**Staff Communication Charter**

## Rationale

Haveley Hey Community School recognises the importance of clear and effective communication that is open and accessible. It is very important to us that we work closely in partnership with parents and carers, and communication between home and school is key.

**Communication Channels**

If communication is to be effective, it must be timely, appropriate, clear, respectful and professional. Communication can take place in a variety of formats. We recognise that the message and the purpose of the communication can help determine which format is most appropriate. Generally, the more issue-driven and/or detailed the information is, the more direct the communication channel chosen should be.

Our parents and wider community communication channels include:

* **Face-to-face communication** – one-to-one meetings, team meetings, parents’ events, parents’ evenings.
* **Telephone conversations –** staff to parent, parent to staff, staff to a member of the community.
* **Electronic written communication** – Class Dojo, email, website, text.
* **Written communication** – letters sent home from the school.

Our staff to staff communication channels include:

* **Face-to-face communication** – one-to-one meetings, phase meetings, whole staff meetings, CPD opportunities.
* **Live digital communication** – Teams, Zoom.
* **Telephone conversations** – staff to staff
* **Electronic written communication** – email
* **Written communication** – letters sent to staff from the school.

**Whole school communication channels used to communicate with parents/carers and the wider community**

* The **School website** holds a wealth of information about the school. Parents can find forthcoming dates, curriculum information, newsletters etc.
* Haveley Hey subscribes to **Class Dojo**, which allows us to communicate with parents quickly and cost effectively via messages. We are able to send messages (avoiding the costs of texts) and parents can send messages back for free. We use this systemto send letters to parents, as well as send out reminders and share children’s work.
* **Events for families:** Family members of different year groups are invited into school to appropriately themed events. This may be to provide information about important assessment points e.g. End of Key Stage Two SATS or different areas of the curriculum e.g. How to support your child with reading, teaching phonics etc.
* For urgent communication with parents a **text** may be sent. Texts are not sent out on a regular basis but will be used in emergencies e.g. To inform parents of a school closure.

**Direct communication between parents/carers and staff**

We ask that all communications are respectful.

**Face to face communication** will be used, if appropriate, when a member of staff would like to speak at length with a parent or carer. The pupil may be invited to attend the meeting as well.

If a parent or carer would like to arrange a meeting, this should always be pre-arranged with the members of staff.

If a parent or carer urgently needs to see someone, for instance if there is a serious family emergency or a child protection issue, please phone ahead and the reception staff will do their best to find a senior member of staff to see you.

For non-urgent meetings, we will aim to meet with you within five working days. The school will determine the level of urgency at its discretion, to enable it to manage multiple demands.

Each year group has two Parents’ Evenings per year which allows parents to meet with class teachers. If a parent or carer does not attend a parents’ evening appointment, staff will follow this up with a phone call or a letter.

**Telephone calls** will be made by school to parents where immediate contact with a family member is required.

* If it is an emergency, a staff member will call the first named emergency contact as listed. Where no contact is made, a call will then be made to the second named contact. In the event that no contact can be made, the member of staff will either leave an answerphone message or ensure that repeat calls continue to be made to the contact numbers, where possible.
* At the start of a phone conversation with any parent, a check will be made to ensure they are available to talk, particularly if what you want to discuss is of a private / personal nature.
* Ensure you are respectful of the parent and student and are clear about the messages you want to give.
* If you are asked a question you do not know the answer to, that is fine, just explain that you will pass this on to the relevant member of staff.
* Whilst this is rare, if you receive a phone call which is of an aggressive tone, sets unreasonable demands or could otherwise be interpreted as harassing, we would advise you to explain that you are unable to continue the conversation and will refer the issue to a member of the senior leadership team and end the call. The conversation should be logged on CPOMS.

**Emails** are used by members of the admin team and on some occasions, by SLT to communicate with or respond to parent enquiries. We do not enourage teachers to communicate via email and staff email addresses are not routinely shared with parents. Our preferred method of written communication is via Class Dojo.

**Class Dojo** is a useful way of communicating between parents and school. However as well as having many advantages, this ease of access has also increased the demands made of staff. As a school, our first priority is to deliver high quality teaching and learning. Staff cannot and are not expected to monitor and manage their Class Dojo accounts during lessons or at other times in the day, when they should be planning and preparing for lessons, assessing student work or carrying out school duties. We have also agreed with staff that there is no expectation to respond to queries during their personal/family time.

