

The Fermain Academy - Policies



**The Fermain Academy**

**Communications Policy**

**Amended By: Rachel Ward**

**Reviewed By: SLT**

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## **Introduction**

Schools have many lines of communication to maintain: with parents and carers, with other schools, with the community, with outside agencies, and within the school. Good communication between the school and the home is essential, and children achieve more when schools and parents/carers work together. Parents/carers can naturally help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve.

At The Fermain Academy we aim to have clear and effective communications with all parents/carers and with the wider community. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values, through keeping parents/carers well informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents/carers play in supporting the school.

We have various strategies for communicating with parents/carers and developing parental engagement. Our communications are in accordance with a statutory requirement; while others simply reflect what we believe is important for our school vision and ultimately our students.

We try to make our written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We use an easy-to-read font and add pictures wherever appropriate. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of racial discrimination. We wish to recognise and celebrate the contributions made to our society by all the cultural groups represented in our school.

## **Home-School Agreement**

Our home-school agreement is a requirement of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. It explains the school's aims and values, the school's responsibilities towards the students, the responsibilities of parents/carers, and what the school expects of the students. We ask parents to sign this agreement when their child starts at The Fermain Academy, and to renew it each year.

The agreement covers the standard of education in our school, the ethos of the school, and our expectations regarding attendance and behaviour.

## **Written Reports to Parents/Carers**

For full time students, we provide a yearly written report to each student's parents/carers on the progress and achievements in the various subjects. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development. For all other students, there will be a number of both verbal and written communications regarding progress and achievement for parents and carers to review.

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For full time students, as well as receiving the annual written report, parents/carers meet their child's learning mentor during the year for a 'structured conversation'. For full time students this gives them the opportunity to celebrate their child's successes, and to support their child in areas where there is a particular need for improvement. Parents/carers are able to see their child's work during these meetings. We encourage parents to contact the school if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being. For part time students, 'structured conversations' will be held as part of the referral process. Other conversations will be had throughout the placement.

We welcome the presence of any other adult the parent/carer wishes to invite to a school meeting. We will also make any reasonable adjustments to our arrangements if this will enable a parent/carer with a disability to participate fully in a meeting or to receive and understand a communication.

### **The Fermain Academy Website**

The Fermain Academy website contains a range of specified information on our school. It also contains a blog that is updated on a regular basis.

### **Public Access Documents**

The Trust makes a range of documentation available to parents/carers on The Fermain Academy website which includes our policies, school development plans and Ofsted report.

### **Home-School Communication**

Parental/Carer engagement is key to ensuring each student is given the support and opportunities to succeed, to improve attendance, improve behaviour, increase attainment and provide parents/carers with a better understanding of their child.

The Trust encourages parents/carers to share any issues or concerns about their child at the earliest opportunity. Teachers see parents/carers immediately, if at all possible. Where this is not possible, the parent/carer makes an appointment.

We arrange annual curriculum meetings for parents. These are evening meetings to explain areas of our curriculum and learner progress. We hold an induction meeting for all new parents/carers and student and parent/carer sessions throughout the year. All students' parents and carers are welcome to attend the curriculum evenings.

If a child is absent from school, and we have had no indication of the reason, we contact a parent/carer (by text initially followed by a telephone call, please see Attendance Policy) to find out the reason for the absence.

School is able to communicate via text and email to parents directly through our MIS, parents can also reply directly to our MIS (Arbor). A summary of each telephone call is recorded in the communications log.

Form tutors call home each week on a Friday to discuss the student's progress, achievements, any behaviour concerns, engagement in lessons, and attendance. An opportunity for the parents to provide feedback and share any concerns or successes.

Introduction of our MIS (Arbor) Parent Portal App to ensure parents/carers can easily access information and engage with school. Parents/carers can provide permission for trips, update information about their child or their own contact details. The parent portal provides parents with instant access to their child's attendance, behaviour and academic progress.

### **Communication with Other Schools and Outside Agencies**

We recognise that students have diverse needs, and we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed on better ways to meet their needs, so those students may participate more fully. Support comes from medical services (such as speech and language therapy and occupational therapy), from child development centres, from local doctors and specialists. It also comes from various welfare-focused services, such as Educational Welfare and Social Services.

We work closely with the student's home school, sharing information about the student's progress, engagement, attendance, safeguarding concerns. We encourage and facilitate regular review meetings with the student, parents and the home school to ensure each student has a full support framework in place.

We recognise that students have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection and safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Our school provides a safe and secure environment for our students. We are the people most in contact with our students, and we are therefore in a unique position to identify and help students suffering harm. When any member of staff has concerns about a child, these will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who may share this information with the relevant agency and persons.

We hold information on students in The Fermain Academy, and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. Details have been sent to parents/carers about the types of data we hold, why we hold that data, and who we may pass it on to. This is a requirement under the Data Protection Act 2018. Parents/carers have a right to view the information we hold, and we have contact details of the agencies to which our information is passed.

### **Communication within The Fermain Academy**

- All our procedures are detailed in the Staff Handbook.
- Written communications are delivered by e-mail.
- Staff members' personal details will not be shared with other members of staff.

### **Electronic Communication**

- We use the Internet, e-mail, social media and the school website.
- All school members may communicate with others through the Internet.

There are many benefits, but also a number of possible dangers. Rules for the use of the Internet are contained in our Safe Use of the Internet policy. Safeguards in our school include constant adult supervision, sites being filtered and monitored by our service provider, controlled links, and the use of child-friendly search engines.

The Fermain Academy Website and Trust area provides information about the academy and an opportunity to celebrate learners work with the worldwide learning community.

### **Use of Photographs and Names**

Photographs are used in and around the school for many purposes, including celebrating success, creating displays, records of practical work (for example art or technology projects), and records of important school events.

We may use photographs of students or their work when communicating with parents/carers and the wider community, in news feeds via social media, in the academy prospectus, on the academy website, or in report to parents/carers. The local or national press may on occasion publish photographs of student participating in events at academy.

Parental/carer permission is obtained during inductions. The academy office holds a list of those students for whom permission has NOT been given and all academy staff are aware of the names on it. The office will manage the social media feeds to ensure photos do not contain students who do not have permission for photos to be shared. (Refer to Trust Data Protection Policy).