



Davenant Foundation School

Parent and School Communication Policy

This policy has been reviewed and to the best of our knowledge we do not feel that it impacts on any group or individuals' equality rights within our school community

Last Reviewed: October 2023

Next Review: October 2026

Policy Details

Policy Name	Parent and School Communication Policy	Committee Responsible	Curriculum
Status	Discretionary	Committee Person i/c	Mr A Thorne
Produced by	ATE	First Agreed	October 2023
Date Produced	October 2023	Last Review Date	October 2023
References		Next Review Date	October 2026

1. Purpose

To promote partnerships between the school, parents and carers and relevant professional bodies. It will also set out communication between staff and students.

Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications and needs to recognise that the quality of their communications reflect on the school's reputation and Christian ethos. Parents and carers, Governors and pupils also have a part to play in reflecting the school's reputation. We strive to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and effective in their purpose.

2. Principles

Davenant uses a number of different methods to maintain effective communication with parents and carers, other schools, the wider community and outside agencies. Depending on the nature of the communication, the school will use the most practicable means to contact the recipient. Communication on issues that affect the safety and wellbeing of a pupil will be treated as a priority. The school holds emergency contact details for all pupils and families are asked to alert the school immediately if contact information needs to be revised.

Staff will always seek to establish friendly relationships with parents and carers but they will ensure relationships are professional and parents will be addressed in a formal manner. Staff are to avoid developing close relationships with parents and carers. The use of a parent, carer or staff member's first name is not appropriate, therefore all communications will be to and from Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Dr etc.

The Communications Policy embraces the principles of the school's Equality Statement and Online Safety Policy

3. Introduction

Davenant recognises the importance of clear and effective communications with all stakeholders (pupils, parents and carers, staff, governors, the local and wider community outside agencies, etc), and is committed to being open and accessible for all who have an interest in the school. The key stakeholders for a school are parents, carers and pupils and this policy addresses the main ways in which the school will ensure there is effective two-way communication between home and school. Parents and carers have a key role to play in their child's education. The school will make every effort to encourage and make arrangements for parents and carers to contribute to creating a shared view of their child's needs.

4. Aims of the policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that effective communication and consultation takes place between the school, parents, carers, pupils and other stakeholders and that there are robust processes to facilitate this.

The school recognises that engaging and working with parents and carers is a vital part of providing their child with an excellent education. Parents and carers are offered opportunities throughout the year to convey to us what they expect from and think of the school. Our wish is to involve as many parents and carers in their children's education as possible.

Our aims include the following:

- To make the school as welcoming and inclusive as possible.
- Signage will be clear, informative and positive.
- All electronic, written and telephone enquiries will be dealt with promptly within an agreed timeframe. Parents will get an acknowledgement and then a time for relevant feedback.
- A variety of forms of communication will be used with parents and carers for example, telephone contact, email, post and text.
- Parents and carers are contacted for positive as well as negative reasons.
- Information is given to parents and carers on what pupils will be taught and tips for helping their child will be provided.
- Parents and carers will be encouraged to help or support their child's learning at school and at home. Information will be provided in a timely way to enable this support to be effective.

5. Communication from parents and carers to the school.

5.1 Choosing the correct member of staff to address a query

Teachers at Davenant are in the classroom teaching for 90% of the working week and will not access their e mails during this time. We recommend that contact to the school is made through the appropriate channels as set out in Appendix A which details who to contact for any query you have. This will ensure that your communication with the school can be dealt with by the appropriate team and that any staff absence or part time working does not affect the response time of your communication.

5.2 Letters and Email: Email is a quick, effective way of communicating necessary information and is the school's preferred method of communication.

- The school will always aim to acknowledge a letter or email from parents and carers within **24 Hours**
- A reply will then will be made by telephone, letter or email within **3 working days**.
- Depending on the content of the communication, a further **agreed timeframe** will be used so the appropriate team/member of staff can gather and collate any relevant information for feedback to the parent or carer.
- Any letters of concern or complaint should be dealt with in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to provide the school with a current email address for prompt and effective communication.
- Parents and carers may wish to contact the school via email for a general enquiry as an alternative to telephone or letter. The school email address is: reception@davenant.org
- The correct salutations must be used when writing to or emailing parents/carers/partnerships. The use of a parent, carer or staff members' first name is not appropriate, therefore all communications will be to and from Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Dr etc and sign off is always full name Ms/Mrs/Mr/Dr Teacher Surname. Any relevant line manager / Head of House / Form tutor must be copied into letters or emails.

