

# Hanson Academy

## Communications

At Hanson Academy, we believe that good communication between school and the home is essential. Children achieve more when schools and parents/carers work together. Parents/carers can help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve, and how they can help.

In our Academy we aim to have clear and effective communications with parents/carers and the wider community. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values through keeping parents/carers well informed about Academy life. This reinforces the importance of the role that parents/carers play in supporting the Academy in educating their children.

### These are our principles:

- Communicating with stakeholders, particularly parents/carers, is a core part of what we do, not an afterthought.
- We will always try to share as much information as possible about any issue.
- If we cannot share information we will explain why.
- We will endeavour to work as transparently as possible by offering clear explanations for major decisions.
- We will communicate in a timely fashion and try to avoid parents receiving information about the school from other sources first.
- We will communicate in a voice which is courteous, jargon free and warm.
- Where information relating to the Academy is available in the public domain, we will direct people to it.
- We acknowledge that some information is of a confidential nature and will always respect that confidentiality.
- We will do our best to communicate with all school communities.

### Communication strategies

We communicate with parents/carers through a range of different strategies. Some of our communications are the result of a statutory requirement; others reflect what we believe is important to our Academy:

#### Student Planners

All students have a planner. This should be used daily for parents/carers and teachers to communicate. Both parents/carers and form tutors must review the planner and sign it on a weekly basis. The planner will be used by class teachers and form tutors to share positive and negative comments about student's behaviour and progress on a daily basis. **The planner and the child's form tutor or Year team should be the first point of contact for all Academy issues.**

### **Talking with staff**

Class Teachers, Form Tutors, Subject and Year Leaders are always available to discuss student's progress and welfare by email or telephone by request. We endeavour to return all emails and calls within 2 working days. However, if you need to talk with staff in more detail, please make an appointment for a meeting in person. Many parental queries and concerns can be dealt with in this way. It is possible to request appointments through the school reception/office by calling 01274 776200. It is also possible to request meetings with Senior Leadership through reception or the Head Teacher's Personal Assistant [info@hansonacademy.org.uk](mailto:info@hansonacademy.org.uk). **Unfortunately as we are a large Academy it is not possible to meet with parents without an appointment.**

### **Website**

The Academy website [www.hansonacademy.org.uk](http://www.hansonacademy.org.uk) is regularly updated with information about the Academy, including up to date policies, current news about what is happening in the Academy, Head Teachers blog and news of any changes to routine. The Academy diary and holiday lists can also be found on the website and is regularly updated. Staff lists and responsibilities are also kept on the school website in the information section. The Academy also has Twitter and Facebook accounts to communicate with parents/carers.

### **Text Communication**

The Academy uses Schoolcomms system. Parents/carers are regularly updated about attendance issues, events and subject updates by text. Details for the protocol for communicating with parents and carers via text and email are provided in appendix 1.

### **E-Mail Communication**

The Academy uses e-mail communication where preference is made by parents/carers. Parents/carers are asked to indicate their preferred method of communication at the beginning of each academic year, and or on admission into the school. If e-mail is chosen as the preferred method then newsletters, whole school and group letters will be sent electronically, wherever possible, replacing the paper copies.

### **Letters**

Important information is sent out by letter and copies placed on the website. Depending on the content of the letter will determine if a text is sent home to expect the letter. Letters are usually sent home with students unless the letter pertains to fixed term exclusion (these letters are posted first class). Copies of letters sent home are kept in the school office.

### **Staff communications with parents**

At the beginning of each term we will share a summary of their curriculum plans and homework timetable through the Academy website. This enables parents/carers to support their child's work through a range of suggested activities to be shared with the child at home.

### **Progress grades**

A copy of the student's progress grades will be sent home every term with details of current grades, effort grades and progress towards target grades. A copy is also placed in the student's planner.

### **Consultation evenings and school reports**

Parents/carers are expected to show an interest in the school's teaching methods and in their child's progress by attending Parent Consultation Evenings, workshops and open days and reading their child's reports.

We do encourage parents/carers to contact the school at any time if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being, but we also provide a formal opportunity to meet one to one with the class teachers and form tutors during the academic year. Parents/carers will be given information and advance notice about such events by letter and on the website.

During the academic year parents/carers will receive an end of year written report and parents/carers can subsequently arrange to meet with teachers if there are any concerns.

### **Termly newsletter**

Details of Academy events, reminders, requests for help and news are shared in our termly newsletter. This comes out in a recognisable colour format and is also published on the website.

### **Meetings**

There are a number of meetings through the term which provide opportunities to discuss current developments in the school:

- **New parents** - we hold two meetings for new Year 7 parents/carers each July and September. The first is preparation for the new term (induction) and the second is to discuss progress (settling in). Both meetings provide an opportunity for parents/carers to meet each other and members of the school including the Leadership team and representatives of the school PTA (Friends of Hanson).
- **Open Evenings** – we hold two open evenings each year. The first is in the autumn term for Year 6 students wishing to explore Hanson as an option for their secondary school choice. The second open evening each year is for Year 11 students wishing to explore opportunities in the sixth form.
- **Consultation evenings** – we hold at least one formal consultation evening for each year group each year. These evenings are scheduled throughout the year and complimented by our reporting to parent's programme, to ensure regular contact with regards students welfare and progress.
- **Home Visits** – The Attendance and Alternative Provisions teams make regular visits home to discuss individual issues where it is not always possible to meet in the Academy.
- **Residential trips** – where a major trip is taking place, such as the ski trip, the trip leaders will organise a meeting for parents/carers well in advance to provide detailed information about all aspects of the trip.
- **Friends of Hanson (PTA)** - this is a forum chaired by parents, to discuss progress and hear parental views on Academy issues. Meetings are held five times a year. The Head teacher and/or a member of the Leadership Team are always present at these meetings. Parents/carers can raise issues for consideration by emailing the chair via the facebook/website link.

