RAINHILL HIGH SCHOOL

COMMUNICATION POLICY

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STATUS	
RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE	
APPROVAL DATE	SEPTEMBER 2022
RENEWAL DATE	SEPTEMBER 2025

SCHOOLS IN PARTNERSHIP
STEPHENSON
MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

Purpose
To promote an effective working relationship between the school and key stakeholders through efficient and timely communication.

Principles
Rainhill High School uses a number of different methods to maintain effective communication with parents and carers, other schools, the wider community and outside agencies. Depending on the nature of the communication, the school will use the most practicable means to contact the recipient.

This Communication Policy articulates how parents and carers should communicate with school and how the school will respond.

Communication on issues that affect the safety and wellbeing 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, professional and productive relationships with parents, carers and other stakeholders.

The School will not tolerate aggression, inappropriate language or harassment of its staff and will, if necessary, take formal action to resolve any such unacceptable behaviour.

The Communications Policy embraces the principles of the school's Equality Statement, Online Safety Policy and Professional Standards (copies available upon request or via the School website) .

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

Safeguarding Concerns
In the case of a safeguarding concern, parents/carers should contact the School by telephone (01744 677 205) or visit Main Reception and ask for the Safeguarding Officer.

School Website
The School website provides a range of information about the school, including:
- Timetables
- School events
- Holiday dates
- School prospectus
- Uniform list
- Pupil Premium information

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

Social Networking
The School has a Facebook and Twitter account which is 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.

The School would ask that all staff, parents and pupils use social media responsibly and avoid posting disparaging comments about individuals and/or organisations who work at, attend and/or are connected with Rainhill High School.

Dealing with the Media

All media requests should be sent to the Headteacher and Chief Operating Officer for a response. The Headteacher or Chief Operating Officer must approve all external communications (for example: newspaper articles and statements to the media) before they are sent. The Marketing Manager will send all authorised articles/statements to the local media contacts we hold on record, in addition to publishing them via our own communication channels.

Severe Weather and Emergency Closure

In the event of emergency closure, communication will be made to parents and carers via School Synergy. Parents and carers should also tune in to local radio and check the School website and social media channels (e.g. Twitter).
Staff will be communicated to in accordance with the Severe Weather and Emergency Closure Policy.

Complaints

Complaints are covered by a separate policy that can be found on our website. Please follow the guidance in this policy when making a formal or informal complaint.

Data Protection

All stakeholders should be mindful of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) when sending written communications and avoid stating personal details within letters and/or emails unless absolutely necessary. Emails containing personal data should be set to 'private' or 'confidential' and any files attached to email, which contain personal data, should be password protected. Please refer to the Data Protection Policy for more information.

Supporting parents and carers of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The School recognises the importance of positive relationships with parents and carers of all pupils with additional needs. The SEND Code of Practice emphasises the importance of positive, supportive attitudes to parents and carers and user-friendly information and procedures. All staff will make every effort to ensure effective communication with parents and carers.

All staff within the School are expected to help and support parents and carers understand how to contribute effectively to their child's education and will make every effort to ensure that parents understand their rights and responsibilities. All relevant information will be provided in a way for all to understand and respond to.

Parents and carers are encouraged to communicate immediately where they have a concern about their child's needs' not being met

Methods of Communication

Please refer to the table overleaf regarding how we approach communication to different stakeholders at Rainhill High School.

The Rainhill Parent, Teacher and Friends Association

The Rainhill Parent, Teacher and Friends Association provide a social forum for parents, teachers and friends of Rainhill High School and Sixth Form to run events and activities. Fundraising is an important aspect of their work but is not their sole focus. Interested parties may contact Rainhill PTFA by emailing PTFA@rainhillhigh.org.uk

School Policies

All School and Trust policies can be viewed via the following links:
Stephenson MAT Policies
Rainhill High School Policies

