



Communication Policy

Rationale

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. Mallorca International 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
- To take into account other related policies, in particular the 'Data Protection Policy', 'Safeguarding Policy', 'Acceptable Use of Technology Policy' and the 'Reglamento de Régimen Interior'
- 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 by Email or face-to-face depending on the circumstances and how many staff need to receive the communication.
- (d) Communications Involving Sensitive Data** – Most importantly, 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.
- An internal 'Whole School Bulletin' is sent out at the start of every week that contains useful information pertaining to the week ahead; staff should make a point of reading this properly at the earliest possible moment. In addition, phase-specific weekly bulletins are sent on a Monday.
- A staff meeting is held weekly on a Monday at 16:15h. At times this is a whole staff meeting, at times departmental; staff are notified on the weekly bulletin.
- Staff should check Emails regularly; at least twice daily including 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 are expected to arrive at school by 08:20h in the morning and leave no earlier than 16:20h in the afternoon in order that there is sufficient time for face-to-face discussions if the need arises.

Internal Communication – to Students

Communication between staff and students is of imperative importance towards facilitating the teaching and learning process. The philosophy of Mallorca International School is that the key to this is through the development of positive relationships based on trust and respect. Every effort should be made to nurture these important relationships.

- **General** – All communication should be made with the age of student and context in mind, i.e. staff may vary the amount and level of language they use (as well as speed, tone and volume in the case of verbal communication). Communication should be concise and focussed towards the intended purpose. Staff should be encouraged two-way communication, welcoming questions from students and should use every opportunity to check understanding; be it a safety instruction or understanding of a concept. All staff are expected to communicate with students showing respect, following agreed procedures and respecting the Safeguarding Policy. No political or religious beliefs should be promoted and comments should be as balanced and impartial as the context allows.
- **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 learner profiles. 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 Management Policy.
- **Written Communication** – Staff use the written form to communicate to students in a variety of ways including: presentations on the IWB, printed tasksheets, comments in exercise books, display boards and posts on Google Classroom. 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 blurb regarding displays in the Staff Handbook.
- **Google Classroom** – The ‘Classwork’ tab should be used to post all homework tasks as well as work to be engaged in during lessons when appropriate. All other communication should be made on the ‘Stream’; comments, subject content, videos, links, info graphics, documents, etc. One-to-one communications may be made, though, staff should never make any sensitive remark and should do so in line with the Marking & Feedback Policy. Staff should also familiarise with the Homework Policy before using Google Classroom.

External Communication – to Parents/Guardians

- 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 SMS. *At the time of updating this document, the SMS service is in the process of being contracted.*
- 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. The school data system holds specific groups of Email addresses in order to facilitate communications to parents of students in specific year groups.
- 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, post on Google Classroom, mention on the school website or a note on the noticeboard in the school office.
- 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.
- Home-School Communication Books** – Children in EYFS have ‘Home-School Communication Books’. Teachers enter a daily note about how much lunch each child eats and also how well they sleep during siesta (if applicable). Other non-sensitive comments to parents may be made in addition. Parents are welcome to write non-sensitive notes in return. Tutors should check these books daily.

- (f) **Agendas** – Students in Primary have ‘Agendas’. They are instructed to take note of their homework in these diaries weekly (unless they have migrated to use of Google Classroom) and a record of independent and guided reading at home. Tutors should check agendas once weekly.
- (g) **Authorisations** – All authorisations requested from parents should be done so via Google 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 senior leadership team (Email or Google Forms).
- Staff should never send Emails to multiple parents without using the ‘BCC’ function. Staff should familiarise with the Data Protection Policy before making external communications.
- Staff should never communicate with parents (or students) via means of social media.
- When making phone calls to parents, only school landline or 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.

External Communication – to School (from Parents/Guardians)

The ‘Reglamento de Régimen Interior’ stipulates 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 the school will decide which member of the team is the most appropriate person to help them with the specific issue. The following flow-diagram illustrates the chain of events:



- (a) **Administrative Communications** – Urgent messages should be made in person or by telephone to the school office. Less urgent messages are best being made by Email. Meetings attended by office staff, head of administration and/or the general manager as appropriate to context.
- (b) **Academic and Pastoral Communications** – Short informal communications can be made immediately before or after school in person. Home-school communication books (EYFS) and agendas (Primary) can be used for short communications of medium to low-level importance. Longer meetings should be arranged in advance and can be done so via the school office. Non-sensitive communications can be made directly to staff via Email. Parents are encouraged to pass any sensitive information on face-to-face. In the first place parents should address questions to the form tutor (or subject teacher in the case of a subject-specific enquiry in Secondary), or to the head of phase if the question is regarding coordination. The head teacher will only enter into meetings in the scenario that the form tutor, subject tutor and head of phase are unable to attend to the matter sufficiently.
- (c) **General Concerns and Complaints** – The Complaints Policy should be referred to and adhered to.

Additional Points to note:

- Parents should familiarise with the ‘Reglamento de Régimen Interior’ 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 students.

Above all, all members of the school community must abide by the 'Data Protection Policy', 'Safeguarding Policy', 'Acceptable Use of Technology Policy' and the 'Reglamento de Régimen Interior' as well as any laws that pertain to communication.

Monitoring and Review

This policy should be reviewed as standard a minimum of once every two years.

Date of implementation: September 2018

Policy review date: September 2020