



Home-School Communication Policy

It is very important to Spalding Grammar School that we work closely in partnership with parents, and communication between home and school is key to that relationship being successful. We recognise, however, that it can often be difficult communicating with teachers because they have a very full timetable; and we recognise that parents also have very busy lives.

Contacting the School

Communication via student planner or by email is our preferred method.

- Notes in student planners are by far the best way to get a message to a teacher promptly and should be used for the majority of everyday communication;
- The student is responsible for showing the note to the correct teacher. If you need to discuss something in more detail with a teacher, this is the best way to ask them to contact you when they are able. If needs be, please write a separate note for the student to give to the relevant teacher;
- Medical and other appointments/absences should also be notified to the School Office, via email or telephone.

Teachers will respond to parental queries at the earliest opportunity; however, most of a teacher's time is taken up with lessons, meetings, planning and preparation, running clubs or intervention sessions, or covering a lesson for an absent colleague. For clarification:

- Teachers are usually in meetings or preparing for the day ahead from 8.30am, at the latest;
- Once a week, teachers give up their 20-minute morning break to be on duty. During other break times they may be meeting with students;
- At lunchtime, teachers are not at the direction of the School. Despite that, many choose to engage in running activities or intervention sessions. It is also important, in the interests of staff wellbeing, to ensure that they are able to take lunch;
- After school, teachers will generally be in meetings or running after-school sessions;
- Heads of Subject and Heads of House do have additional non-lesson time, but this is generally booked for meetings with students, parents or colleagues;
- The School does not permit teachers to respond to emails during lessons, as the expectation is that, while in the classroom, the teacher's focus is on the students' learning.

Please note that the School, in caring for its staff, has advised teachers that there is no expectation to respond to queries in their personal/family time, such as at evenings and weekends.

Teachers may, therefore, not be able to respond on the day that the query is made. It is the School's position that **three working days** is a reasonable timeframe for a response. We would ask, therefore, that following up on a query does not happen until three days has passed.

E-mail

To make a general enquiry, please use the enquiries@spaldinggrammar.lincs.sch.uk address. However, the School does allow direct email contact with members of staff so that a parental query can be sent to the most appropriate person. Reception staff can provide any email addresses, as necessary. Please note:

- Teachers are not always in a position to check emails during the day and the School does not expect work emails to be checked from home during a teacher's personal/family time; we therefore aim to respond as soon as possible, and within three working days;
- Depending on the nature of the concern raised, it may be that the initial response from the School is simply an acknowledgement that the concern has been noted. In that case, the response will include a time by which parents can expect a fuller response;
- Part-time staff may take longer to respond as they are in school less frequently;
- Where possible, please avoid sending emails to multiple recipients. If it is necessary to copy others in, please make it clear who the primary recipient is intended to be, in order to ensure that the School knows who needs to respond;
- Occasionally emails do go astray. So, if you do not get a reply within three days, please contact Reception, who will pursue your enquiry for you.

Telephone

Contact with teachers may also be made by telephone. Please use the main School number in order to leave a message for a teacher to contact you. Reception is manned between 8am and 5pm. Please note:

- Reception staff will relay any message to that teacher as soon as they can, usually by email. Please note that there are no 'phones in classrooms and **lessons will never be interrupted** for teachers to take calls;
- All calls to the School are logged by date and time;
- If the nature of the call is extremely urgent, please tell the receptionist and they will attempt to find a senior member of staff to speak to you;
- While we will endeavour to respond to an urgent telephone call on the same day, this may not always be possible.

Who to Contact

In order to ensure that a query is dealt with as swiftly as possible, it is important that it is directed to the correct person. In the first instance, please contact (for a subject-specific enquiry) your son's/daughter's teacher in that subject; or (for a pastoral query/concern) his/her Form Tutor.

If it is felt that the matter needs to be addressed at a higher level, then please contact the Head of Subject (for subject-specific concerns) or the Head of House (for pastoral matters). Details of which members of staff hold which responsibilities are available on the School's website.

