



**Bexhill**  
Academy

# **COMMUNICATIONS/ PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP POLICY**

Adopted and ratified: 1 June 2022

Next Review: 1 June 2023

# **COMMUNICATIONS/PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP POLICY**

## **For Bexhill Academy**

This policy was adopted on 1 June 2022  
This policy is due for review on 1 June 2023

### **INTRODUCTION**

Bexhill Academy recognises the importance of clear and effective communications with all stakeholders (pupils, parents/carers, Trust Board Members, Local Authority, outside agencies, national bodies etc.) and is committed to being open and accessible for all who have an interest in the school.

The key stakeholders for Bexhill Academy are parents/carers and pupils and this policy addresses the main ways in which the school ensures effective two-way communication between home and Bexhill Academy.

### **PARENTS/CARERS AS PARTNERS IN THEIR CHILD'S EDUCATION**

Parents and carers have a key role to play in their child's education. Bexhill Academy will make every effort to encourage and make arrangements for parents/carers to contribute to the shared view of their child's needs.

We encourage communication with parents/carers and teachers via email and telephone conversations. By attending year group Parent/Carer Consultation Evenings and getting feedback on your child's progress and attainment, you can talk with your child at home about their learning experience and progress requirements.

### **AIMS OF THE POLICY**

- To ensure that effective communication and consultation takes place between Bexhill Academy, parents/carers, pupils and other stakeholders.
- To ensure robust processes for consultation between Bexhill Academy, parents/carers and pupils on key service areas.

Bexhill Academy recognises that engaging and working with parents/carers is a vital key in providing their child with an excellent education. At regular opportunities throughout the year, the academy will ask parents/carers what they expect from and what they think of the academy. We intend to involve as many parents/carers in their child's education as possible as part of the community aspect of the school's work.

Our aims include the following:-

- To make Bexhill Academy as welcoming and inclusive as possible. Signage will be clear, informative and positive.
- All written and telephone enquiries are to be dealt with promptly.
- A variety of forms of communication with parents/carers, for example telephone contact, email, post, text and home visits are encouraged.
- Parents/carers are contacted for positive as well as negative reasons.
- Information is given to parents/carers on what pupils are taught and strategies for helping their child circulated.

- Parents/carers will be encouraged to help or support their child's learning at school and at home. Information will be provided to enable this support to be effective.
- Bexhill Academy will encourage the use of parents/carers as volunteer helpers within the boundaries relating to safeguarding children.
- Bexhill Academy will promote family learning and family fun activities.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Communications can take a variety of forms: verbal (through meetings or by telephone), written (through letters, notes, weekly update via Principal's Newsletter or email) or through the website. Our aim is to utilise all means of communication effectively.

Staff will endeavour to reply to parent/carer letters as quickly as possible, preferably within 2 working days. Any letter or complaint will be referred to the Executive Principal, Ms Catherine Davies, for advice prior to response.

Communication between the academy and parents/carers will operate in the following ways:

- All prospective parents/carers may receive a prospectus on request or in person by coming to the academy reception
- Prospective parents/carers are invited to an Open Evening in Term 1 of the academic year proceeding the year of entry to the academy
- Prospective parents/carers are invited, along with their child, to an Induction Evening in July where the main channels of communication are outlined, essential information given and information about the academy is presented
- Parents/carers are invited into a Year 7 "Settling In Evening" in Term 1 of Year 7 to meet the pupil's teachers and review how the pupil has settled into the academy. Academic and Pastoral information will be duly shared.
- Parents/carers are invited to attend at least one full parent/carer consultation evening each year to review the academic and personal and social progress of their child.
- Parents/carers will receive reports of academic progress on a regular basis.

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school where teachers may be teaching full time or otherwise working with pupils at lunchtime or after academy hours. Parents/carers may feel frustrated if they feel that a message elicits no immediate response, when in fact there has been no available opportunity for the member of staff to reach a telephone to return a call.

For this reason, the reception area is a first point of contact for all parent queries. Bexhill Academy will also be proactive in encouraging use of a wide range of communication methods, with email contacts published on the website. All parents/carers are encouraged to give an email address for prompt and effective communication. The Parent Mail system is also in operation to ensure messages can be sent promptly direct to the parent/carers mobile phone and/or email address.

## **ACCEPTABLE COMMUNICATIONS**

Respect is at the core of our academy values. We will respectfully respond to all queries and communication with politeness and courtesy.

