Communication Policy

1.0 The Cumberland School Mission Statement

Our vision – Determined, ambitious learners

The Cumberland School (TCS) is an ambitious school, within a diverse and exciting community. Our motto, 'Determined, ambitious learners,' encompasses all of our school community: students, staff and governors. Our commitment to providing the best opportunities to learn and excel goes hand in hand with our commitment to equal opportunities and effective inclusion.

As a school we are determined to improve the life chances of every one of our students. Determination and resilience are essential qualities for our students if they are to achieve their potential. Our curriculum, both in the classroom and outside of it, ensures that students are given opportunities to challenge themselves and develop confidence, independence and resilience.

We want all of our students to have high standards. We encourage all students to understand their responsibilities to each other, the school and the wider community. Pride, respect and high aspirations are valued and developed so that TCS is a safe place to take risks and grow.

Above all, TCS is a learning community. We believe that all students and staff have the right to exceed expectations and we recognise that hard work, challenge and collaboration are vital to ensure exciting and effective teaching and learning in the classroom. We are an outward facing school, collaborating with other schools, colleges and businesses. We believe there is much we can and must learn from each other.

2.0   Policy links to school mission, aims and values

All of the work of The Cumberland School is intended to support the delivery of our mission statement in full. This policy is specifically intended to ensure effective and timely communication.

3.0 Purposes and implementation

All communications at The Cumberland School should keep staff, students, parents, LSB members and other stakeholders well informed in a timely manner. Communication should be honest, ethical and professional and should use the channel of communication that is most appropriate to context, message and audience.

The policy will be put into practice when communicating between staff, outside agencies, parents and students. Deputy Headteacher for Teaching and Learning is accountable for implementation and review. A summary is in the Staff Handbook and on the website. Ongoing monitoring will take place for impact and effectiveness.

4.0 Communication

This information can also be located in the guidance published on the school website.

Students should refer to the relevant section of the school's website for all information. Aspects of relevant policies will inform curriculum planning and teaching and learning practices.

Staff should refer to their staff handbook in the section on teaching and learning, student well-being, organisation, management and staffing and in the relevant sections of the school's website.

Parents/carers should refer to the induction guidance, home – school contract, options guidance and in the relevant sections of the school's website.

We believe that effective partnership working is key to the implementation of our aims, values and policy aspirations. In particular this policy relates to our working closely with LSB members, the Local Authority for Newham, Children's Services and the Metropolitan Police.

4.1 Internal Communication

Face- to- face communication
- communication between colleagues should remain professional and friendly
- all staff are expected to communicate regularly with colleagues. Nobody should work in isolation and opportunities should be found by staff to share information and network with colleagues in a way which enables them to fulfil their role. All staff should be made to feel included and welcome
- communication should be in person where possible. Where there is misunderstanding or disagreement between colleagues, face to face communication between the two colleagues should be undertaken in the first instance.

Written communication
- these are placed in staff pigeon holes. Staff are expected to empty their pigeon holes every day.

Email
- email is an effective and useful method of communication. All staff should be aware of the school's internet and online safety policy when using school email
- staff should become familiar with and adhere to email protocols as outlined in the staff handbook
- emails should be used for communicating instructions and sharing information
- hard copies of important emails should be retained, if necessary
- staff should endeavour to reply to emails within 24 hours, particularly regarding outside communications
- email is a formal method of communication and members of staff should be mindful of this when using school email. Staff are reminded that all email sent using the school system should be of a professional nature that they would be happy to share publicly.

Meetings (including virtual meetings)
- all staff should have regular meetings with their line manager
- for all staff there is an integrated programme of meetings. All staff are invited to contribute to the content of the meeting. All meetings should be structured to reflect school priorities,

preferably with the agenda shared prior to the meeting. Minutes should record actions from the meetings. Staff are expected to show respect for other colleagues by attending all meetings on time.

- for staff with management responsibilities, meetings should occur with their line manager. The frequency should be determined by the demands of their role. Both parties should feel free to bring up matters arising. Formal minutes with actions and deadlines should be taken and circulated by the line manager and should be forwarded to their own line manager
- where a member of staff needs more support, line managers can arrange a series of meetings. Formal minutes with actions and deadlines should be taken to evidence the support and participation
- all meetings should be scheduled using the school's online calendar system (Google).