Stakeholders Involved in Communication	Nature of Communication	Approach to Communication
Parents to School	Reporting Pupil Absence	Report pupil absence via School Synergy or ring the school, select option 2 and leave a message on the absence line.
	Urgent Queries	• Urgent queries are defined as those of a safeguarding nature, for example a concern about the immediate well-being of a child or, for example, a missing child. • In the case of such a concern, parents/carers should contact the school by telephone (01744 677 205) or visit Main Reception and ask for the Safeguarding Officer.
	Non-Urgent Queries	• Non-urgent queries should be sent to the staff member concerned via the School Synergy System. • Staff will respond, during working hours, to non-urgent queries, via School Synergy, within 5 x school days. • If you are not sure who the staff member concerned is, then a non-urgent query can be sent to your child's form tutor, via the School Synergy System, in the first instance.
	Request for a Meeting	• Requests for a meeting should be sent to the staff member concerned via the School Synergy system. • Staff will respond, during working hours, to requests for a meeting within 5 x school days and will meet parents/carers within 10 x school days of the request being acknowledged. • Meetings are by **appointment only**, staff will not meet with parents/carers who 'walk-in' and request an immediate meeting unless the issue is 'urgent' as defined above.
Parents to Staff	Non-Urgent Queries	• Non-urgent queries should be sent to the staff member concerned via the School Synergy System. • Staff will respond to non-urgent queries, via School Synergy, within 5 x school days.
	Request for a Meeting	• Requests for a meeting should be sent to the staff member concerned via the School Synergy System. • Staff will respond, during working hours, to requests for a meeting within 5 x school days and will meet parents/carers within 10 x school days of the request being acknowledged. • Meetings are by appointment only, staff will not meet with parents/carers who 'walk-in' and request an immediate meeting unless the issue is 'urgent' as defined above.

Parents to Students	Parent/Carer contacting their child/children	• Pupils are not allowed to leave lessons to come to the telephone to accept an incoming call. • Parents who wish to contact pupils to relay an urgent message may do so by telephoning the School Office. To minimise disruption to teaching and learning we would request that this facility should be reserved for emergencies. Any urgent messages will be passed to the pupil concerned. • Pupils must keep their mobiles switched off during the school day in their school bags. Parents should not use this as a method of communication during school hours. • The use of mobile phones by pupils during the school day is strictly prohibited. If pupils use a mobile phone to contact parents during the school day, this will be treated as a breach of this rule and will result in the confiscation of the phone under the School's Behaviour Policy. If pupils need to contact home during the day, they should go to Student Services at break or lunchtime.
Students to Staff	Homework	• School Synergy system to be used for recording homework. • Correspondence is to remain professional at all times.
	Resources from Lessons and Homework	• Microsoft Teams is to be used for accessing resources from lessons and resources for homework. • Correspondence is to remain professional at all times.
	General Queries/Comments	• Microsoft Teams can be used by students to ask questions of staff, for example: questions about homework, options or regarding an extra-curricular club or event. • Correspondence is to remain professional at all times. • Students should address staff by their title and surname e.g. Mr or Mrs Smith) or by 'Sir or Miss' when sending them a message. • All general queries sent by students should be school related and appropriate in content.
Staff to Students	General Queries/Comments	• Microsoft Teams can be used by staff to ask and/or reply to questions from/to students, for example: queries about homework, options or regarding an extra-curricular club or event. • Correspondence is to remain professional at all times. • Staff will only discuss school related queries in responding to, or when asking, questions from/to students with messages being professional and appropriate in nature. • Staff are never permitted to use personal email accounts when communicating with pupils.

