



# KING HENRY VIII SCHOOL

## Communications Policy

March 2023

| Name of policy | Date reviewed | By whom   | Next review               | Responsibility |
|----------------|---------------|---|---------------------------|----------------|
| Comms          | March 2023    | C L Dowding<br>Deputy Head<br>P M Dearden<br>Headmaster | Bi-Annually<br>March 2025 | C L Dowding    |

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## **1. Purpose**

To promote partnerships between the school, parents and carers, pupils and the wider community through efficient and effective communication.

## **2. Definition of communication**

Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications and needs to recognise that the quality of their communications reflect on the school's reputation. Parents and carers, governors and pupils also have a part to play in reflecting the school's reputation. We strive to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and effective in their purpose and so encourage all to choose the most efficient mode of communication in an effort to reduce emails.

## **3. Principles**

KHVIII School uses a number of different methods to maintain effective communication with parents and carers, other schools, the wider community and outside agencies.

Communication on issues that affect the safety of a pupil will be treated as a priority. The school holds emergency contact details for all pupils 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 parents and carers but they will ensure relationships are professional and parents will be addressed in a formal manner. School communication therefore should use Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Dr etc.

## **4. Scope of policy**

This policy is of use for all key stakeholders. This includes: staff, pupils, parents and carers, Governors and the local and wider community etc.

Parents and carers have a key role to play in their child's education. Clear communication is at the forefront of this.

## **5. Aims of the Policy**

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

KHVIII School recognises that engaging and working with parents and carers is vital in providing their child with an excellent education. Parents and carers have various opportunities throughout the year to convey to us what they expect from and think of the school, such as parents' evenings. Our wish is to involve as many parents and carers in their child's education as possible.

Our aims include the following:-

- To make the school as welcoming and inclusive as possible

- All written and telephone enquiries will be dealt with promptly and parents and carers can expect an acknowledgement within 2 working days during term time.
- A variety of forms of communication with parents and carers for example, telephone contact, email, post and text.
- Parents and carers will be given information from the school to help and support their child's learning.

## 6. Communication with parents and carers

- 6.1 Choosing the correct member of staff to address a query.  
Please see Appendix A details which member of staff could contact parents and carers for different situations.

### 6.2 School's responsibility for emails and Letters

Email is the school's preferred method of communication for sharing information.

Staff will always reply to a letter from parents and carers as quickly as is reasonably possible. A response to acknowledge receipt of a letter should be made by telephone, letter or email **within 2 working days and responded to within 10 working days** unless there is staff absence, in which case parents and carers are encouraged to email another member of staff. Letters /emails being sent out to a group of parents/carers should be approved by a member of the Senior Leadership Team and sent out using iSAMS. Copies of correspondence with parents and carers may be placed on pupil files on iSAMS. Any letters of concern or complaint should be dealt with in accordance with the school's Complaints Procedure (copy available on the policy page of the school website, <https://kinghenrys.co.uk/about-henrys/policies-and-inspection-reports/#toggle-id-2>)

Whole school information is included in a weekly newsletter, InTouch, published on a Friday each week during school term time. This is emailed to all parents and carers. Hard copies of the newsletter are available from the school upon request.

Email replies from staff to parents may bcc in [filing.khviii@bkhs.org.uk](mailto:filing.khviii@bkhs.org.uk) which will keep the email on file.

See Appendix B for the auto-reply during school holidays.

### **6.3 Parents, carers and pupils**

All Parents and carers with an email address need to ensure that they provide the school with the correct email address.

Any relevant line manager/Head of House/Form tutor should be copied into letters or emails.

A link to the staff contact list is published on the weekly newsletter, InTouch in the final section.

Parents and carers are encouraged to contact the school via email for a general enquiry. The school email address is: [info.khviii@bkhs.org.uk](mailto:info.khviii@bkhs.org.uk). For absence see Section 7.

Tone of communication should be respectful at all times. If the tone of email is perceived as disrespectful a holding email will be sent and the email will be referred to their line manager for guidance.

Under no circumstances should staff personal email addresses be used for school related matters.

