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# **Perth Grammar School**

# **Parental Communications Policy**

**April 2023**

Proposed review date: April 2026

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

- 1.1 This policy seeks to define the means by which the school maintains good communications with parents/carers and other stakeholders. It should provide an overview of what they can expect of the school and, in turn, what the school will expect of them.
- 1.2 This policy complies with relevant Perth & Kinross Council policy documents, including the [Customer Service Standards](#) (July 2010).
- 1.3 This policy reflects that the school's motto (*With Pride, We Respect, With Ambition, We Strive*), and in particular its focus on the importance of communication with our community and cultivating trust and respect. It is an important principle that the views of all are listened to so that together we can build the best possible experience for our young people.

## 2. PARENTAL COMMUNICATION WITH THE SCHOOL

### 2.1 Enquiries

2.1.1 Parents are welcome to raise matters with the school by visiting reception, by telephone (01738 472800) or by email ([PerthGrammar@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:PerthGrammar@pkc.gov.uk)). In many cases, including where a message has to be passed to a pupil, such enquiries can be dealt with directly by the Business Support Team. Where another member of staff is required to respond, the following will apply:

- **Non-urgent enquiries** - In such cases, a message can be left with the Business Support Team who will forward it to the relevant member(s) of staff. In line with the Council's [Customer Service Standards](#), general correspondence (letters, emails and enquiries) will be responded to within **15 working days**. In many cases, however, particularly where there is a time factor, responses will be quicker.
- **Matters requiring an immediate response** - Where a matter is of such urgency (e.g., child protection, medical or attendance matters) that it requires an immediate response, it will be passed to the most appropriate member of staff who will usually be a member of the school's Senior Leadership, House Teams or Extended Leadership Teams. In most cases, the member of staff will be available to deal with such enquiries at the time of contact.
- **Enquiries by email** - All enquiries by email should be directed to the school's generic account: [PerthGrammar@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:PerthGrammar@pkc.gov.uk)

This will allow enquiries to be logged for the purpose of quality assurance and for them to be forwarded to the appropriate member of staff. Parents are advised on the website of broad remit areas within the school in order that they can mark their email for the attention of that person.

Any email to the school will also receive an automated reply confirming receipt and reminding parents of the [Customer Service Standards](#) timescale for responses. This email also advises that the school should be phoned in the event of more urgent enquiries such as pupil attendance or medical updates.

- 2.2 **Letters to the school** - In general, any letters requiring a response should, in the first instance, be addressed to one of the following: the Head Teacher, Business Support Team or your young person's Guidance Teacher.
- 2.3 **Social media** – parents/carers should not use social media personal/private messaging to contact members of staff. School social media accounts are for sharing information only.
- 2.4 **Parental complaints** - Should a parent wish to make a formal complaint about any aspect of the school, this should be addressed to the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team. The school follows the [Perth and Kinross Complaints Procedure](#). Such complaints can be made by email, letter, telephone or in person.
- 2.5 **Subject Access Requests (SAR)** – the Data Protection Act 2018 protects individuals from possible misuse of their information, while giving them legal rights to gain access to the information held about them by an organisation or individual within it. If a parent/carer/young person wishes to access information about themselves or their child(ren) this should be submitted in writing to the Council's Data Protection Team at: [DataProtection@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:DataProtection@pkc.gov.uk)
- 2.6 **Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests** – Members of the public have a legal right under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 to access information held by the Council. If you wish to request information from the Council, please contact the Council's Freedom of Information Team at: [FOI@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:FOI@pkc.gov.uk)

### 3. THE ROLE OF PARENTS/CARERS IN HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

- 3.1 Communication between the school and home is at its most effective where parents are clear of what is expected of them. The following are key ways in which parents can support the work of the school in terms of communication:

#### 3.2 Pupil absence

- 3.2.1 The school's over-riding obligation is to ensure the safety of the children and young people entrusted to it, and it is of the highest importance that reasons for any pupil absences are established as a priority each morning. It is therefore essential that parents notify the school as early as possible where circumstances are likely to result in their child being absent from school. An absence can be reported in the following ways:
- Pupil Intervention Team (pupil absence voicemail) – 01738 472888
  - Telephone – 01738 472800
  - Email – [PGSPupilAbsence@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:PGSPupilAbsence@pkc.gov.uk)
- 3.2.2 Where no such notification has been received, parents will be sent a **Groupcall** (see 4.3.1 below) message asking for such information. Parents are requested to respond to such messages as a matter of urgency, as the school will continue to pursue absences until such time as it has established a reason for an absence. In the past, this has led to the unnecessary involvement of the police and other agencies.
- 3.3 **Information returns**
- 3.3.1 Throughout the session parents will be asked to make returns to the school by a stated deadline. These could be for a number of reasons, such as information data updates, confirmation of attendance of a pupil on a school trip or activity, feedback on reports etc.

Whatever the reason, it considerably eases the administrative burden to the school when parents adhere to the deadlines provided.

### **3.4 Updating the school on personal matters**

3.4.1 All our pupils can be affected by things going on at home or in their personal lives and these in turn can have an impact on their learning. It is very helpful for the school to be made aware of anything that a young person may be experiencing away from school that could be having an impact on how they are feeling in school. This could be something such as a family bereavement or friendship difficulties. In these circumstances parents should contact their young person's House Team.

