RIDGEWAY ACADEMY

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

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Signed by:	Signature:

RIDGEWAY ACADEMY

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

1. Introduction

It is very important to us that we work closely in partnership with parents and carers, and communication between home and school is key. We recognise however that it can often be difficult communicating with teachers because they have a very full timetable; and we recognise that parents and carers also have very busy lives. Modern communication methods can mean more efficient sharing of information, though this needs to be structured to ensure that it is manageable for staff whose primary responsibility is to teach young people.

2. Contacting the School

2.1 Telephone

Please use the main reception number to leave a message for a teacher to contact you:

- Reception staff will relay messages to teachers as soon as possible.
- If a call is urgent, please inform the receptionist who will attempt to find a senior member of staff to speak to you.
- We will try to respond to you within three working days, if not the same day.
- Please note lessons will never be interrupted for teachers to take calls.
- The telephone number is 01707 351350.

2.2 Email

Please, use:
attendance@ridgeway.aetrust.uk for all communication around attendance;
detentions@ridgeway.aetrust.uk for all communication around detentions;
admin@ridgeway.aetrust.uk if you need to contact staff for any other matters.

If you need to make reference to your child in the subject header of your email, please use initials.

In the main body paragraph of your email, please include a bold FAO [for the attention of] heading to help our admin team direct your query to the correct teacher or leader.

e.g., FAO Mr Smith regarding Science Trip and RTO, Year 9A

Do note that:

- Teachers are not in a position to check emails consistently throughout the day and the school does not expect work email to be checked during a teacher's personal time.
- We aim to respond to you as soon as possible and **within three working days (72 hours)**. Part-time staff may take longer to reply.
- Teachers, on occasion, may find it easier to email you regarding your child using the contact details we have on file. It is acceptable to continue these conversations directly with the member of staff once they have contacted you, but any subsequent new question or issue should be raised through the admin@ridgeway.aetrust.uk [or detentions / attendance] address so that it can be tracked and routed accordingly.

3. Communication between home and school.

Our commitment to communicating with you is documented in our Home School Partnership. This clearly lays down expectations of students, parents and the school in collaborating to educate young people in the best way possible.

3.1 Meetings

The day-to-day care, welfare and safety of your child is managed by the person who is placed closest to them. In the first instance, please approach the following members of staff who are responsible for your child in the following order:

1) Form Tutor or Classroom Teacher (if query is relevant to a specific subject)
2) Head of Year or Subject Leader (if query is relevant to a specific subject)
3) Assistant Headteacher
4) Deputy Headteacher
5) Headteacher

Meetings must always be pre-arranged with members of staff.

- We recognise that sometimes you receive news that may cause upset. It is not appropriate to come to school expecting to speak with a particular member of staff without an appointment. Appointments can be requested via the school receptionist, who will pass your details on to the appropriate member of staff to get back to you. Pre-arranged meetings will allow us to have the right information to hand and to meet with you at a time that both suits you and fits with that teacher's timetable and other fixed commitments. Please, be aware that meetings will be time-bound.
- If you urgently need to see someone, for instance if there is a serious family emergency or a child protection issue, please phone ahead and the reception staff will do their best to find a senior member of staff to see you.
- For non-urgent meetings we will aim to meet with you within five working days. The school will determine the level of urgency at its discretion, to enable it to manage multiple demands.
- In the event that you see a member of staff in the local community outside of work hours, please refrain from raising issues, questions or concerns relating to your child or the school as it is not an appropriate forum or time to discuss work-related matters.

3.2 Contacting You

Our preferred method of contacting you is via email.
We also remind you that you have access to My Child at School and Google Classroom Guardian Summaries which provide you with current information on attendance, consequences, reports and any homework that your child has been set.
Parents evenings and Pastoral Review Day appointments are booked via School Cloud.
Details surrounding extra-curricular activities are shared with both parents/carers and via SOCS **(https://www.socscms.com/login/4393/).**
All of these services can be accessed via our school website at **https://ridgeway.herts.sch.uk**
If you need support with accessing these systems, please contact **admin@ridgeway.aetrust.uk**

4. Social Media

4.1 School Social Media Feeds

We use our social media channels to promote student achievements, subject information and key events at the school. This is for the benefit of parents and students. Our whole-school X (formerly known as Twitter) feed is **@Ridgeway_AC**. We also use Instagram and the feed is **@ridgewayacademy**

Our social media feeds are not monitored for inbound messages. We are unable to respond to message or comments. If you have a question about an event or other post on social media, please either email or call the school.

Our social media feeds operate on a 'best efforts' basis by staff whose primary commitment is to the teaching and learning of students. Expectations around frequency and timeliness of updates need to be moderated accordingly, particularly after normal school hours and during holiday periods.

We understand that parents and carers particularly enjoy updates and photographs from school trips. The primary concern of staff needs to be the safety and learning of students on the trip and

there may not be the time to post about trips in detail. Parents/carers should also be aware that we are often in parts of the country or abroad where there is limited signal, so it may only be possible to update at the end of the day. We endeavour to update parents on the return time for trips, though we will always encourage students to contact home themselves directly.

4.2 Appropriate use of Social Media

Our social media sites contain terms and conditions relating to acceptable comments and posts. These terms and conditions are available on the main school X page. We reserve the right to remove posts on these pages that breach the terms and conditions.

We are aware that some parents set up group chats for classes or year groups on WhatsApp, Facebook and other platforms. Whilst we recognise that these can be useful for some parents, these are not endorsed by the school and we will never post official messages on these forums. On occasion, information provided by parents on these forums can be inaccurate or not representative of the school's view. Please, rely on official social media channels, the school website (**https://www.ridgeway.herts.sch.uk**) or email received directly from the school.

Our teachers and staff have a right to a personal life and to be protected from harassment online. We ask that parents never address staff members directly via social media and must not post inaccurate or defamatory statements about staff or the school on social media platforms. Contact with the school should be made using telephone, email or in person by appointment.

5. Complaints

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. For a full description of the complaints procedure, please view our Complaints Policy, which is available at **https://www.ambitioneducationtrust.org/Key-Info/Policies/#gswModal11**

Our full set of policies are available at
https://ridgeway.herts.sch.uk/About-Us/Policies/

6. In the Event You Do Not Receive A Response

If you have not received a response from the school within three working days, please contact the school by emailing **admin@ridgeway.aetrust.uk** or telephone the school and we will follow up your enquiry. Communication with parents and carers is important to us, and we will continue to monitor this policy and our approach to improve the process further.