



SPRINGWELL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# Communication Policy

<b>DATE ISSUED</b>	September 2020	<b>REVIEW DATE</b>	September 2022
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Full Governors F1020/849	<b>AUTHOR</b>	H Staton
<b>VERSION</b>	2	<b>PREVIOUS VERSIONS</b>	September 2018 v1

## **Rationale**

Springwell Community College recognises the importance of clear and effective communications with all stakeholders (students, parents and carers, governors, Local Authority, outside agencies, national bodies) and is committed to being open and accessible to all who have an interest in the college. The key stakeholders for the college are parents, carers and students and this policy addresses the main ways in which the college ensures effective two-way communication between home and college.

This policy is designed to create an environment of openness and ease of access for parents, carers, students and the community to the college staff and governors. By adopting this approach, we aim to prevent minor issues becoming more serious and to ensure that major concerns are dealt with promptly and fairly.

Communications can take a variety of forms: verbal (through meetings or by telephone) or written (through letters, text messages, Go4Schools, notes in planners or email). Occasionally a communication may be received second hand or through an intermediary.

Surveys indicate that the majority of parents and carers are satisfied or very satisfied with the two-way communication they have with Springwell, however, this does not mean that the college always gets things right. This policy aims to clarify the parameters within which we operate to ensure that communication is carried out with all stakeholders and interested parties effectively and clearly.

Parents and carers also have a login to our web-based Go4Schools to view general college information as well as to view information specific to their child, such as their personal timetable and a record of Behaviour for Learning logs in each lesson.

### **1 Aims of the policy**

- To improve the quality of service given to students at Springwell Community College by ensuring that effective communication and consultation takes place between the college, parents, carers, students and other stakeholders.
- To improve the quality of service by ensuring robust processes for consultation between the college, parents and students on key service areas.

### **2 Communications**

Communication between the college and parents/carers operates in the following ways:

1. Prospective parents and carers are invited to Open Evenings, usually in September preceding the year of entry to the college. All prospective parents and carers receive a college prospectus.
2. Prospective parents and carers are invited, along with students, to an induction evening in July where the main channels of communication are outlined and information about the college is presented.
3. Parents and carers are invited to Tutor Evening in the Autumn term to meet the student's tutor and review how the student has settled into the college and/or academic year.
4. Parents and carers are invited to attend parents' evenings each year to meet teachers and review the academic progress of the student.

5. We also hold appropriately themed IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) evenings at various points; for example, one for Year 9 options and another for Year 11 parents and carers to find out how they can support their children during the GCSE year.
6. The Student Planner is used as a key vehicle for communication between parents and carers and the college and this planner is fully explained at the induction evening for new parents in July and to all students as they start at Springwell. Planners are monitored regularly by tutors.
7. The college website and social media accounts are the primary form of communication with parents and carers. They provide access to a range of college communication and documents as well as providing a forum for celebrating the successes of our students.
8. Text messages are sent to alert parents and carers, especially when important information needs to be shared or to inform parents and carers that information has been sent home or that it has been uploaded to the website and these are targeted to the relevant parents and carers wherever possible. **It is important parents and carers ensure the college has an up-to-date mobile phone number for them for this purpose.**
9. The college has an official Twitter account and Facebook account which provides information about college events, celebrates our students' successes and links to other relevant information.
10. Communication about student progress takes place formally for each student, through progress reports, which are usually issued three times a year. Queries about events at the college may be made by telephone to the college or by email. There is a quick reference guide (Appendix 2) detailing who is the best person to contact for certain issues, but if in doubt, we advise parents to call Reception and they will be happy to assist.

### **3 Service Standards at Springwell Community College**

We aim to respond to all parental communication as quickly as we can. Our aim is to ensure that:

- Emails and phone calls will be treated promptly with an initial response within 48 working hours (even if this is just to acknowledge receipt and to promise a full response by a certain date).
- Letters receive either a verbal response (usually by phone) within 48 working hours or a written response within 5 working days.
- Notes in your child's planner will be addressed within 48 working hours, providing your child ensures the note is shown to the appropriate member of staff.
- All complaints or suggestions will be cleared and resolved in 5 working days (please see our complaints policy for more details of how complaints will be handled).
- In exceptional circumstances where it is impossible to meet these deadlines, then the initiator will be contacted to explain why there has been a delay and when a full reply will be made.
- Please bear in mind that messages sent at weekends may not be dealt with until the following working week, and emails sent in holidays should not expect a reply until term-time.
- We are happy for parents and carers to contact faculty leaders when there are concerns or queries about particular lessons; indeed we encourage this. However, when doing so, we ask

parents to bear in mind that most teachers teach hundreds of students at any one time and it is therefore impossible for them to undertake an extensive, ongoing dialogue with the parents of individual students over any significant period of time. We reserve the right for teachers to refrain from further contact where the demands for information become unrealistic.