During school holidays there is no expectation for teaching staff to check their school email. Those staff in positions of responsibility and/or an organiser of a trip are encouraged to check their emails periodically over the holidays.

### **6.4 Telephone calls and Teams Meetings**

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school, where teachers may be teaching full-time and running clubs or working with pupils at lunchtime or after school. Parents and carers may be frustrated if they feel that a request for a telephone call 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.

In a non-emergency an acknowledgement of a call will be made within 2 working days where possible, with any follow up action from the request/query/problem being dealt with within 10 working days. Staff may take notes and email this summary to the relevant members of staff, and bcc filing.

Telephone calls and Teams meetings should remain cordial at all times and follow the School code of Conduct. If a call or meeting conversation becomes abusive or raised voices are used the member of staff should end the call and report this incident to the senior leadership team

#### **6.5 Automated texts from iSAMS**

Automated texts from iSAMS may be sent to parents/carers (including in the event of an emergency closure of the school) but are not used for general communications from members of staff.

### **7. 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 on the absence line 02476 271175. For full details please refer to the Attendance Policy (Welcome Pack – A\_Z Guide For New Parents received when you first joined the school, copy available.....).

### **8. Meeting with Parents and Carers**

Parents and carers wishing to meet a member of staff should contact the member of staff, preferably via email, to request an appointment giving a reason for the request.

Parents and carers should report to Main Reception prior to meeting with a member of staff. A member of staff may ask another colleague to accompany them.

Meetings should remain cordial at all times and follow the School code of Conduct. If a conversation becomes abusive or raised voices are used the member of staff should end the meeting and report this incident to the senior leadership team.

### **9. Social Media**

KHVIII School has Twitter, Instagram and Facebook accounts which are used to provide updates to parents and pupils who wish to subscribe to this. It is not compulsory to do so and therefore any key messages will be relayed through formal school communication channels.

As a school we appreciate the value of WhatsApp parent groups where these are used positively. As the school does not have any means of accessing these messages we request that all concerns, questions and negative communications regarding the school are not used in these groups. Please use email or other methods of communication to discuss any concerns regarding the school community.

## **10. Reports and Progress**

Parents and carers receive formal grade cards through the year and a full annual report to provide information about their child's progress in each academic year. These reports are accessible online through iSAMS Parent Portal. A full annual report will be both printed and available on the iSAMS Parent Portal.

In addition, parents and carers have the opportunity to meet their child's subject teachers once a year at parents evening. For Years 7-13 the parents' evening will take place in The Burgess Hall and Dining Room. 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

On an individual basis, 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.

## **11. 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 Main Reception.

Parents who require support to access school documents in their home-language should contact the school for assistance.

## **12. The School Website**

The school website, [www.kinghenrys.co.uk](http://www.kinghenrys.co.uk) provides a range of information about the school, including:-

- Aims and Ethos
- History
- Uniform list
- Academic information
- School events
- Holiday dates
- School prospectus

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

## **13. Microsoft Teams**

Microsoft Teams is a powerful tool for motivating pupils as it gives them more choice and flexibility about when and where they complete their independent learning. It also encourages parent and carer involvement in learning, especially with extended learning tasks.

The messaging facility can be used in Teams but there is no requirement for staff to respond to these messages. Staff may use the messaging facility if they wish but students will be told this method of communication is being used.

Homework may be set on Teams by staff.

More specific guidance is given in the AUP.

#### **14. Communication between pupils and staff**

Two-way communication between pupils and staff is an important aspect of school life. The school welcomes and encourages pupils to engage in conversation with all members of staff within the school. When communicating with a member of staff pupils should: -

- Stand in front of the member of staff they are speaking with and give them their full attention;
- Address the member of staff using their formal name e.g, Mrs Smith, never referring to a member of staff by their first name. Generic terms of Sir and Miss are alternatives;
- Be respectful, do not talk over, raise voice or walk away before the conversation has ended
- When communicating with pupils', staff should use pupils' first names and full names of staff (e.g. Mr Surname) in front of pupils.