5.3 Telephone Calls

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school, where teachers may be teaching full-time and running clubs or working with pupils at lunchtime or after school. Parents and carers may be frustrated if they feel that a message elicits no immediate reply, when in fact there has been no available opportunity for the member of staff to reach a telephone to return a call. If it is not an emergency an e mail would be a better way to communicate.

- Calls to the school are made on our main number 0208 508 0404
- Our switch board has an interactive menu to guide callers to the appropriate area
- During times of high volume it may not be possible to answer a call and there is an opportunity to leave a voice mail.
- Voice mail messages will get picked up within the working day but are not checked out of hours.
- In a non-emergency a return call will be made within **3 working days**, with any follow up action from the request /query/problem being dealt with within an agreed timeframe. In exceptional cases where further information or a thorough investigation is required a 15 working day limit is applicable. If this is the case then a holding communication will be made.

- Staff will make a record of a telephone conversation with a parent/carer and will be filed for future reference.
- Conversations should remain professional and courteous at all times (See Appendix D)

5.4. Absence If a child is absent, parents and carers are asked to contact the school as soon as possible on the morning of the absence, for full details please refer to the Attendance Policy (copy available in the Policy the [school website](#)). **The school will not send acknowledgements out regarding an absence communication. Parents should use absence@davenant.org**

6. Communication between school and parents. The school has many means to communicate with parents and carers including letters/emails/texts/Talaxy and online platforms such as social media and our Website.

For general information our Website is the first place a parent or visitor should go. Relevant communication to parents is sent to a parents Talaxy folder with more urgent communication sent as an email or text. These may be specific but also general for whole school or year groups. We aim not to overload parents with e mails so the majority of information will be in the Talaxy document folder that all parents/carers have.

6.1. School Website

The school website provides a range of information about the school, including:

- Inclusion information
- Pupil Premium information
- School policies
- Uniform list
- Timetables
- School events
- Holiday dates
- School prospectus and admissions information

It is used to promote the school to a wider audience and is updated regularly.

6.2 Talaxy

TALAXY is a web-based system that allows us to provide information to you about your child (ren). Information that we provide you with includes Registers, Grades, Homework, Parents' evenings and the Document Folders.

The school will communicate with you either:

- Directly via email
- Using the Documents Folder

Sending emails

- The aim of the school is to minimise the amount of emails that are sent by individual departments each day to parents.
- However the school understands that some emails are extremely important or urgent and therefore need to be sent as a full targeted email. (E.g. cancellation of a sports club/match or an important year group event/evening). Where this is the case, staff are encouraged to use email to ensure that all the information is in the body of the email rather than uploading a letter as an attachment.
- Staff should always be aware of their target audience

Uploading documents to TALAXY

- When uploading documents to TALAXY staff should NOT send a separate email home to parents/carers alerting them that the document has been added.
- An automatic email will notify parents daily of any items that have been added to their “Documents” folder on TALAXY.

In summary

- Attachments/documents should be added to the “Documents” folder on TALAXY. (Please refer to your training guide as to the process).
- Emergency/important information emails should be sent with the message in the body of the email and not added as a “Document” on TALAXY to ensure parents/carers are aware.
- Alternatively staff can send a brief email which includes the salient points and add the information to “Documents”
- Staff must ensure your email is being sent to the relevant group of students.

6.3 Texts

- Automated texts from Talaxy are sent to parents/carers (including in the event of an emergency closure of the school) but are not used for general communications from members of staff.

6.4 Social Media

- The School has a Twitter account which is used to provide updates to parents and pupils who wish to subscribe to this. It is not compulsory to do so and therefore any key messages will be relayed through formal school communication channels.
- Social networking sites/blogs, etc. Staff are not permitted to communicate with parents or students via private social networking sites (such as Facebook) or accept them as “friends”. The exception is networks or blogs set up specifically for the purpose of teaching and learning, together with official School sites. This is part of our safeguarding procedure to protect students and staff.

6.5 Email

- Emails are used either for individual communication to specific parents or if there is a need to inform all parents or a sub group quite quickly.
- Staff will only ever use school e mails to contact parents/carers.