Staff to Parents/Carers	General Queries/Comments	• School Synergy will be used by staff to communicate with parents regarding all general queries/comments. • Where a phone call is necessary, staff will use a school phone to make all phone calls or withhold their personal number if using a personal phone to contact parents/carers. Any written follow-up to a phone call will be made via the School Synergy system. • Correspondence is to remain professional at all times. • Staff will only discuss school related queries in responding to, or when asking, questions from/to parents/carers with messages and/or conversations being professional and appropriate in nature.
Staff to external agencies	All Queries/Comments	When contacting external agencies, staff will use Microsoft Outlook (work email system) to send required emails.
Staff to Staff	All Queries/Comments	• Microsoft Outlook (work email system) will be used by staff to communicate with other staff members. When sending messages, staff are asked to: o Consider whether an email is appropriate when face to face communication may be more conducive o Avoid send or reply all unless necessary o Copy in line managers where appropriate o Keep messages concise, use Standard English and bullet points if necessary o Check for messages not less than twice per day – it is not expected that staff check for messages before 8am and after 5pm • Two-way radios are to be used by all staff on call for conveying short, necessary messages to other staff.
Staff to School	Attendance, behaviour, internal messages	The School Synergy system will be used for this type of communication from staff to the School.
	Safeguarding concerns	The CPOMS system will be used by staff to record all safeguarding concerns pertaining to students. Safeguarding concerns relating to staff should be, in the first instance, directed to the Headteacher or, if they concern the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors.

	GDPR (Data Protection)	The GDPRiS system will be used by staff to record all data protection queries/breaches and requests for information, in addition to undertaking data protection related training.
	Complaints	The Infreemation system will be used by staff to record all information pertaining to complaints.
	H&S Training	The Smartlog System will be used by staff to undertake health and safety training, record compliance (where asked to do so) and to monitor School health and safety compliance.
School to Staff	Urgent/Emergency Messages	• Urgent messages are defined as those relating to the safety of staff and/or students and/or those which have a profound impact on the operation of the school, for example: lockdown, fire evacuation, cyber incident, loss of power, one-off change to the timing of a lesson etc. • In the case of such a message, the School will communicate to staff via the School Synergy System and email and, when appropriate, an announcement on the school tannoy system.
	Staff Briefing	The Staff Briefing will take place every week, on a Monday morning, to inform all staff of key notices pertaining to that week.
	Staff Bulletin	The Staff Bulletin will be sent weekly on a Friday, via the School Synergy system, and will contain key information for all staff to be aware of.
	Staff Handbook	The Staff Handbook is updated annually and is available on the School Synergy system. It contains the following information regarding: • SLT structure – roles and responsibilities • Communication strategy • Professional Expectations & Teacher Standards • Safeguarding • School Day • Calendar • School Map • Organisation Chart (inc who to contact for what) • Staff Absence • Trips • Accessing Support Staff Services • Finance Forms • Medical • SEN • Behaviour Guidance • Behaviour Routines

		• DIS • PSHE • Form Tutor • Rainhill Experience • Enrichment (incl. Tracking)
School to Parents	General Information and News	• The School website contains all general information (news, policies, holiday dates, contact details, Governing Body information, school prospectus etc.) for parents/carers and should be used as a first point of call for all parents before contacting the School directly. • The School's social media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) accounts will be used to publicise news and events taking place at the School.
	Specific Information relating to your child/children	The School Synergy system is used for all specific information pertaining to students, for example: behaviour reports, attendance, school reports etc.
	Parent Newsletter	The Parent Newsletter is sent weekly on a Friday, via the School Synergy system, and will contain key information for all Parents to be aware of.
	Urgent/Emergency Messages	• Urgent messages are defined as those relating to the safety of staff and/or students and/or those which have a profound impact on the operation of the school, for example: lockdown, fire evacuation, cyber incident, loss of power, one-off change to the timing of a lesson etc. • In the case of such a message, the School will communicate to Parents via the School Synergy system and, when appropriate, our Facebook and Twitter social media channels.
	Non-urgent messages	The School Synergy system will be used by the School to send all non-urgent messages to Parents.
Any stakeholder to Governors and/or Trustees	Complaints	Complaints are covered by a separate policy that can be found on our website. Please follow the guidance in this policy when making a formal or informal complaint.
	Grievances	Staff grievances are covered by a separate policy that can be found on our website. Please follow the guidance in this policy when making a formal or informal grievance.
	Any Other Query	Should any stakeholder wish to contact Governors or Trustees with a query then can do so by emailing their query to: Kelley.Black@rainhillhigh.org.uk