



COOKSTOWN HIGH SCHOOL

Communication Procedure

Reviewed: October 2021

Next Review: October 2024

PROCEDURE OVERVIEW

DETAILS

TITLE	Communication Procedure
TARGET AUDIENCE	Parents/Guardians, School Stakeholders, Staff
REVIEW DATE	Oct 21
REVIEW LEAD	Miss Evans
PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN THE REVIEW OF THIS PROCEDURE:	Senior Leadership Team
POLICY PRESENTED TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS ON:	7 December 2021
POLICY RATIFIED BY THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS ON:	7 December 2021
EFFECTIVE FROM:	8 December 2021
REVIEW FREQUENCY:	Every three years (minimum)
PRINCIPAL	Miss G J Evans
CHAIR OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS	Mrs L Dripps

This procedure has been reviewed to include reference to the remit of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) in investigating complaints from members of the public in relation to maladministration in publicly-funded schools.

RECORD OF PROCEDURE AMENDMENTS

The following table outlines any significant changes/amendments made to this procedure since it was ratified by the Board of Governors on:

DATE OF REVIEW OR AMENDMENT	SUMMARY OF CHANGED / AMENDMENTS TO PROCEDURE	AMENDED BY

Introduction

The purpose of this statement is to provide information and guidelines regarding effective communication between parents and teachers of Cookstown High School. We acknowledge the home as central to the development of each young person and it is our intention that the school and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the young person strive to be mutually supportive of each other so that the young person can maximise their potential.

Responsibilities of the School

The following list, which is not exhaustive, indicates the main structures in place, initiated by the school, to facilitate communication between the school and parents:

- 'Schoolbag' post – written communication for parents passed via their child which they may or may not be required to return.
- School (paper) homework diary.
- Email communication from the school – normally this will be concerning a matter pertaining to the whole school, or at the very least a whole year group the purpose of which is to relay important but non-urgent information.
- Effective telephone communication – our aim will be to return a call to a parent within 24 hours but please be aware that sometime staff may be teaching all day. Return calls may be made by someone other than the person to whom the original call was made, should it be felt that this is more appropriate.
- Telephone calls – used by staff where a private conversation is deemed necessary.
- Parent App Messages from school – one-way communication e.g. for unexpected school closure or to ask parents/carers to contact school regarding unexplained absences, messages, information about attendance, timetable, achievement and behaviour points and is the **only** way of accessing your child's report.
- Letters by post – used if Parent App is not possible or where deemed necessary by the school.
- Parental interview – likely to be requested by a member of the pastoral team e.g. Head of Year, a Curriculum Leader, a Senior Member of Staff (e.g. Designated Teacher for Safeguarding, SENCO, Vice Principal or Principal).
- The school calendar.
- Parent/teacher interviews (annually 1 per year group) – recorded on the school calendar and parents will be notified in advance by email by the Head of year.
- Parents' Information meetings.
- Year 10 & Year 12 Subject Choice interviews.
- Year 8, 11 and 13 Induction meetings.
- Intervention meetings following Tracking 2 results with Year 12 and 14 pupils.
- Principal's letter to parents.
- On occasions, meetings with governors.

The school uses the school website, school App, and SIMs Parent App to communicate important but non-urgent matters to the public, and parents are encouraged to use these regularly to keep updated on school events and successes. The posts on social media are not responded to individually as this is not an appropriate method of professional communication. The school reserves the right to determine the suitability of what is posted on any High School platform.

Responsibilities of Pupils

We expect our pupils to:

- relay information to parents on a regular basis about school activities and events that affect them.
- pass on any written communication from the school to their parent(s) and return the same, duly completed, where required.
- participate in policy review and changes through their school council representatives (all consultations take place through the website).

Responsibilities of Parents

We expect our parents to:

- develop close links with the school and attend specific pastoral and academic parents' meetings relevant to the age of their child/children
- collaborate with the school in developing the full potential of their children
- familiarise themselves with school policy and procedure (all policies are on the school website and a hard copy available on request)
- support the Staff and Governors in their implementation of policy and procedure;
- become actively involved with school (e.g. PTFA and Former Pupils Association), attend school functions, sports fixtures and help build a sense of community
- participate in policy review and changes (all consultations take place through the website).

Parent/Teacher contact initiated by parents

Communication between parents and teachers is to be encouraged.

The school does not recommend that email* should be used as a means of communication between parents and staff to discuss pastoral or academic matters pertaining to their child; in such instances parents are asked to contact the school by telephone or letter.

Arranging parent/teacher meetings when the school day is operating can be difficult. There should be no expectation that a staff member will respond to school based enquiries beyond the school day. However, parents are welcome to contact the school office to raise a concern or query. The office staff will take a message and inform the appropriate member of staff.

A parent may wish to request a meeting with a Curriculum Leader or member of the pastoral team or a senior member of staff. To do so they should contact the office staff who will liaise with the member of staff. **Meetings cannot be arranged through the use of the email system.** Every attempt will be made to arrange a telephone conversation as soon as possible (*this will be dependent on the ability to contact parents/guardians, teaching commitments, other arranged meetings and engagements or other school-based issues requiring immediate attention such as safeguarding or health and safety*).

As general guidance the following is the agreed system of communication for parents/carers and is understood by the office staff:

- Curriculum enquiry in one subject: In the first instance, ring and ask to speak to or see the Curriculum Leader
- Pastoral enquiry or curriculum enquiry in two or more subjects: In the first instance, ring and ask to speak to or see the Head of Year.
- A safeguarding issue: ring to speak to a member of the Safeguarding Team.

*** Parents are asked not to email a member of staff directly without prior agreement with that member of staff.**

Communication and School Sports, Trips and Events

A suggested protocol will be used to keep pupils and parents/carers informed of arrangements.

School Sports

- Practices - A schedule of practice times for each team will be agreed at the start of the school year and placed on the extracurricular grid which is posted on the school website. Should a practice be cancelled e.g. due to the absence of a member of staff taking the practice or inclement weather, a message will be sent via email to pupils and a message posted on the school app.
- Fixtures - A message of arrangements for Saturday fixtures will be posted by Friday lunchtime. Any variations or cancellations will be posted on the school website and school app and parents and carers should check these on Saturday morning. Staff will endeavour to post any variations or cancellations as soon as possible but it must be remembered that this is reliant on information being conveyed from other schools or the fact that weather conditions affecting fixtures can change quickly.
- Team lists – will be placed on the sports noticeboard and pupils will be expected to read the arrangements and ‘tick off’ their names to show their availability.
- SIMS Parent App message.

Trips and Events (Leaving school premises)

- Parents will receive written information about arrangements for trips and an attached consent form for completion will be made available. Parents/Carers are asked to follow guidance regarding medical information or arrangements for their son/daughter.
- Subsequent information regarding trips may be published on the school website or app. Parents will be informed if this is the case.

Events (In school)

- Parents will receive written information regarding events in school that require parental permission e.g. a visit from an outside agency as part of the pastoral curriculum. School operates an opt out system for such events. School assumes permission has been granted from parents/carers for such events unless the attached reply slip indicates that they do not want their son or daughter to attend the event.