We expect that your communication remains courteous and respectful also. If any telephone communication is not constructive or respectful staff will end the conversation and direct you to put your matters via email. It will then be dealt with by a senior member of staff.

We thank you for your understanding and support in communicating in a respectful and courteous manner.

### **HOME/ACADEMY AGREEMENT**

Our Home/Academy Agreement is a requirement of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. It explains the academy's aims and values, our responsibilities towards the students, the responsibilities of parents/carers and what Bexhill Academy expects of the students. We ask parents/carers to sign this agreement when their child starts at Bexhill Academy.

### **BEXHILL ACADEMY WEBSITE**

Parents/carers without access to a computer should be encouraged to make contact with the academy to arrange for computer access at the school.

The Bexhill Academy website is a good source of general information and includes:

- School prospectus
- Curriculum resources
- Holiday dates
- Copies of letters to parents/carers
- Information about lessons
- Special events
- News Updates
- Essential Bexhill Academy emergency details
- Safeguarding Information, Support and Guidance

### **SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES etc**

Staff are not permitted to communicate with parents/carers or pupils via social networking sites (such as Facebook) or accept them as their "friends". This is part of our safeguarding procedures to protect pupils and staff.

### **EMAIL**

Parents/carers may wish to contact Bexhill Academy via email as an alternative to telephone or letter. The email address is [office@bexhillacademy.org.uk](mailto:office@bexhillacademy.org.uk)

### **CELEBRATING SUCCESS**

Parents/carers will be invited to special open sessions, events and presentations throughout the course of the year.

### **PARENT/CARER INVOLVEMENT**

Parents/carers may receive questionnaires on aspects of the services provided by Bexhill Academy. Replies are confidential and will be collated and analysed by the Senior Leadership Team. Issues arising will be shared with the Executive Principal and discussed by the Trust Board and the Leadership Team.

## **SUPPORTING PARENTS/CARERS OF CHILDREN WITH SEND**

Bexhill Academy recognises the importance of positive relationships with parents/carers of all children with additional need. The SEN code of practice emphasises the importance of positive, supportive attitudes to parents/carers and user-friendly information and procedures. All professionals will make every effort to ensure effective communication with parents.

All staff within Bexhill Academy are expected to help parents/carers understand how to contribute effectively to their child's education and will make every effort to ensure that parents/carers understand their rights and responsibilities. All relevant information will be provided in a way for all to understand and respond to (see SEN policy).

## **HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS**

- A calendar of school events is produced and updated on the academy website for parents/carers and pupils.
- The weekly newsletter is made available to parents/carers. It contains general details of academy events and activities as well as celebrating successes.
- We will send letters when necessary, including via ParentMail, and store copies on the academy's website.
- Bexhill Academy encourages parents/carers to share any issues about their child at the earliest opportunity.
- If a child is absent from school, and we have no indication of the reason, Bexhill Academy staff will contact a parent/carer by telephone/text message to find out the reason for the absence.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER SCHOOLS AND OUTSIDE AGENCIES**

Prior to pupils joining Year 7, students are visited in their primary schools to gain further information about them to help and support their transition to Bexhill Academy. We recognise that children have diverse needs, and we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed on better ways to meet these needs, so that children may participate more fully. Support comes from medical services (such as Speech and Language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy), from Educational Psychologists, from health professionals and specialists.

It also comes from various welfare-focused services, such as East Sussex Behaviour and Attendance Service, Children's Services and Child Protection Units. We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our academy should provide a safe and secure environment.

We hold information on all our pupils in Bexhill Academy and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. Details will be sent to parents/carers about the types of data we hold, why we hold that data and who we pass it on to. This is a requirement under the Data Protection Act 2018.

## **USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS**

Photographs are used in and around the academy for many purposes, including displays, records of practical work and records of important events.

We may use photographs of students or their work when communicating with parents/carers and the wider community. The local or national press may on occasion publish photographs of students participating in academy events.

Parental/carer permission must be obtained prior to using photographs of students or their work.

Photographs used in the press will not be captioned with student's names.

**MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

Bexhill Academy will review this policy every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the academy.

Parents/carers can support Bexhill Academy in the implementation of this policy by reinforcing our values in their home-school conversations with our students. We welcome parent/carer feedback on this policy..