

The Hafod Federation

Positive Home/School Communication Policy



T Payne
Chair of Governing Body

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The Hafod Federation

Our Positive Communication Policy

Policy statement

At The Hafod Federation we are very fortunate to have a parent body which is supportive and friendly. We recognise that the success of the school is dependent on a strong partnership between all members of the school community: pupils, parents, staff and proprietors. This partnership must be based on a polite, positive and respectful relationship. For this reason, we continue to welcome and encourage parents/carers to participate fully in the life of our school. Any reference in this policy to a “parent”, includes any parent, guardian, carer or other individual with “parental responsibility” (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a pupil of The Hafod Federation.

The policy sets out how contact with parents will be managed in the very small number of cases where the actions or behaviour of a parent challenges our school’s ability to deliver an effective education service and threatens the safety and well-being of our staff.

We ask that all members of the school community follow these principles:

- We all respect the caring ethos of our school.
- Both parents and staff need to work together for the benefit of the pupils.
- All members of the school community should be treated with respect and, therefore, we must all set a good example in our own speech and behaviour.

In this context, threatening, violent or abusive behaviour, against any members of our school community, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All members of our community have a right to expect the school to be a safe place in which to work and learn. Where the behaviour of parents or visitors falls below expected standards, the school will take appropriate action.

Parental conduct

Parents are asked to communicate with each other and with other children, as well as all members of staff in a respectful and courteous manner; a manner in which they themselves would wish to be addressed.

This policy aims to ensure there will be equity and fairness in communications between parents and staff. In so doing, we aim to improve the schools’ efficiency, while managing those risks to the health and safety of school staff, which can be the result of unreasonable expectations and demands from some parents.

All parents will be treated with fairness and respect even if as a Governing Body we perceive actions or behaviour to be challenging. We will always separate the way we may need to manage inappropriate contact with a parent from the way we deal with their regular contact with school.

This policy sets out how contact with parents may be managed in the very small number of cases where the actions or behaviour of a parent challenges our school’s ability to deliver an effective education service.

Parental access & communication procedures

Normal permitted times on the premises are at drop-off in the morning (8:30 am to 8:45 am) and at pick up (3:15 pm to 3:30 pm). If a child is registered to attend breakfast club or an after-school club, these timings will extend to reflect the normal drop-off or collection times associated with these activities. Access onto the school property at any other time is by appointment only.

We always want to communicate with our parents as quickly, effectively and informally as possible to find resolution to concerns.

Whilst we welcome communication from you electronically or in writing, we prefer you to telephone the school office with your enquiry/concerns. This ensures we can process your enquiry/concern in good time. Our preferred communication channel is telephone call to allow you to raise your enquiry/concern with us as effectively as possible and for us to agree a way forward. Please note it may be necessary to end a call to avoid escalation of abusive language and tone.

We recognise that for some people written communication is preferable and we are committed to making reasonable adjustments as necessary so as to facilitate effective and timely communication. Should your preference be to communicate with us electronically or in writing then we aim to reply to written communication within 48 hours.

Social media is not an acceptable method of communication with the school.

As a governing body we are committed to providing a proportionate amount of time and resources to any parent who has contact with a school.

Behavioural Incidents

In order to support a peaceful and safe school environment, the school cannot accept parents or visitors exhibiting the following:

- Conduct which undermines the safe and calm environment in school, either in the school office, classroom, around the school site, immediately outside the school or anywhere the school is being represented (sports and educational fixtures/school journey/day trips etc.)
- Using loud or offensive language, such as swearing.
- Displaying an unacceptable amount of anger and aggression.
- Threatening physical violence to a member of the school community.
- Damaging school or personal property.
- Abusive telephone calls, emails, letters or other forms of written communication.
- Defamatory comments about school staff, proprietors or other parents on social media sites.
- Sexual abuse
- Racial abuse
- The use of physical aggression towards another adult or child. This includes physical punishment of one's own child.
- Approaching someone else's child in order to chastise them.
- Entering the school premises without authorisation.

Any example of such behaviour shall, for the purposes of this policy, constitute a “Behavioural Incident”. If any such incidents are reported by a parent to the school, but haven’t been witnessed by a member of staff, evidence will be required to substantiate these claims.

Persistent Complaints & Demands

The governing body may also seek to take action where unreasonably persistent complaints or demands are made and are seen to be frustrating attempts for school staff to run the school effectively. Examples may include :

Unreasonable demands and persistence may prevent school staff from fulfilling this commitment. Such as:

- excessive telephone calls, emails or letters
- requesting information which has already been circulated
- demanding responses within an unreasonable time scale or information not relevant
- continuing to raise matters which have been resolved
- submitting repeat complaints, after the complaints process has been completed, essentially about the same issues, with additions/variations which the complainant insists make these 'new' complaints which should be put through the full complaints procedure
- making unnecessarily excessive demands on the time and resources of staff whilst a complaint is being looked into, by for example excessive telephoning or sending emails to numerous members of staff, writing lengthy complex letters every few days and expecting immediate responses.
- repeatedly contacting or insisting to speak to a member of staff at school when it is more appropriate to leave a message with the office.

The plan for dealing with unreasonably persistent complainants could include some or all of the following:

- placing time limits on telephone conversations and personal contacts.
- restricting the number of telephone calls that will be taken (for example, one call on one specified morning/afternoon of any week).
- limiting the complainant to one type of contact (telephone, letter, email etc.) and/or requiring the complainant to communicate only with one named member of staff.
- requiring any personal contacts to take place in the presence of a witness.
- refusing to register and process further complaints about the same matter.
- where a decision on the complaint has been made, providing the complainant with acknowledgements only of letters, or emails, or ultimately informing the complainant that future correspondence will be read and placed on the file but not acknowledged. A designated ‘officer’ would be identified who will read future correspondence.

Inappropriate use of social media sites

- Social media websites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, headteachers, school staff, proprietors and in some cases other parents/pupils.
- The Senior Leadership Team & Governors consider the use of social media websites being used in this way as unacceptable and not in the best interests of the children or the whole school community.
- Any concerns you may have must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, the Head, (Deputy Head in their absence) or The Chair of Governors, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

In the event that any pupil or parent is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on Facebook or other social network sites, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the network site. All social network sites have clear rules about the content which can be posted on the site and they provide robust mechanisms to report contact or activity which breaches this. The school will also expect that any parent or pupil removes such comments immediately. In serious cases the school will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking and other sites. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly is the issue of cyber bullying and the use by one child or a parent to publicly humiliate another by inappropriate social network entry. We will take and deal with this as a serious incident of school bullying. Thankfully such incidents are extremely rare.

Procedures

The school has processes in place for dealing with Behavioural Incidents. Any Behavioural Incident will be reported to the Head, and the appropriate procedures will be followed. This may include verbal warnings, written warnings and/or exclusion from the school premises.

At any stage, the school may report serious incidents of abusive and threatening behaviour to the Police. The school has a responsibility to ensure that any act of actual or threatened violence is referred to the Police immediately.

Prior to implementing this procedure, it is important that everything possible has been done to satisfy the individual, such as referring issues to more senior managers as appropriate. The relevant Complaints Policy must have been appropriately followed and the issue handled appropriately. It should be appreciated that some unreasonably demanding, habitual or vexatious complainants may have issues which contain substance and great care should be taken to listen to any new issue raised.

This policy was written by Governors and sent to parents for consultation in October 2021.