### **3.5 Updating the school in the event of change of contact details**

3.5.1 It is very important that the school has current contact details for parents and other relatives. Parents are requested always to notify the school of such changes, both to their own contact details and those of relatives. This can be a particular problem for the school when it comes to mobile phone numbers. Details can be updated by using [ParentsPortal](#).

### **3.6 Use of social media**

3.6.1 The school respectfully asks that consideration should be given regarding the nature of comments made about members of staff on social media platforms. Where a parent has a concern or complaint this should be raised with the school directly so this can be addressed through the complaint's procedure (see 2.4 above).

## **4. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND PARENTS/CARERS**

### **4.1 The School Handbook**

4.1.1 A school handbook is made available to all parents through the school website and is updated by December of each year. This handbook meets the requirements of the Education (School and Placing Information) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, and its purposes include:

- providing a welcome for new parents to the school;
- helping parents to choose a school; and
- helping parents to prepare their child for school.

4.1.2 The handbook should serve as a practical guide to parents about school, authority and national policies and how these will impact on their child's experience at the school. It should also give them a good 'feel' for the school.

The school handbook is also available on the [school's website](#) or in hard copy upon request.

### **4.2 Standards and Qualities Report**

4.2.1 The school is required under the Standards in Scotland's Schools (Scotland) Act (2000) to publish an annual report including key performance measures such as those relating to attainment and attendance. This report is published on the [school's website](#) in September.

### 4.3 General communications to all parents

4.3.1 The school uses a variety of methods to communicate with all parents on matters which are of interest to them. These include:

- **Groupcall** – this facility allows the school to send text messages to parents and is usually used only for matters that require to be drawn to parents' attention urgently such as unexplained absences, school bus or club cancellations, event reminders or severe weather notifications.
- **Email** – the school holds parental email addresses for almost all pupils and is the school's preferred method of written communication. Only in exceptional circumstances would letters be sent by post.
- **Parent Bulletin** – the parent bulletin is published every Monday and provides parents with an accessible and attractive overview of the school's activities. Upcoming key diary dates are included in every bulletin.
- **School Website** – the school website is a very useful resource for parents. As well as providing news updates, the website is the place where parents are most likely to find information they need about the school. This includes the school's calendar of events, handbook, bulletins and other key documents. The school website also provides clear details for parents on how they can contact the school.  
[www.perthgrammar.org.uk](http://www.perthgrammar.org.uk)
- **Instagram & Twitter account** – (@PerthGrammar) these are particularly useful for providing updates on pupils' achievements both within the school and in terms of extra-curricular activities.

### 4.4 Communication regarding the curriculum/learning and teaching

4.4.1 There is one Parent Contact Evening per year for all learners. There is also a further three Senior Phase Targeted Clinics (S4-6) which are focussed on highlighting concerns with progress. Four Tracking Reports are also issued for all learners throughout the year with one of these reports including comments. Should parents wish to discuss their child's progress, contact should be made in the first instance with the Guidance Teacher, via the school office. Additional details of curriculum and course choice can be found on the school website.

## 5. SEEKING PARENTS' VIEWS

### 5.1 The Parent Council

5.1 The Parent Council, which meets approximately 4 times a year and is attended by the headteacher, members of the Senior Leadership Team and staff where appropriate. The Parent Council is a key vehicle for parents/carers to support the school and learning community and share their views with the school leadership. These meetings are also used by the school leadership to provide parents with updates on a wide range of issues, ranging from small changes to procedures to significant government policy changes. The school is committed to harnessing the potential of the Parent Council as a key forum for interaction with parents and will always seek to support initiatives raised through this body.

## **5.2 Consultation on proposed change**

5.2.1. The school is committed to consulting parents wherever possible, particularly in cases where significant changes in policy or procedures are under consideration. As well as pupils themselves, parents are key stakeholders within the school community and their views are valued and will be taken into consideration in the making of decisions. In practice this may look like surveys or focus groups.

## **5.3 On-going evaluation of events**

5.3.1 The school is also committed to seeking regular feedback from parents on activities such as parents' nights and will evaluate parents' views on how such events might be improved.

## **5.4 Annual parental survey**

5.4.1 In addition to these methods of seeking parental views to encourage parental engagement, the school also conducts a formal parental survey, covering a wide range of the school's functions, towards the end of each academic session. These questions largely remain the same each year which allows the school to note trends – either positive or negative – in terms of parental responses. A summary of this survey is shared annually with the Parent Council and, where appropriate, their views on next steps sought to inform whole school improvement planning.

## **6. SCHOOL CONTACT DETAILS:**

- Email Address: [PerthGrammar@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:PerthGrammar@pkc.gov.uk)
- General Enquiries: 01738 472800
- Attendance Line: 01738 472888
- Website: [www.PerthGrammar.org.uk](http://www.PerthGrammar.org.uk)
- Instagram/Twitter: @PerthGrammar
- Address: Perth Grammar School, Gowans Terrace, PERTH, PH1 5AZ