



Communication Policy

Our Vision Statement: An inspiring and inclusive community hub, leading global citizens

Effective communication is key in order to facilitate a well-coordinated, thriving and successful school; be it to staff, students, parents or with other members of the wider school community. GEMS Metropole School aims to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

Aims

- To ensure that staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders are kept well informed
- To ensure that there is a clear structure outlining which form of communication is to be used for each purpose
- To use the method of communication that is most effective and appropriate to the context; message and audience
- To be open, honest, ethical and professional
- To use jargon free, plain language and be easily understood by all
- To action communications within a reasonable time – maximum 24 hours
- To be compatible with the core values of the school

Procedures

Internal Communication – to Staff

(a) **Time-Sensitive, Communications of High Importance** – From time to time an important and urgent message may need to be relayed to staff. In this case the communication must be made as a face-to-face communication, or if to a wider audience by means of a mobile phone message using one of the WhatsApp groups (limited to working hours only).

(b) **Non-Time-Sensitive Communications of High Importance** – If the communication is not time-sensitive it should be sent by email which ensures a lasting record of the communication made for reference.

(c) **Communications of Low to Medium Importance** – These may be made either by the briefing email via the PA to the Principal or via 1:1 email, depending on the circumstances and how many staff need to receive the communication.

(d) **Communications Involving Sensitive Data** – These should be kept to a 'Need to Know' basis. Points (a), (b) and (c) apply, however, only specifically relevant staff should receive the communication, and face-to-face communications are preferred.

Additional Points to note:

- As per the 'Acceptable Use of Technology Policy', staff should never share logins and/or passwords to computer accounts, email accounts or their mobile phones.
- WhatsApp and emails should be sent between the hours of 06.00 and 18.00, there will be no expectation for a response to any emails or WhatsApps sent out of these times.
- An internal *Email Briefing* is sent out three times a day that contains useful information; staff should make a point of reading this properly at the earliest possible moment. In addition, weekly morning



briefing, via TEAMS at 07.05. First Sunday of every month whole school briefing, with subsequent Sundays in the month being split into primary and secondary.

- Admin huddle will be at 07.00 for all admin staff in the admin area.
- A staff meeting is held weekly on a Tuesday at 15:15h. At times this is a whole staff meeting, at times departmental; staff are notified on the daily briefing email.
- Staff should check emails regularly; at least three times daily including the first hour before teaching. Staff should attempt to respond to emails when required timely, notwithstanding the fact that they should not compromise their teaching to do so unless imperative.
- When sending emails information should be kept as concise as possible with links or attachments made available if expansion on points is thought useful.
- Staff should only email the person they wish to receive a response from and should refrain from Cc and Bcc staff members who do not need to directly respond. If the receiver does not respond then a line manager will be copied in to the follow up email.
- Team chat should only be used via a team group during collaboration on a task, not as a main means of communication.
- WhatsApp should only be used for quick alerts and directives should be sent via email.
- Internal promotions and new staff member bios will be added to the email briefing to welcome new staff both admin and teachers.

Internal Communication – to Students

Communication between staff and students is of imperative importance towards facilitating the teaching and learning process

- **Verbal Communication** – Invariably the majority of communication involving students is made verbally, however, staff should keep in mind that additional visual cues are often useful for EAL students or certain learners. Shouting at students and gesticulating at them aggressively is unacceptable behaviour. Wherever possible, two members of staff should be present if there is a need to discipline a student; following the Behaviour Policy.
- **Written Communication** – Staff use the written form to communicate to students in a variety of ways including: presentations on the IWB, printed task sheets, comments in exercise books, display boards and posts on TEAMS. In addition to the general points already stated, staff should carefully consider the size and font of texts, contrast of colours (text/background), avoid placing images behind texts that affect the readability of a text, ensure handwriting is easily legible and consider layout. Information should be easy to find. The Marking & Feedback Policy should be respected as well as the display non-negotiables.
- **TEAMS** – Assignments should be used to post all homework tasks as well as work to be engaged in during lessons when appropriate. Documents and resources should be saved on files and all other communication should be made on the 'feed'; comments, subject content, videos, links, info graphics, etc.

