

Guidance for parents on communicating with school.

Introduction

It is our aim to enjoy professional and productive relationships with our parents so that our young people can achieve their potential. Ripley is a large academy and as such we need to have clearly laid out systems and protocols for communicating with parents so that we can respond promptly and consistently.

This communication policy articulates how parents and carers should communicate with school and how the school will respond.

Communication lines to be followed:

Absence

To register an absence please ring school and leave a message on the absence line (01524 64496 'Option 1'). This includes part-day absences.

Information

If there is information relating to a pupil that you would wish staff to know about, **the first point of contact is the progress tutor**; parents should write a note in their child's school journal or a separate note to their Progress Tutor. Alternatively parents may use the Parentline system located on the school website.

Emergencies

In case of emergencies parents should contact the school by telephone (01524 64496).

Concerns

We are delighted that parents choose to place their children in our care. The contract between Ripley and its parents is laid out clearly in the Home/School agreement signed by parents in Year 7. During school time the school is *'in loco parentis'* meaning that school is empowered legally to make decisions on behalf of pupils and in their best interests.

There may be, from time to time, concerns that parents wish to raise. We will do our best to address concerns promptly and consistently.

It is important to emphasise that a number of issues, in particular setting, uniform and sanctions (including detentions), are entirely internal matters for the school and therefore not for negotiation.

Our preferred form of contact is via 'Parentline' – this is a dedicated and secure online system accessed via the contact tab at the top of the home page on the school website. To raise a concern using Parentline:

- Please register your concern as concisely as possible using the form on Parentline to ensure we have all the necessary details.
- Your concerns will be passed on by the administrator to the most appropriate person to deal with your query.
- In the case of concerns relating to subject issues it is likely that the Subject Teacher or Subject Leader will respond. Other concerns will normally be dealt with by the Progress Tutor or the Progress/Assistant Progress Leaders.

- If we consider that your concern is urgent, please rest assured that we will respond to you promptly. For non-urgent issues, we aim to respond within five working days. The member of staff dealing with your concern may respond via Parentline, by phone or may ask you to come into school.
- Staff emails are for internal purposes only; **emails sent to individual staff addresses will not receive a response.**
- Members of staff will not be able to respond to requests for telephone conversations made via Parentline. Please give sufficient detail in your message to help us determine how best to respond.
- During the school day, staff are involved in teaching and learning and the day-to-day running of a busy school and therefore **we regret it will not be possible to transfer phone calls directly to staff.** The receptionist will transfer any concerns or requests onto Parentline and they will be forwarded to the appropriate person who will respond as soon as possible.

If contact via Parentline is not possible:

Parents may phone school during office hours (9am – 4pm). The receptionist will take details of your concern and transfer it onto the Parentline system.

Making an appointment

If, following communication on Parentline, the school feels it necessary to make an appointment, parents will be contacted. It will not be possible to see any member of staff without a pre-arranged appointment.

When attending for an appointment, parents must sign in at Reception in the Lodge (just inside the main gate) on arrival. A visitor's badge will be issued and a member of staff will escort parent(s) to a meeting room.

Please note that abusive or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated, either on the phone or in a meeting.

Contacting a pupil in school

Pupils are not allowed to leave lessons to come to the telephone to accept an incoming call.

Parents who wish to contact pupils to relay an urgent message may do so by telephoning the school office. To minimise disruption to teaching and learning we would request that this facility should be reserved for emergencies. Any urgent messages will be passed to the pupil concerned.

Pupils must keep their mobiles switched off during the school day. Parents **should not** use this as a method of communication during school hours.

The use of mobile phones by pupils during the school day is strictly prohibited. If pupils use a mobile phone to contact parents during the school day this will be treated as a significant breach of this rule and will result in the confiscation of the phone under the school's Mobile Phone Policy. If pupils need to contact home during the day they should go to pupil reception in the main school building.