* Try and respond to an email within 2 working days of receipt, even if just a holding reply. This allows the original sender to know that you are dealing with the enquiry.
* Staff will not be expected to monitor or respond to emails outside of normal working hours (including weekends and published school holidays).
* Consider the best way to reply to the email, very often a conversation will be more effective and efficient. This may be through a telephone conversation or meeting.

The following points are to be considered in respect of all message on Class Dojo or emails, including those to other staff.

* When replying to messages/emails be concise and to the point. Reading an email is more difficult than reading printed communications, and a long email can be discouraging to read.
* Answer all questions and pre-empt further questions. This helps prevent long chains of messages/emails; as further questions may need to be asked to follow up on missing information. If a message/email is not going to be sufficient, a response to arrange a time to talk can be more profitable and economical on time.
* Do not use CAPITALS for any part of the message/email other than is grammatically necessary as this appears that you are shouting, which you would be unlikely to do in normal conversation.
* Read the message/email before you press ‘send’. Many typos and related errors are found when proofreading an email, and in some cases it becomes evident that the meaning of a statement has been lost. Similarly, it gives the chance to read it as if you were the recipient, thus avoiding the chance of a misunderstanding or offence being caused.
* You could also ask a colleague to review the message/email before you send. If it is a sensitive issue or you are concerned about getting the tone right, you should ask a member of SLT to check it.
* Whilst this is rare, if a member of staff receives a message/email which is of an aggressive tone, sets unreasonable demands or could otherwise be interpreted as harassing, this should be referred to your phase leader / member of SLT.

**Social media** – Haveley Hey Community School does not currently have any active social media accounts.

**Staff to staff communication**

All communication between staff should be purposeful, professional and respectful.

**Face to face communication and telephone conversations**

* These are the school’s **preferred** methods of communication between staff. They are two forms of communication that reduce misconceptions and they also allow for a two-way conversation to be conducted efficiently.
* Where - we want staff to feel that they can share their feelings when needed but this should be with a trusted colleague, in a private, considerate place and should not impact any other members of staff.
* When - clear communication with your line manager should take place at the earliest point for any concerns.
* What - The more that we can check up on each other, the more supported we will all feel. If you have an issue this should be taken to your line manager. If it is about your line manager then it should be taken to a member of SLT. It should not be spoken about to other members of staff in a public forum.
* Positive shared areas - the staff room is a shared space that needs to be a protected environment, free from negative chat. Anything that is making staff feel negative should be communicated as above. This charter should protect staff from a negative environment in shared areas, however if staff feel that the positive environment is being compromised, they should raise this with their line manager. Shared work areas e.g. The PPA room, should be a quiet, calm space for staff to work productively without being significantly impacted by others.
* Considering policy - staff must adhere to the code of conduct at all times and need to also be mindful of staff that have children or other relatives in the school.

**Electronic written communication**

* In terms of emails, it is important to consider whether an email is the most appropriate means of communication, or would a face-to-face conversation be better, and in the long run less time consuming?
* Be respectful of one another and mindful that all email communication can be requested and viewed by other parties.
* We ask that all email communication between staff is considerate and respectful. When communicating, please be mindful that everyone is working hard to help our children achieve well. We do not always get it right, but we constantly aim to do so and to improve when this is not the case. However, some email communications can cause offence or can be damaging to a relationship that should be based on trust and mutual respect.
* When sending emails, staff are also asked to consider how we are supporting eachother to reduce the strain on inbox activity and to maintain a sustainable workload. When replying to an email do not use ‘reply all’ unless absolutely necessary.
* Please be mindful that staff work at times that suit their lifestyle, this may include evenings and weekends for some staff. It would be useful to include a sentence at the end of your email to reflect this e.g. THINK WELLBEING: This email was sent at a time & date convenient to the sender; please do not feel under any pressure to respond if this is outside your usual working hours. There is no expectation that staff read and/or respond to email communication out of their usual working hours.
* Staff can also use the ‘scheduled send’ function to schedule an email to send during working hours.