External Communication – to Parents/Guardians

1. (a) **Short, Time-Sensitive, Communications of High Importance** – Short urgent messages should be made by telephone if the number of recipients is manageable. If not, messages should be sent via the GEMS Connect App
2. (b) **Non-Time-Sensitive Communications of High Importance** – If the communication is not time-sensitive it should be sent by email, which ensures a lasting record of the communication made for reference.



3. (c) **Communications of Low to Medium Importance** – Staff may elect varying means of making communications of low to medium importance depending on the context; face to face, a general meeting, TEAMS feed, mention on the school website/social media or an alert on GEMS Connect.
4. (d) **Communications Involving Sensitive Data** – All communications to parents involving sensitive data should be made face-to-face, or in the case that this isn't possible by phone call. Staff should never address sensitive matters by email.
5. (f) **Homework Diaries** – Students in secondary are instructed to take note of their homework in these diaries weekly. Primary students keep a record of independent and guided reading at home through reading diaries. Lead teachers should check agendas weekly.
6. (g) **Authorisations** – All authorisations requested from parents should be done so via Microsoft Forms (school trips, residential trips, registrations, data usage, etc).

Additional Points to note:

- Staff should never send a group communication to parents in writing before having it approved by the leadership team (Email or Microsoft Forms).
- Bulk emails to parents that are through the PRE must be sent 24 hours before publishing for checking and approval.
- Staff should never send emails to multiple parents without using the 'BCC' function
- Staff should never communicate with parents (or students) via means of social media.
- When making phone calls to parents, only school landline or school mobile phone numbers should be used (no personal numbers).
- Similarly, to when communicating with students, no political or religious beliefs should be promoted and comments should be as balanced and impartial as the context allows.
- If in doubt, consult a member of the senior leadership team.

Parents are encouraged to:

- Develop close links with the school
- Participate in meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the professional role of the staff and all staff members in the school
- Collaborate with the school in developing the full potential of their children
- Share the responsibility of seeing that the school remains true to its ethos, values and distinctive character
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them through Happy Meets.

External Communication – to School (from Parents/Guardians)

Parents should keep the school up to date with family circumstances which may affect the schooling of their son/daughter(s). In addition, parents have the liberty to contact the school and request a meeting should they have an issue that they wish to discuss. In this scenario parents should refer to the escalation policy to know which member of the team is the most appropriate person to help them with the specific issue.

- The class/lead teacher will be the first point of communication for parents. A parent can: informally meet after school, book an appointment with the class teacher or email to share information or ask questions.
- If parents have any concerns about the year group as a whole, the class teacher or are unable to make an appointment with the class teacher, they will talk to the Head of Year. The Head of Year may contact a parent if there are concerns. The Head of Year will send out whole year group specific information for that year group via a weekly newsletter.

