COMMUNICATIONS POLICY (parents)

Review date	Summer 2025
Review period	Annual by SLT
Next Review date	Summer 2026
Reviewed by	Teresa Mpofu/SLT
Approving committee	SLT
Policy type	Not legislative
Other related policies	Complaints Policy SEND policy Safe guarding Policy Communications Policy (staff)

1 Rationale

Lawrence Sheriff School recognises the importance of clear and effective communications with all stakeholders (pupils and parents/carers, governors, 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 a school are parents and pupils and this policy addresses the main ways in which the school ensures effective two-way communication between home and school.

Communications can take a variety of forms: verbal (through meetings or by telephone), written (through letters, The Weekly Word, the school website, notices on Edulink or via email). Occasionally a communication may be received second hand or through an intermediary.

2 Routine Communication

The school is particularly proactive in encouraging use of effective communication. Routine communication takes place via:

- Open meetings for current and prospective year 7 parents
- Open meetings for current and prospective sixth form students and their parents
- Annual parent consultation evenings (biannual for Y11-13)
- Achievement and attitude grades
- Exam reports
- Full written reports

- Year 7 settling in telephone calls
- Head of Year letters (sent out termly)
- Meetings called within year e.g. year 11 meeting in October to set out key milestones, trip meetings, options meetings
- The school office – which is open within school working hours to respond to queries and pass on message to staff
- Group call texts for absences

3 **Other forms of communication**:

3.1 Edulink

It is now routine that letters, grades, reports, exam entries and results are all posted via Edulink. This can be accessed via the webpage and also via an App. Edulink also offers parents further insight into their child's school life via access to merits and strikes. Student timetables, contact details, attendance and absences are all accessible via Edulink and we would expect parents to log in regularly. If you require any assistance accessing Insight, please email lssparentportal@lawrencesheriffschool.com.

3.2 School Website

The school website is updated frequently with details of upcoming events, school policies and details of many school activities. We would expect parents to regularly access the school website.

3.3 The Weekly Word

TWW is an important channel of communication with updates on school events and activities, and important notices to the wider school community as well as provided insight into the ethos and values of the school via First Word articles. If parents are not on the mailing list, please contact the school and ask to be added to it.

Please note that these communications concern only your child. Details about other students, for example sanctions or rewards issued, will not be discussed; in addition, parents/carers will not be given information about their child's position in a class.

4 **Who to contact at school?**

Initially, most concerns and queries, with the exception of safeguarding issues, should be directed towards your child's tutor. The concern or query may then be dealt with by the tutor or passed onto a subject teacher, subject leader, head of year, head of house, or pastoral manager as appropriate.

4.1 SEND

If any parent requires additional information regarding SEND communication and point of contact this can be found in the SEND policy, which can be found under the policies section of the school website.

4.2 Safeguarding

If any parent requires additional information regarding Safeguarding communication and

points of contact, this can be found in the Safeguarding policy, which can be found under the policies section of the school website.

5 **Time frames for response to parental contact**

Whilst recognising that communication with parents/carers/home is important, staff have full and busy working days and have a right to be able to switch off at the end of a school day. With this in mind, the following guidelines should be respected:

- Telephone queries will be responded to within 3 working days
- Letters will be responded to within 3 working days if a verbal response is required and 5 working days if a written response is required
- Emails will be responded to within 3 working days
- If additional time is needed, we ask staff to send you an email explaining this and outlining a time line for further communication

We would ask that parents/carers are thoughtful as to when emails are sent. Although we do not expect staff to access or respond to emails outside of school hours, many staff do access their emails in the evening and at the weekend and it can have a negative impact on their work/home life balance if receiving emails from parents late into the evening and at the weekend. We have asked staff to use the ***Schedule Send*** facility in Gmail and would ask that parents use the same function, if available, in order to give staff 'clear air'.

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

6 **Meeting face to face with staff**

On occasion, parents will request to meet with staff (before, during or at the end of school day) to talk through issues and this is entirely appropriate; however, it is not reasonable for parents to arrive at school and demand to speak to a teacher/member of staff immediately. This would usually require taking staff out of their teaching role and this is not acceptable. If any parent needs to speak to a teacher, for anything other than a safeguarding issue that poses an immediate threat to a student, we ask that they contact the school and book a convenient time to meet with the relevant member of staff.

7 **Complaints**

If any parent/carer needed to make a complaint they should refer to the school's complaints policy which can be found on the school website.

8 **GDPR**

Effective communication means that the school holds information for both students and parents. Our Data protection Policy and Privacy Notices can be found on the school website, under the policies section.