Pupils may also email staff on their school accounts. All pupils are taught email protocol:

- Complete the subject line
- Use Ms/Mrs/Mr **and** Surname as salutation
- Use standard English
- Avoid abbreviations
- Sign off with Thank you or Kind Regards.

Correspondence is to always remain professional.

Neither staff nor pupils are permitted to contact each other using personal email addresses.

Pupils are expected to check their emails at least once a week and delete/archive regularly.



## 15. Communication between KHVIII staff

Email groups are the responsibility of the Network Manager who will liaise with HR to ensure staff lists are kept up to date as staff join and leave our teams.

We are trying to reduce email traffic due to workload and staff wellbeing considerations. Consider whether an email is appropriate when face to face communication may be more conducive;

- Avoid exclusive email correspondence without requesting or organising a face-to-face meeting;
- Avoid reply all unless necessary;
- Line managers should be copied in;
- Keep emails concise, use Standard English and bullet points if necessary;
- Use a brief but informative subject line indicating:
  - ACT (action)
  - FYI (information)
  - URG (urgent)
  - REM (reminder)
- Communications should show professional courtesy and respect;
- It is good practise when emailing about sensitive matters relating to pupils to use the initials of the pupil to help protect confidentiality;
- Staff to check emails each working day;
- Staff to acknowledge emails within 2 working days;
- There are three standard emails per day: green sheet, cover and Bulletin that should be read before tutor period. These can also be found on the Staff Common Room noticeboard;
- Use group emails as appropriate, however any large group emails, should first be sent to the Head's PA who will control the distribution of these.

Staff should not send non-urgent (one that does not require an immediate response) emails before 7.00am or after 7.00pm weekdays or at the weekend. Emails should instead be saved as drafts or be on a delayed-send and sent during work hours to maintain staff wellbeing.

An email can rarely be assumed to be confidential and under certain circumstances can be seen by parents and senior members of staff.

A daily bulletin will be sent to all staff at the end of each day for the following day's notices for pupils. These are to be read out during registration.

The Green Sheet will be emailed to all staff by Deputy Head (Academic) at approximately 7am each day with pertinent notices. Staff should send RGS notices to add to the Green Sheet instead of sending 'All Staff' emails detailing the events that day and events forthcoming.

Agendas for staff meetings should be emailed at least three working days in advance. The minutes of the meeting to be circulated to all relevant parties where possible within two weeks of the meeting.

## **16. Dealing with the Media**

The KHVIII InTouch is our main avenue for communicating to our parents/carers, however, for wider coverage staff must first seek permission from the Deputy Head teacher responsible for Communications. A member of the Marketing team will then be able to liaise with the local contacts such as Coventry and Warwickshire Radio for small pieces. The Deputy Head teacher responsible for Communications must be the main liaison for bigger pieces or any pieces going to the Coventry Telegraph, TES or to a national media outlet.

The Deputy Head for Communications must approve every piece before it is sent externally and in each case staff should consider an equivalent article written for the KHVIII InTouch.

All media enquiries must be directed to the Deputy Head responsible for Communications.

## **17. School trips, visits and activities**

The school will endeavour to publish all proposed trips, visits and activities on the school calendar and the online calendar SOCs at the start of each academic year. Parents and carers will initially be notified by letter, usually in InTouch, of trips, visits and activities that their child/children may wish to participate in as early as possible, and we will aim to make this with at least six weeks of the proposed trip, visit or activity, although this is not always possible. Occasionally opportunities arise during the academic year to offer pupils additional trips, visits or activities that were not known or available when the school calendar was published.

## **18. Severe weather and emergency closure**

In the event of emergency closure communication will be made to parents and carers via text and/or email. Staff, parents and carers should also tune into local radio and check the school website and social media channels (e.g. Twitter) if it is suspected that the school may close.

## **19. 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 September and June. KHVIII School also has Open House several times a year for tours to enable them to see the school operating on a typical school day. The Sixth Form Open Evening takes place in October. All Open Events are advertised on the school website, via a banner on the school site on the corner of Spencer Road and on our social media outlets.