### **Home School Agreement**

Our home-school agreement replaces the Academy pledge at the front of the student's planner and will be in place from September 2015. It explains the Academy's aims and values, the Academy's responsibilities towards the children, the responsibilities of parents/carers, and what the Academy expects of the children. We ask parents to sign this agreement when their child starts in our Academy (or September 2015 for students Year 8 to 13).

The agreement covers the standard of education in our Academy, the ethos of the Academy, our expectations on attendance and good behaviour, and our expectations about homework. Our governing body reviews the agreement annually.

### **Academy prospectus**

The Academy prospectus is available containing a range of information to give new and prospective parents a full picture of provision at our Academy. We will update this document every year and will add it to our website. An up-to-date copy will also always be available in the reception area. An electronic copy of the Post 16 prospectus is also available to download from the website.

### **Public access documents**

The Academy makes available a range of documentation for parents/carers. We keep a master set in the main office, and we make this available on request. It contains copies of all Academy curriculum policies, minutes of governing body meetings and copies of policies that the governing body are required to have in relation to charging and remissions, sex education, health and safety, curriculum, performance management, admissions and action planning following inspection. It also contains a range of national and LEA documentation. A copying charge may be levied where requests for printed materials are made.

### **Attendance**

We would ask that students do not take holidays in term time as it does have an effect on their education. Any holidays which are taken during term time will not be authorised. If a child is unwell and they are unable to attend school their parent/carer must telephone 01274 776200 every morning that they are absent (before 8am if possible). A text will be sent home if we have not received a reason for absence.

### **Conclusion**

Good communication is vital to home-school partnership. The raising of standards cannot be achieved without such a partnership.

Adopted: June 2015

For review: July 2016

### **Who to contact?**

**School reception:** 01274 776200

**Attendance:** 01274 776200

### **What to do if.....**

The majority of issues raised by parents/carers, the community or pupils, are concerns rather than complaints.

The Academy is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing formal procedures. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, you may wish or be asked to follow the Academies' formal complaints procedure.

For the Academy to be able to investigate a complaint, it needs to be made within one year of the incident occurring. If a complaint is older than a year it will not be investigated. The prime aim of the policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. Malicious complaints may incur appropriate action by the Academy.

### **General Complaints Procedure:**

A problem or concern should be raised promptly with the form tutor or member of staff responsible for the area or action you are concerned about. If your concern is more serious you may prefer to make an appointment to discuss it with the Progress and Behaviour Leader/Senior Leader/Principal.

All staff will make every effort to resolve your problem promptly at this informal stage. Most concerns and potential complaints can best be resolved through informal discussion with the Principal or member of the Leadership team or relevant member of staff.

The Academy policy has four main stages and the following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints. In summary they are as follows:

- Stage 1 – A concern is raised informally with a staff member.
- Stage 2 – Formal complaint is heard by the complaints co-ordinator or an appropriate member of staff.
- Stage 3 – Complaint is heard by Principal.
- Stage 4 – Complaint is heard by Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel.

You may complain either to the LEA or the Governing Body in the first instance rather than the Academy. The complaint will be investigated by whichever of these is responsible for the matter complained about. The Governing body will inform both the complainant and the LA of the outcome of its investigation.

Further details can be found in the full complaints policy on the website <http://www.hansonacademy.org.uk/Policies>

## **HANSON ACADEMY APPENDIX 1**

### **EMAIL and TEXT PROTOCOL**

#### **For staff communication with parents**

This is guidance on when to send an email or text from Hanson Academy to parents/carers. It should be used in conjunction with the Communication and E-safety policies.

As a broad overview, emails and texts should be used for communicating essential information only. Parents/carers may wish to email teachers about their children but teachers should use email to set up a meeting so that personal communication about individual children is discussed face to face, by phone or letter and only in the last instance (or preference made by parent/carer) by email or text.

Student's initials must be used in subject titles of emails (students full names must not be used in email subject titles). Teachers must use Academy email address and Academy mobiles to communicate with parents/carers (personal mobiles and emails are not permitted).

#### **EMAILS**

- Group email addresses can be collated under year group, club register, class group or whole school categories. Groups will be administered by Senior Leaders and the Academy Administrative Officer, so that they can communicate information where only one group is affected (e.g. Y7 trip information).
- Ad hoc information such as the cancellation of an after school club can be sent by text, email or phone.
- Individual emails to parents/carers should not be sent by the office unless to make an appointment or by request of the parents/carer.
- All group emails must be viewed by a member of the SLT before they are sent.
- With permission of the Head Teacher, the PTA may send a group email to all parents e.g. asking for help with a school fair, as well as having a regular section of the newsletter for information.

#### **TEXTS**

- Texts will be sent if a student is absent from school
- Text should be used as a primary resource in informing parents/carers of a school closure (e.g. snow)
- Texts should be used to inform parents/carers of a change to procedure e.g. the cancellation of an event.
- Texts can be sent asking for outstanding money for trips
- Texts can be used to remind parents/carers of upcoming events
- In the event of sickness or an accident parents/carers should be telephoned not sent a text. However, a text may be sent asking the parent/carer to contact the Academy.

- Texts can be used to inform parents/carers that a newsletter or significant letter has been published and is available online or in the office.
- Texts must not be sent regarding behaviour of an individual child by a teacher or by the office. Contact should be face to face, by phone, email or letter.
- News of great significance must not be sent by text but should come by email/letter from the Head Teacher. Although a text may be sent to alert parents/carers to the letter/website.