6.6 Telephone calls

- Staff will call parents for a variety of reasons, initial contact regarding a concern or to reply from an earlier communication
- Calls will be focused and not take a disproportionate amount of time.
- Parents and carers must ensure that contact details are always up to date.
- Staff may have to leave a voice mail. This could include the relevant information or a message to state they will try again at a later date
- Booking a time slot for a call is often the best way forward to ensure both parties can connect. We aim for the majority of calls to not last longer than 5 to 10 mins where relevant but shorter if possible.
- Longer calls should be booked in advance so that time in supporting a family is not cut short due to teaching and other commitments.
- Conversations should remain professional and courteous at all times (See Appendix D)

6.7 School Newsletter A school newsletter is produced every Half Term

7. Reports and Progress. As a school we communicate progress both informally and formally. The formal avenues include a child's school report and parents evening and informal updates can happen through the year through the various methods of communication.

7.1 Reports

- Parents and carers receive an interim progress report once a term. These reports are accessible online through the Talaxy portal.

7.2 Parents evenings

- Parents and carers have the opportunity to meet their child's subject teachers once a year, at parents' evening.
- There are 5 minute slots available for booking through Talaxy in advance of the parents' evening.
- Communication between parent and teacher should be formal and professional and within the allocated 5 minute slot.
- A bell will ring 10 seconds before the end of the allocated time to indicate the end of that meeting.
- Separated parents do not get separate meetings slots as there are limited spaces available. *(The only exception is if there is a legal reason such as a restraining order).*

7.3 Informal progress updates

- Parents and carers should contact the school if issues arise about their child's progress or wellbeing. Please use the appropriate e mail to refer your concern. (See Appendix A)
- Staff may contact a parent/carers if there is a concern about the progress or wellbeing of a student. This is to ensure the parent is fully aware and that the school and home can work together to support the needs of the child.

7.4 Estranged/separated parents

- Unless there is a court order to the contrary, the school will provide the same information to both parents, provided that contact details have been furnished.
- Copies of communications can be sent via the student if both parents are in agreement.

8. Staff who are also parents. Davenant has a high number of staff who are also parents. Both staff and parents must follow the same procedures as they would either contacting the school or parent. *Please see staff handbook for further details*

9. Communication between staff and students. Two way communication between pupils and staff is an important aspect of school life. The school welcomes and encourages pupils to engage in conversation with all members of staff within the school.

9.1 Student to staff:

When communicating with a member of staff, pupils should:

- Stand in front of the member of staff they are speaking with.
- Address the member of staff using their formal name e.g. Mrs Smith, never referring to a member of staff by their first name;
- Be respectful, do not talk over, raise voice or walk away before the conversation has ended.

9.2 Staff to student

When communicating with pupils staff should

- Use pupil's first names and full names of staff (Mr Surname and Ms/Mrs Surname) in front of pupils.
- Staff will be respectful when dealing with students.

9.3 Student staff e mail communication

- Pupils may also email staff on their school accounts in relation to their learning.
- Staff may e mail students on their school accounts
- Students and staff can communicate through google classroom too.
- Correspondence is to remain professional at all times.

NOTE: Parents must not use their child's school email address to contact a teacher as this is a GDPR breach.

- Staff are never permitted to use personal email accounts when communicating with pupils.
- Pupils are expected to check their emails daily and delete / archive regularly.

10. Meeting with Parents and carers. Part of building a relationship with our parents and carers to support the child may involve face to face or online meetings. These can be initiated by the school, the parents/carers or outside agencies.

10.1 Requesting a meeting

- Parents and carers wishing to meet a member of staff must contact the school to make an appointment. This request will be responded to **within 3 working days**.
- **If it is an emergency we will respond as quickly as we can. The definition of an emergency, though not finite, is that the wellbeing and safety of a child is at immediate risk. Any safeguarding concerns should be directed to the safeguarding team. (See Appendix A)**
- We cannot accommodate unarranged appointments.
- Teachers and other school professionals may request a meeting with a parent/carer and a suitable time can be booked.

10.2 The Meeting

- Parents and carers should report to reception prior to meeting where they will then be accompanied by a member of staff. A member of staff may ask a senior colleague to accompany them to the meeting if it is deemed necessary.
- Time is precious to both parents and staff so meeting will aim to be productive and efficient.
- Staff will call a meeting to a close in the event of the parents or carers becoming angry or abusive. This should be reported immediately to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- It may be more efficient, depending on the reason, to meet the parent **on line using Talaxy parents evening software**. This can support the parents around work or accessibility.
- Staff will take relevant notes during the meeting.
- We welcome the presence of any other adult a parent or carer wishes to invite to a school meeting for support or to act as an interpreter, however they must notify the school that they are bringing another adult to the meeting in advance.
- Communication during the meeting should stay focused, courteous and professional at all times.

