

Penryn College

Communication Policy

Approved by: Full Governing Body

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Responsible SLT member: Sally Price

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Statement of intent

Penryn College is committed to maintaining effective communication and relationships between parents, pupils and the school.

This policy sets out the aims of the school with regard to internal and external communication, and the responsibilities of the school, its staff members and parents. The policy also outlines the school's marketing strategy and how this will be used to build positive relationships with parents and the wider community.

The School aims to promote effective communication between pupils, members of staff, parents, stakeholders and all members of the school community through the following means:

- Having a clear and professional communication strategy in place to keep parents and carers well-informed about their child's educational progress and any other matters related to their child's overall wellbeing
- Improving the quality of education by ensuring there is a robust process in place for consultation between the school, parents, staff members and pupils on key areas
- Monitoring and evaluating communication issues through regular meetings with staff, parents and members of the school community
- Developing a reliable online presence in order to build a positive reputation for the school within the wider community

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Education Act 2002
- The Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Data Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Adverse Weather Policy
- Invacuation, Lockdown and Evacuation Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Staff Handbook
- Parent Code of Conduct

2. Aims and Objectives

In our school, we strive to maintain clear and effective communications with all parents, carers and with the wider community.

Effective communication enables us to share our aims and values by keeping parents and the community well informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents and members of the community play in supporting the school.

We have various strategies for communicating with parents and the community which reflect what we believe is important for our school. We make our written communication as accessible and inclusive as possible. We use an easy-to-read font and add pictures where appropriate. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of discrimination. We recognise and celebrate the contributions made by groups represented in our school and community.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Placing key policies, documents and procedures in areas that maximise their accessibility and usefulness to the entire school community, e.g. on the school website.
- Communicating important information, e.g. the curriculum, clearly to parents.
- Informing parents of all school events within appropriate timelines.
- Regularly keeping parents informed of their child's progress.
- Informing parents about the types of data that the school holds on pupils, who controls the data, why that data is held and who it may be shared with. This information will be

concise, transparent and easily accessible; written in a clear and plain language; and free of charge.

- Ensuring that consent obtained from parents, and pupils where appropriate, regarding the processing of personal data is freely given, specific, informed, and an unambiguous indication of the individual's wishes.
- Ensuring that individuals are informed of their rights to withdraw consent and are provided with easy ways to do so.
- Ensuring that information regarding staff pay and conditions of service is made available to all who are employed at the school.
- Taking steps to ensure parents who do not have access to the internet can still access the information that is included on the school website.
- Appointing a member of staff with the appropriate skills and knowledge required to fulfil the role.
- Approving all communication-related proposals and materials.
- Overseeing the implementation of this policy.

Staff members are responsible for:

- Ensuring the principles and procedures of this policy are followed.
- Communicating proactively with parents about pupil progress and helping parents to support their child's learning.
- Ensuring that their internal communication with other staff is strong, e.g. passing on relevant information to supply teachers and updating classroom planning files with specific pupil information.

Parents are responsible for:

- Reading the key communications circulated by the school and responding or acting on these communications where required, e.g. by attending meetings.
- Logging on to the school website and the Virtual School for detailed information about the school calendar, term dates, exam details, monitoring and assessments, school achievements and other useful information.
- Informing the school of important information related to their child, such as:
 - Medical conditions or allergies, supported by medical documentation relating to these conditions.
 - Any SEND or other needs their child has.
 - Child protection matters, legal issues or relevant duties with appropriate documentation.
- Raising any issues or concerns they may have with the appropriate contact, e.g. contacting the class teacher with education-related issues.

4. External communication

Communications Team

The communications team comprises a Press Officer & Web & Social Media Co-ordinator and an Event Coordinator.

The Press Officer & Web and Social Media Co-ordinator's principle role is to ensure that the college remains in the public eye through the publication of relevant, informative and eye catching copy in a variety of outlets.

The post holder is responsible for all written, visual and aural communications with newspapers, magazines, journals, television and radio outlets. They are also responsible for ensuring that the website, and social media outlets are relevant, informative and up to date with latest news and information about the college.

The Events Co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that all events run by the college are planned and executed effectively through timely and appropriate consultation with concerned members of staff responsible for the organisation of such events.

Communication from the school to parents

Parents will be contacted through the following methods:

- Letters home
- Text messages
- Phone calls
- The school website
- School weekly newsletter
- Student specific parent/carer weekly email
- In-person meetings
- Virtual subject review evenings
- Social media and media channels
- Governor meeting minutes
- Celebration events (parents and carers are invited to the school)
- Open days
- Parents' Forum
- Parents' Handbook
- Parent View (via OFSTED)
- Questionnaires and surveys
- Parent Reports
- School iPads
- School Prospectus
- Virtual School

Parents will be given the opportunity to sign up to newsletters and other marketing communication via email.

