one member of staff ensure that everyone that is copied in needs to see it.

5.4 All Staff emails can only be sent by the PA to the Principal or SLT and are only to be used to send vital information that all colleagues need to know – i.e. new procedures, SEN information.

5.5 Check the list of Distribution Groups and use these as appropriate.

5.6 If a colleague moves offices they must advise reception so that the internal phone list can be amended.

5.7 All communication with colleagues will take place in a professional manner.

6 Internal Meetings

6.1 If colleagues are invited to attend a meeting they should arrive promptly, having read any pre-provided information and prepared to contribute to support school (Academy) improvement.

6.2 Colleagues should only arrange meetings that will have an impact on school (Academy) improvement and should only invite relevant colleagues.

6.3 All meetings should have an agenda and clear timeframe.

6.4 Notes should be taken at all meetings which provide attendees with the actions and deadlines agreed. Notes should only include enough detail to act as a reminder for the action.

7 The Media

7.1 Under no circumstance should any member of staff communicate with the media (Radio or TV). All communications of this nature should be redirected to the Federation Communications Manager and the Academy Principal.

8 Social Media

8.1 The following table shows how the Academy currently considers the use of communications devices for staff (as per the KOA E-Safety Policy):

Communication Technologies	Allowed	Allowed at certain times	Allowed for select staff	Not Allowed	Allowed	Allowed at certain times	Allowed with staff permission	Not allowed
Mobile phones may be brought to the Academy	•	•						
Use of mobile phones in lessons		•						
Use of mobile phones in social times		•						
Taking of photos on mobile phones or other camera devices			•					
Use of personal email addresses in the Academy, or on an Academy network		•						
Use of Academy email for personal emails			•					
Use of Academy email for personal emails				•				
Use of corporate instant messaging (Lync)		•						
Use of public instant messaging			•					
Use of social networking sites			•					
Use of KOA blogs		•						

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Communications Policy and Communicating with Parents/Carers Policy