11. Accessibility

- We will endeavour to make any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary to enable a parent or carer with a disability to participate fully in a meeting or to receive and understand a communication.
- The font used in all printed communications is Calibri 11. Documents printed using a larger font can usually be provided and requests should be made via reception.
- If a translation of a document is required, in the first instance parents/carers should access Google translate?

12. Google Classroom in Google Apps for Education

- The Google platform is a powerful tool for motivating pupils as it gives them more choice and flexibility about when and where they complete their learning. It also encourages parent and carer involvement in learning, especially with extended

learning tasks. Homework can be completed on Google classroom and tasks appear both in Talaxy and Google classroom.

- Google classroom is used to communicate with students both academically and for clubs, events and trips.
- Parents **must not contact staff through their child's google** account but through the recognised channels. By using your child's account it is a GDPR breach.

13. School trips, visits and activities. Trips, activities and sports fixtures are an exciting part of school life and a crucial part of being a Davenant students.

- The school will endeavour to publish all proposed trips, visits and activities on the school calendar at the start of each academic year. Parents and carers will be notified by letter of trips, visits and activities that their child/children may wish to participate in as early as possible, and within at least six weeks of the proposed trip, visit or activity.
- Occasionally opportunities arise during the academic year to offer pupils additional trips, visits or activities that were not known or available when the school calendar was published.
- The school will always ensure parents and carers are notified of any additional opportunities for their child as soon as possible to ensure parents and carers have adequate time to plan for such events. (See also the separate trips Policy)
- Communication protocols for any trip or visit will be communicated to parents in advance of the trip.
- PE and Sports department may use apps to support communication with parents for school teams. These include apps like Teamer.

14. Severe weather and emergency closure

- In the event of emergency closure communication will be made to parents and carers via text or email. Parents and carers should also tune in to local radio and check the school website and social media channels (e.g. Twitter).

15. Prospective parents/carers

- The school prospectus is published on the website. Prospective parents and carers may request a printed copy.
- Prospective parents and carers are invited to an Open Evening in the October of the year preceding their child's year of entry to the school and to attend published tours to enable them to see the school operating.
- Prospective parents and carers are also invited, along with their child, to an induction evening in June where the main channels of communication are outlined, and important information will be shared.

16. Davenant PA

- Davenant is very fortunate to have an active and supportive PA run by current parents and their focus is to run events and activities. Fund raising is an important aspect of their work but is not their sole focus.
- The PA will communicate through school channels having worked with a member of SLT on proposals and dates.

21. Supporting parents and carers of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities - (SEND)

The school recognises the importance of positive relationships with parents and carers of all pupils with additional needs. The SEND Code of Practice emphasises the importance of positive, supportive attitudes to parents and carers and user-friendly information and procedures.

- All staff will make every effort to ensure effective communication with parents and carers.
- All staff within the school are expected to help parents and carers understand how to contribute effectively to their child's education and will make every effort to ensure that parents understand their rights and responsibilities.
- All relevant information will be provided in a way for all to understand and respond to.

When pupils who have special educational needs are making less than the expected progress or if they are experiencing behavioural difficulties, we would expect to meet with parents and carers more regularly either face to face or on line.

Parents and carers are encouraged to communicate where they have a concern about their child's needs being met and should also refer to the Inclusion section of the website.

22. Communication with other Schools and outside agencies

Prior to pupils joining Year 7, pupils are visited in their primary schools to gain further information about them to help and support their transition into Davenant. We recognise that children have diverse needs, and where required we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals including: medical services, educational psychologists, health professionals and specialists and various welfare-focused services, such as Educational Welfare and the local authority. We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our school must provide a safe and secure environment (see the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy).

We hold information on all pupils in our school and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. All personal data is held and processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (for full details see our Data Protection Policy, copy available on our school website).

23. Monitoring, evaluation and review

A member of the senior leadership team will review this Policy at least every three years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The Policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

Appendix A

The following directory will assist you in addressing your email to the appropriate member of staff.