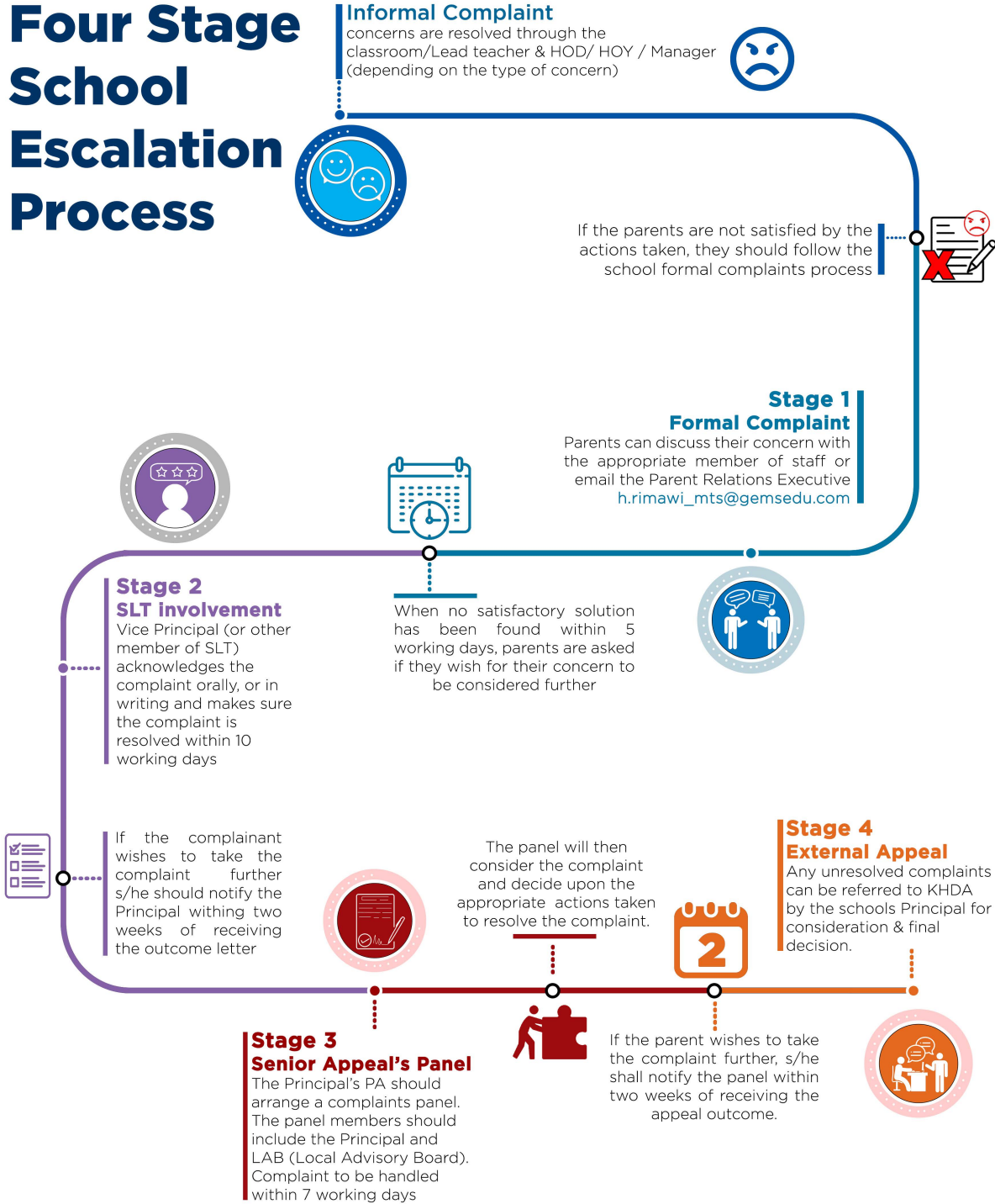


- The Assistant Head Teachers and Deputy Head teachers will be the next point of contact, after the Class/Lead Teacher and the Year Group Leader.
- Any unresolved concerns will then follow the complaints procedure policy.

The following flow-diagram illustrates the chain of events:



Four Stage School Escalation Process





General Concerns and Complaints – The Complaints Policy should be referred to and adhered to.

Additional Points to note:

- Parents should familiarise themselves with the escalation and complaints policy regarding communications outside of the school site. They should specifically keep in mind that concerns or doubts over the sons/daughters of other parents should be addressed to the school (not directly to other parents), that school matters should not be discussed off-site in person, by phone or use of social media, and that the complaints procedure should be adhered to and open forums discussing complaints should not be created.
- Concise and objective communications are appreciated owing to the busy schedule of staff.
- When parents are making communications they are encouraged to consider the global needs of all

Structures in place to facilitate open communication & consultation with parents

- Parent/teacher meetings
- Termly written school reports
- IEP meetings
- Written communication
- Monthly Happy Meets for existing parents who would like to voice concerns, share ideas and ask questions
- Meet the Principal for prospective parents to learn about the school
- Weekly newsletters keep parents up-to-date with school events, holidays and school concerns
- The school website is a source of information
- Homework diary
- Parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. Sports Day, productions and concerts
- Lunch with Nav – monthly opportunity for students to ask questions and share ideas with the school Principal
- Social Media – Metropole Live

It is vital that the school is immediately informed if family events/situations occur that cause anxiety to your child and therefore may adversely affect his/her education