- Emails that are abusive or unnecessarily unpleasant are very unlikely to receive a response unless there is a clear safeguarding concern. Likewise, staff are encouraged to put the phone down if they are faced with abuse.

#### **4 Consultation**

Questionnaires between the college, parents and students operates in the following ways:

1. Questionnaires are issued to parents and carers on a range of issues and through a variety of means (hard copy, through electronic surveys, email). They may be accessed through the website, distributed at specific parental events or via 'student post'. The consultation process via questionnaires addresses the key service areas such as the curriculum, changes to the timing of the college day, uniform, the framework for parental forum evening and primary school transition.
2. The college holds regular Parents' Forum events, where parents and carers are invited into the college to give their views on what is currently working well in the college and what needs improving. They may also focus on specific issues that require more detailed consultation, such as those mentioned in the previous point.
3. The Governing Body (including parent governors) meets regularly and is consulted on a wide range of issues.
4. The Parents, Friends and Teachers' Association meets once a half term and is used by the Headteacher as a further means of gathering parental views.
5. The student voice group Students Matter are consulted on a range of key issues relating to the college. Meetings take place once a month with additional meetings for specific issues.
6. Members of the Leadership Team undertake 'Climate for Learning Walks' regularly and discuss learning with students as part of this exercise.
7. Consultation between external agencies takes place with a view to improving the service provided by the college, for example, there is a multi-agency meeting each term hosted by the college.
8. The Special Educational Needs Department works closely with individual students, parents/carers and external experts and meetings are held frequently to discuss best practice and provision for individuals and groups.

#### **6. Advice for parents**

If parents and carers are unsure about who to contact with a specific issue or query, please refer to the '*Who to contact? FAQs*' document which is on the college website and attached as an appendix to this policy (Appendix 1).

Parents and carers are encouraged to raise concerns at an early stage. This can be done through a variety of means:

- A letter via their child's tutor
- An email or phone call to the college office (details are on the website)
- A phone call to Reception or Student Services
- An email or phone call to their child's Student Progress Leader
- By making an appointment to meet a member of staff
- By a comment in their child's planner
- At Parents' Evenings

Whilst the Headteacher is very willing to receive both suggestions and enquiries, parents and carers will appreciate that in some circumstances it may be more appropriate for another member of staff, who has a more detailed knowledge of the issue, to respond in the first instance. However, if the response does not answer your concerns, then you are very welcome to contact the Headteacher directly.

We understand that sometimes parents and carers may be frustrated about issues that arise and we will always do our best to solve any problems. At the same time, our staff should not have to put up with communication that is rude, abusive or aggressive. In addition, we would much prefer parents or carers to contact us directly with concerns rather than raise them on social media before we have had the chance to respond.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Parental Communication with college: FAQ's**

*When should I contact college?*

As soon as you have a concern! If in doubt, please contact us; we would far rather you contacted us for reassurance over something that turns out to be minor than spend time worrying about something.

*I know class teachers are very busy. Is it okay to contact them?*

Yes, it is fine to contact a class teacher if you need to. We only ask that you respect the fact that most teachers teach around 200 students and cannot therefore, realistically enter into a detailed dialogue over a prolonged period of time with individual parents. The vast majority of instances where parents need to contact teachers, can be dealt with via a quick email exchange, so feel free to do this in the first instance. Please also note that, as stated in our Communications Policy, we do not expect teachers to reply to messages outside of working hours.

*How quickly can I expect a response to my queries?*

Please refer to the main section of the Communications Policy (on the website) for full details.

*How do I know who is the best person to contact?*

The table below is intended to help parents and carers with information about who to contact in certain, common scenarios. If you are unsure about who to contact, we recommend you call reception on 01246 473873, where our staff will be able to point you in the right direction.

Individual email addresses follow the format of first initial, surname and then @springwellcc.org (eg for Mr Joe Bloggs, it would be [jbloggs@springwellcc.org](mailto:jbloggs@springwellcc.org)). If you are not sure of the name or spelling, please contact Reception or Student Services.

*Is there anything else I should bear in mind?*

Hopefully this guide, along with our full Communications Policy, covers what you need.

We understand that sometimes parents or carers may be frustrated about issues that arise and we will always do our best to solve these. At the same time, our staff should not have to accept communication that is rude, abusive or aggressive. Equally we would much prefer parents or carers to contact us directly with concerns rather than raise them on social media before we have had a chance to respond.