Query	General Contacts
I have a general enquiry not specific to my child	Reception@davenant.org
I need to inform the school of an absence or I have a query about an absence.	absence@davenant.org
I have a concern about my child's wellbeing, behaviour or attendance	Ks3office@davenant.org Ks4office@davenant.org sixthform@davenant.org
I have a subject related question / concern and would like it directed to the class teacher or the head of Department.	Reception@davenant.org
I have a query/concern relating to safeguarding	Safeguarding@davenant.org
I have general concerns about my child's learning	Learningsupport@davenant.org
My child has a one-plan or an EHCP and I have a question relating to their additional needs.	Learningsupport@davenant.org
I have a query about admissions (Y7 to Y11)	Admissions@davenant.org
I have a query about 6 th Form admissions	Sixthform@davenant.org
I have a query regarding music lessons	Music@davenant.org
I have a query regarding sports clubs and activities	Sports@davenant.org
I have a careers related query related to my child.	Careers@davenant.org
I have a query about Duke of Edinburgh	Dukeofedinburgh@davenant.org
I have a query about public examinations or mocks and I have already looked and read exam information sent out.	Exams@davenant.org
I am interested in becoming a teacher	teach@essexschoolsitt.com
I wish to contact the parents association	PA@davenant.org
I wish to contact the chair of governors	Joanne.McCallig@davenant.org
I wish to make a complaint	Link to complaints policy

Appendix B

This plan sets out the school's different methods of communication and who is responsible for delivering these methods.

Method of communication	Details	Intended recipient/audience	Who is accountable for this?
School newsletter	Sent once per half-term	Staff members, pupils and parents	Office manager and Head Teacher
Posts on the school website	Key policies and reports kept updated	Open to all	TTN/ATE/CSR
Social media posts on school accounts	Twitter accounts School/6 th Form/PE and some subject ones	Parents/Students/Interested parties	TTN/ATE
Advertisements and marketing materials	Jobs and Events	Potential employees / Parents / students and potential parents and students	MGS – Jobs ATE – Marketing events
Letters and emails sent to parents	Main form of communication	Parents	
Google classroom	Main platform for student curriculum communication	Students	TTN- Lead google expert All teachers

Appendix C

Contacting the school

This table in this plan can be used to find out who in school to contact regarding different issues

Query	Who to contact	Contact information and availability
Absences	The school office	The office can be reached on phone number The office is open between the hours of 08:00am and 4:00pm
Complaints	Main school at Reception	Complaints policy should be followed LINK
Freedom of information and subject access requests	Compliance Officer	Email: reception@davenant.org
Safeguarding concerns	Designated Safeguarding Lead	safeguarding@davenant.org or link button on website
General queries HOY Curriculum or Admin queries go through reception.	Main office	reception@davenant.org Please put the name/position of the member staff or team you wish the communication to reach header box.

Appendix D Inappropriate Communication/Behaviour

Davenant school prides itself with being part of a very positive extended community. There are times however where there is a breakdown in communication and will need to be addressed. We will not tolerate any form of abuse towards our staff. This may be verbal, physical or in written form such as e mails or letters. Harrassment on any social media platform is also not tolerated.

Following an incidence of poor communication from any member of the Davenant community, it may be necessary to put into place actions that enable all parties to return to a positive standing. We will always aim to re connect and rebuild relationships which reflects our values.

- **Issues with a Staff member:** Please refer to the Complaints Policy. The school would support the re-building of trust. However, an alternative member of staff may be appointed as a contact point if the school felt this were appropriate.
- **Issues with a parent/carer/visitor** Depending upon the severity of the situation, the following actions may be put into place:
 - A verbal/written warning to the parent about their behaviour / language
 - Any future meetings/discussions will be conducted with more than one member of the school staff so as not to compromise a lone member of staff In more severe cases the school will put stricter restrictions in place whereby:
 - Access into school will be pre-arranged and agreed in advance by both parties
 - A single point of contact within school through whom all communications should be directed will be put in place
 - Blocking of E mail with a separate nominated contact person may have to be put in place.

Note: Any emergency or safeguarding situations would override any ban while the emergency is being dealt with

The school does have the right to refuse access, physical or electronically, from the school site to anyone if they are deemed to be a threat to the safeguarding and wellbeing of any members of the school community, including students and staff. (DfE Guidance 2012, "Advice on School Security: Access to and barring of individuals from school premises"). In this case a formal letter will be issued giving full details of when the ban begins and might end. The decision to refuse access would be agreed and reviewed by a representative of the Governing Body.