If a pupil is absent from school and the school has no indication of the reason for the absence, the school will contact the pupil's parent via text on the first day of absence in order to notify the parent and seek a reason for the absence. If no contact can be made with any named parent, the school has the right to contact the education welfare officer to ensure the pupil's wellbeing and safety.

Communication from parents to the school

For general and urgent enquiries, parents will be required to ring the school office, which is open from Monday to Friday between 8:30am and 4:30pm, on 01326 372379. For non-urgent enquiries, parents will be required to email the school using secretary@penryn-college.cornwall.sch.uk. All emails to the school will specify the member of staff that the query is addressed to. All emails to the school will be treated as confidential, unless there is a specific reason not to do so.

Communication between teachers and parents

Teachers regularly update parents of pupils' progress, the curriculum content being covered, and how they can support pupils' development and progress through activities to be completed at home.

Pupils have an iPad which can be used by parents to view information that they wish to see regularly. iPads will be used to record key education-related information for parents, e.g. homework assignments, and as a regular communication channel for parents.

Teachers will be available to discuss pupils' progress and any concerns with parents and can be contacted via email using the first letter of their first name, surname @penryn-college.cornwall.sch.uk. Alternatively parents can use secretary@ email address.

5. Emergency communication

All parents will ensure that the school has their latest contact details, including their address, telephone number and email address, so that they can be contacted in the event of an emergency.

If a pupil is seriously ill or injured, the school will attempt to contact the pupil's emergency contacts via telephone. In the event of a larger serious incident requiring invacuation, lockdown, or evacuation, the school will follow its Invacuation, Lockdown and Evacuation Policy – parents will receive updates on how the school will communicate with them during an invacuation, lockdown or evacuation via the school newsletter.

Where an incident affects the whole school community, such as power failure or snow, the school will send all parents an email and use social media channels (i.e. Facebook, X and Instagram) with information on how the school will be operating, e.g. reduced hours or closure. If the school is closed for more than one day due to adverse weather or similar problem, an update will be posted on the school website at least once a day. The school will also ask the local radio station, Radio Cornwall and the local authority, Cornwall Council, to broadcast a closure announcement.

6. Email communication

Email and internet access will be used in line with the school's Data Protection Policy, Online Safety Policy, and Data and Cyber-security Breach Prevention and Management Plan.

All staff will have their own email account, which will be used to conduct all school-related communication – staff will not use their personal email addresses. Emails will not be used as a substitute for face-to-face communication. Staff will consider the best way to communicate according to each individual situation.

The school will aim to respond to all email enquiries within three working days. Staff and parents will be made aware that part-time staff may take longer to reply due to the nature of their work schedule.

The following processes will be implemented to assist with the management of email communication:

Using a centralised email address

- Parents will be provided with one email address to use as a main point of contact for general home-school communication, e.g. informing the school that their child is ill.
- Office staff will first seek to handle the enquiry themselves, e.g. if the email is in relation to dates of upcoming trips, uniform queries, sickness.
- If the message requires more specific support, it will be forwarded to appropriate member of staff.
- Parents will only use staff-specific email addresses if they need to contact a specific member of staff directly.

Implementing set times for responding to emails

- The school has established a set window of time that staff can be expected to respond to emails, which it set out in Appendix 1 – *Penryn College Communications*.
- The school community will be encouraged to only send emails during the school day and informed that if emails are sent outside of this window, they should not expect an immediate response in most cases.
- The school will not expect work emails to be checked outside of working hours.

Providing support to staff

- Guidance will be provided to staff regarding email good practice, including in relation to prioritising emails, using filters, and carrying out regular inbox housekeeping.
- Staff members will be advised not to subscribe to any junk type email chains, in order to reduce emails received.

7. Meetings with staff and parents

Meetings between staff and parents

When parents wish to organise meetings with members of staff, they will first contact the front office team before communicating with the appropriate member of staff directly. Parents will be required to organise meetings with members of staff with adequate preparation time, i.e. at least two working days before the meeting. Lessons will not be able to be interrupted to accommodate parents needing to speak to a teacher.

If parents urgently need to meet with a member of staff, they will phone the front office as soon as possible – the front office will aim to find a senior member of staff to see parents as soon as possible, depending on the severity of the matter. For non-urgent meetings between parents and staff, the school will aim to meet parents within five working days. The school will determine the level of urgency in requests for meetings.