### Who to Contact - Quick Reference Table

Issue	Who to Contact	How to Contact
Any safeguarding concern	Miss H Staton is in charge of Safeguarding, but Student Progress Leaders will also be able to help	Telephone Miss H Staton 01246 473873
General, non-urgent enquiry	Reception staff will be able to assist with most enquiries and they also have an email address that is monitored daily	Telephone 01246 473873 Email <a href="mailto:enquiries@springwelcc.org">enquiries@springwelcc.org</a>
Reporting an absence or other queries relating to attendance	Pastoral Administration Team deal with absences and requests for leave of absence.  Education Attendance Officer, Mrs Brown, will be able to deal with other attendance issues	Telephone 01246 473873  Mrs Brown can be contacted via reception or email on: <a href="mailto:jbrown@springwelcc.org">jbrown@springwelcc.org</a>
Concerns about your child's progress in a particular subject	Please contact the Faculty Leader	Email is usually the most efficient way to contact Faculty Leaders. They can always telephone you back if necessary. The website contains the names and email addresses of all Faculty Leaders
Concerns about the progress of your child generally	Please contact the Student Progress Leader	The website contains the names and email addresses of all Student Progress Leaders
Concerns about friendship issues	Your child's Tutor will usually be the best person to approach in the first instance	Communication through your child's planner or email <a href="mailto:enquiries@springwelcc.org">enquiries@springwelcc.org</a> stating the name of your child and their tutor group
Questions about uniform	The website has details of the College Uniform and Appearance Policy	<a href="http://www.springwelcc.org">www.springwelcc.org</a>

Questions or concerns relating to SEND provision	Mrs Thompson, SENCO, works on Monday, Wednesday and Friday each week	Email <a href="mailto:mthompson@springwellcc.org">mthompson@springwellcc.org</a> or telephone reception and ask for Mrs Rodway-Edson
Questions about, or problems with, ParentPay	Mrs Bedford is our Finance Officer	Telephone reception 01246 473873
Issues relating to finance (eg. Payment for trips)	Mrs Liddle is our College Business and Resources Manager	Telephone 01246 473873 Option 3
Exam queries	Mrs K Harrison is the Exams Officer	Telephone reception on 01246 473873
Term Dates	The website has details of the term dates. Each term a summary calendar is produced for parents and carers	<a href="http://www.springwellcc.org">www.springwellcc.org</a>
Questions about transport and buses	Student Services will be able to answer most queries	Telephone 01246 473873 and ask for Student Services
Lost Property	Student Services will be able to answer most queries	Telephone 01246 473873 and ask for Student Services
Contact with the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team	Miss Maggs is the PA to the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team	Telephone 01246 473873 Option 3
A query that does not fit into any of the categories above	Contact Reception or Student Services and they will direct you to the appropriate person	Telephone 01246 473873

Subject Area	Faculty Leader	Senior Leader Link Contact
English	Mrs L Holmes Faculty Leader for English <a href="mailto:lhomes@springwellcc.org">lhomes@springwellcc.org</a>	Mr M Edwards
Maths	Miss S Patel Faculty Leader for Maths <a href="mailto:spatel@springwellcc.org">spatel@springwellcc.org</a>	Mr J Naylor
Science (Biology, Physics and Chemistry)	Mrs S Hopkinson Faculty Leader for Science <a href="mailto:shopkinson1@springwellcc.org">shopkinson1@springwellcc.org</a>	Mr S Birks
Humanities (History, Geography and RE)	Mr M Johnson (Mat. Cover) Faculty Leader for Humanities <a href="mailto:mjohnson@springwellcc.org">mjohnson@springwellcc.org</a>	Mr S Birks
Arts (Art, Drama, Dance and Music)	Faculty Leaders for the Arts Mrs H Fisher hfisher@springwellcc.org & Mrs K Pettit kpettit@springwellcc.org	Mr M Edwards

MFL (German, Spanish, French)	Mrs L Greaves Faculty Leader for MFL <a href="mailto:lgreaves@springwellcc.org">lgreaves@springwellcc.org</a>	Mr J Naylor
PE	Mr P Dean Faculty Leader for PE <a href="mailto:pdean@springwellcc.org">pdean@springwellcc.org</a>	Miss H Staton
PSHE	Mr C Jacques Faculty Leader for PHSE <a href="mailto:cjacques@springwellcc.org">cjacques@springwellcc.org</a>	Miss H Staton
Technologies (Computing, Media and Business, Food and Product Design)	Mr S Warrington Faculty Leader for Technologies <a href="mailto:swarrington@springwellcc.org">swarrington@springwellcc.org</a>	Mr S Birks

Pastoral Area	Student Progress Leader	Contact Details
Year 7	Mr M Walker	<a href="mailto:mwalker@springwellcc.org">mwalker@springwellcc.org</a>
Year 8	Mr C Jacques (Mat. Cover)	<a href="mailto:cjacques@springwellcc.org">cjacques@springwellcc.org</a>
Year 9	Mrs C Hoyle	<a href="mailto:choyle@springwellcc.org">choyle@springwellcc.org</a>
Year 10	Mrs C Selby	<a href="mailto:cselby@springwellcc.org">cselby@springwellcc.org</a>
Year 11	Miss R McAlpine	<a href="mailto:rmcalpine@springwellcc.org">rmcalpine@springwellcc.org</a>