Only if matters are not resolved at Head of Subject/House level, or if the matter is considered of the utmost urgency, or on matters of school policy, should the following people be contacted (in order):

1. Assistant Headteacher
 - Mr Brooks (behaviour, welfare and personal development; Computer Science, Latin, PaCE, PE)
 - Mr Endersbee (teaching and learning; Art, Geography, Music, Technology/Engineering, RS)
 - Mr Smith (assessment and data; Business, History, Law and Politics, Psychology and Sociology)
2. Deputy Headteacher
 - Mrs Ingram (curriculum; Mathematics, English, Science, Modern Languages)
3. Headmaster

The School reserves the right for members of the Senior Leadership Team (Assistant Heads, Deputy Head and Headmaster) to redirect a query to be dealt with by a more appropriate member of staff.

In the event that a parent is unclear who is the best person to contact for their concern, then please email the general enquiry address (given above) and the concern will be passed on to the appropriate person for you.

Meetings

The School commits teachers to meeting with parents on specified occasions:

- Subject teachers will meet with parents once each year at Progress Evening;
- Form Tutors will meet with parents and students in Years 7, 9, 11 and 13 once a year in a Transition Meeting.

Other meetings may be arranged with members of staff, but these must always be **by appointment** in order for appropriate arrangements and preparation to be made.

- If you urgently need to see someone; for instance, if there is a serious family emergency or a child protection/safeguarding issue, please telephone ahead and the Reception staff will do their best to find a senior member of staff to see you. We will endeavour to meet with you within one working day;
- For non-urgent meetings, we will aim to meet with you within five working days.

Please note:

- Parents who simply present themselves at Reception without appointment will not be seen, except in cases of absolute emergency;
- The School will determine the level of urgency at its discretion, to enable it to manage multiple demands;
- The School does not expect teachers to provide feedback to parents in circumstances where those parents have not attended Progress Evening.

Contacting You

Our preferred means of contacting you is via ParentMail or individual email or letter. It is important, therefore, that any changes to parental email addresses are communicated with the School as soon as possible.

- Parents will receive general letters and notifications through ParentMail;
- We also use ParentMail to notify you if we have to close the School in an emergency;
- Communication with individual parents will either be by hard copy letter or by individual email;
- The School also uses Go4Schools as a means to keep parents updated on the performance (both academic and behaviourally) of students, and parents are asked to check regularly for notifications from G4S and to discuss those with their son/daughter. Go4Schools is used to publish Phase Data sheets and a student's yearly Profile. Parents/Carers should login to G4S to view this information. Academic and behaviour data can also be viewed 'live' at any time.

The School's position of allowing direct email contact from parents to teachers does present the risk of parental expectation of 'open' dialogue, for example in response to negative entries entered on Go4Schools. Details of any incident and the sanction applied are given on Go4Schools. The School does not require teachers to respond to emails that seek to challenge, or 'negotiate' on the severity of, sanctions applied as a result of student misbehaviour.

Social Media

The School uses Facebook and Twitter to promote student achievements, subject information and generic educational information. This information can also be found in the weekly Newsletters. The School's Facebook and Twitter accounts are for reasons of publicity and information sharing, and the account and its

monitoring are not set up so that the School can respond to social media comments, messages or replies. Communication with the School should be via the preferred means identified in this policy.

No Response

In the event that you have contacted a member of staff and not had a response within the timescales set out in this document, we ask that parents contact the School either by email to enquiries@spaldinggrammar.lincs.sch.uk or by telephoning Reception on 01775 765800.

Supplementary

It is important that the Home-School relationship is a professional one. We will ensure that communications from the School are appropriate in nature and tone. In return, members of staff are entitled to the same – inappropriate language, rudeness and shouting are not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

In order to ensure communication with parents is efficient and effective, we will continue to monitor practice under this policy and, where necessary, seek ways to improve our communication processes further.

April 2019