Recording meetings

If parents and/or other individuals wish to record a meeting, whether the meeting is virtual or in person, they will discuss their intentions with the school no less than 24 hours before the meeting commences. The school will decide if recording requests are appropriate, in consideration of the meeting's subject matter and the school's Privacy Policy.

The school will accept all recording requests in exceptional circumstances, e.g. if parents are hard of hearing or have a memory-related disability.

For meetings to be recorded, consent will need to be obtained from all participants. The final decision to permit any individual and/or parental recording of meetings will reside with the school.

If parents and/or other individuals fail to obtain the school's permission to record before the meeting begins, and insist on recording without permission, the school will be permitted to suspend the meeting.

Any complaints surrounding the school's rejection of a request to record a meeting, or the school's suspension of a meeting due to permission not being granted, will be managed in line with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

8. Data protection and consent

Staff members' personal details will not be shared with other members of staff or external agencies without a lawful basis for data processing as outlined in the UK GDPR. Under no circumstances will staff members' personal details be shared with parents.

Consent

The school will ensure its consent mechanisms meet the standards of the UK GDPR in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy. The school will only accept consent where:

- It has been positively indicated – consent will not be inferred from silence, inactivity or pre-ticked boxes.
- It is given freely, specific, informed, and an unambiguous indication of the individual's wishes.

The DPO will ensure a record of consent is kept, documenting how and when consent was given. The DPO will manage all requests to withdraw consent.

The DPO will vet all consent requests relating to marketing before they are sent out to ensure they comply with the UK GDPR.

Individual's consent will always be sought for the following:

- Written marketing material, including emails, text messages, and letters home.
- Direct social media marketing material, e.g. tagging individuals in posts.
- The use of images and/or videos of pupils, e.g. in the school prospectus, website, and other promotional material.

The school reserves the right to use any data, e.g. photos, that was processed before consent was withdrawn, as consent was given at the point of processing; however, the school will take all reasonable measures to remove any data for which consent was provided before the consent was withdrawn, e.g. photos on social media.

Right to object

In accordance with the UK GDPR, all individuals have the right to object to receiving direct marketing correspondence. The school will make the individual's right to object clear when requesting consent.

Where an individual exercises their right to object, the school will stop processing personal data for direct marketing purposes as soon as the objection is received. The school will not refuse an individual's objection regarding personal data that is being processed for direct marketing purposes.

Right to erasure

In accordance with the UK GDPR, all individuals have the right to request the deletion or removal of personal data where there is no compelling reason for its continued processing, e.g. where a parent's child has left the school.

In requests for consent, the marketing officer and DPO will ensure the reasons for processing are clear, e.g. by ensuring they are not obscured by lengthy procedures or small print. In its requests for consent, the school will make it clear all individuals have the right to erasure in the following circumstances:

- Where the personal data is no longer necessary in relation to the purpose for which it was originally collected or processed
- When the individual withdraws their consent
- When the individual objects to the processing and there is no overriding legitimate interest for continuing the processing
- The personal data was unlawfully processed
- The personal data is required to be erased in order to comply with a legal obligation
- The personal data is processed in relation to the offer of information society services to a child

9. Marketing

Individuals will not receive any marketing materials until after the school has received their consent, in line with the school's Data Protection Policy.

Marketing correspondence sent by the school will solely pertain to school-run or school-assisted events and causes. The school will not pass any personal data on to its suppliers or third parties for marketing purposes.

The marketing officer is responsible for creating suitable marketing materials which fit the needs and aims of the school. Marketing materials will be targeted at parents and LAs, and be used to communicate the school's ethos, values, and vision, with a clear link to the local area and wider community.

All marketing materials will receive approval from the headteacher prior to publication.

The school website

The website will be used to communicate information regarding, but not limited to the following:

- Clubs and activities
- School hours
- School uniform
- Term dates
- The school calendar
- Ofsted reports
- Exam information
- School prospectus

The school prospectus will be updated each Summer term. The content of the prospectus will complement the work of the school and contain information about the most recent activities and successes of the school, including progress, priorities and performance.

The school website and social media

In accordance with the School Website Policy, the school will ensure its website meets the requirements of the UK GDPR.

All school news, press releases and announcements will be regularly uploaded to the school website, posted on social media, and, where necessary, sent to local news outlets. The school's website and relevant social media accounts will also be used to connect with the wider community, for example through advertising enrichment activities.

10. Monitoring and review

The efficiency of this policy will be continually monitored throughout the year by the headteacher and governing board. This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the governing board. The next scheduled review date for this policy is December 2025