## **20. Parents Association**

King Henry VIII Parents Association is led by current parents and their focus is to provide a social forum for parents of KHVIII and to run events and activities. Fund raising is an important aspect of their work but is not their sole focus. Parents may contact the committee by emailing [parents.khviii@bkhs.org.uk](mailto:parents.khviii@bkhs.org.uk)

## **21. Supporting parents and carers of pupils with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

The Send Code of Practice (2014) emphasises the importance of positive, supportive attitudes to parents and carers and user-friendly information and procedures. The school recognises the importance of positive relationships with parents and carers of all pupils with additional needs and therefore seeks to work closely with those involved in the support of those children on the Learning Support register. We encourage an active partnership through an ongoing dialogue with parents and carers who themselves have a vital role in supporting their children with special educational needs. Through parents' meetings, strategy sheet reviews, phone calls, emails and 'Teams' meetings we proactively look to share the progress made by the pupils on our register.

We may discuss any outside specialist support which is helpful and seek to involve parents in decision-making about the provision planned for their child. These meetings are usually held with the Head of Learning Support and/or Head of Year.

Parents and carers are encouraged to communicate immediately where they have a concern about their child's needs being met. In the first instance this should be with the Form Tutor.

## **22. Communication with other Schools and outside agencies**

Prior to pupils joining Year 7, pupils are visited in their primary schools to gain further information about them to help and support their transition to KHVIII. 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 pupils 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 Policy, copy available in the Policy Folder in the Whole School T-Drive or on the policy page of the school website).

### **23. Investigating incidents**

When investigating an incident involving pupils, school members of staff interview all pupils directly involved and others as appropriate and ask them to complete a written account. The school will only share any information that would identify any pupils in accordance with data protection regulations and legislation and our policies and procedures (a copy of our data protection policy is available on the policy page of the website or in the Whole School Team Drive).

### **24. Monitoring, evaluation and review of the communication policy**

A member of the senior leadership team and the Coventry School Foundation will review this Policy at least every three years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The Policy will be promoted throughout the school.

The next review is due: September 2025

### **Appendix A – To Whom should my query or concern be addressed?**

If you have a general query or concern, not specific to your child, please contact Main Reception on 02476 271111 or email your child's tutor.

If your query or concern is about your individual child please follow the communications route applicable to your specific question below.

#### **My query is about my child's learning:**

**Subject Teacher then Head of Department.**

For more significant concerns please contact [info.khviii@bkhs.org](mailto:info.khviii@bkhs.org) who will then triage your concern to the appropriate person.

If, following the communications route above you are still dissatisfied with the response you may complain to the school, please refer to the school's Complaints Policy available on the school website

#### **My query is about my child's wellbeing, behaviour or non-compliance:**

**Form tutor then Head of Year**

For more significant concerns please contact [info.khviii@bkhs.org](mailto:info.khviii@bkhs.org) who will then triage your concern to the appropriate person.

If, following the communications route above you are still dissatisfied with the response you may complain to the school. Please refer to the school's Complaints Policy available on the school website.

### **Appendix B– Auto-reply for staff during holidays**

During school holidays the following safeguarding message will appear as an auto-reply to external emails. This should not be set up for internal emails.

Thank you for your email.

During this school holiday period this inbox will not be monitored as normal, and queries may not be responded to until term resumes on XXXX.

Should your query regard the immediate risk of harm to a child, please contact the appropriate Children's Services listed below and in accordance with your postal address:

Coventry: 02476 788 555

Warwickshire: 01926 414144

Leicestershire: 0116 305 0005

Leicester City: 0116 454 1004

Solihull: 0121 788 4300

Birmingham: 0121 303 1888

If you are a pupil at immediate risk call 999

If you are concerned about your own mental health or that of a friend, then please contact one of the following providers:

- Childline 0800 1111
- kooth.com
- Rise Crisis Team: 0808 1966798

For any other queries, please contact School Reception on 02476271111 or alternatively, email: [info.khviii@bkhs.org.uk](mailto:info.khviii@bkhs.org.uk).