Staff Briefings
- these take place on a weekly basis, usually on a Monday at 8.10am, and all staff are expected to attend. Information pertinent to that week is shared. Briefing minutes will be taken and circulated to all staff

Telephone Calls
- these should take place using the school networks
- it may be preferable to use personal mobile phones to contact a member of staff, particularly if they are not available in their office. This is permissible but professional judgement should be used here
- staff should avoid using personal mobile phones to contact parents and in such circumstances must withhold their number
- staff should never contact students using their personal mobile phone unless discussed beforehand with the designated safeguarding lead or in an emergency
- staff should endeavour to reply to all Behaviour Watch notifications within 24 hours, particularly regarding outside communications.

4.2 External Communication

General
- communication should be clear and professional at all times
- staff should endeavour to reply to phone messages and all emails within 24 hours, particularly regarding outside communications
- all communication should be responded to within 24 hours. Where more time is needed an acknowledgement of the communication should take place within this time period.

Informal communication
- where informal communication takes place, staff should be mindful of their professional responsibility. If issues or actions arise from the communication, this should be shared with relevant parties and logged on Behaviour Watch and any documents should be placed in the student's file.

Email
- external emails should be treated in the same way as internal emails
- all letters and important communication will be sent to parents via Parentmail
- all external letters will be checked for accuracy and clarity by the Headteacher. Staff must use the centralised letter proformas kept with the office team wherever possible.

Meetings
- all relevant parties should be invited to meetings

- meetings should be arranged at a time that is convenient to all relevant parties
- meetings, particularly with parents, should rarely take place without a prior appointment
- all meetings should be scheduled using the school's online calendar system (Google)
- all meetings that take place should be 'minuted' or recorded appropriately on the school's system. All formal actions should be noted. Following a meeting with a parent or carer written communication with the actions discussed should be shared using the standard letter.

Written Communication
- these are placed in staff pigeon holes. Staff are expected to empty their pigeon holes daily
- a letter received from a parent/ carer or outside agency pertaining to a student should be replied to in writing within 48 hours and placed on the student's file
- any letter of complaint should be shared with line managers for advice.

Telephone Calls
- these should take place using the school network wherever possible
- all communication with parents must be logged on Behaviour Watch
- when making a call, staff should introduce themselves, their role and the name of the school. They should establish who they are speaking to before continuing the conversation
- incoming calls should be announced by the receptionist. They should state the name of the caller, the institution they represent and or the students' name and the purpose of the call
- all calls which are not connected will be directed back to the receptionist who will send a Behaviour Watch notification to the intended recipient for follow up.

4.3 Communication with Parents

Dynamic Progress Reporting (DPR)
- parents are able to log on to the DPR to view their child's academic progress at any time
- the DPR is updated by teachers regularly and is captured three times a year
- parents can email their child's teacher directly using the DPR. Any emails that teachers receive that are of concern should be referred either to safeguarding or line managers.

Parents' Evenings (including virtual meetings)
- each year group has a parents' evening where parents will have the opportunity to meet with all of their child's subject teachers
- the dates are published at the beginning of the year. Reminder letters will also be sent out via Parentmail.

Parents' Information Evenings
- at particular times of the year parents are invited to attend meetings at school so that information can be by key staff members
- the dates for these meetings are published at the beginning of the year.

School Newsletter
- periodically the school newsletter will be distributed to parents and the community with news from the school and useful information. These newsletters can be found on the school's website.

School Website
- all key letters and information will be published on the school website for information.

Parental Concerns
- parents should contact the appropriate member of staff. For curriculum issues it should be the subject teacher or Head of Department. For all other issues Form Tutors and Year teams should be contacted. Parents can contact by email, telephone or letter. All formal concerns should be addressed in writing.

4.4   Links with other policy areas

The policy links with the following areas:
- Staff Code of Conduct
- ICT Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Leadership, organisation, management and staffing
- ICT and online safety
- Safeguarding and Early Help Policy
- Complaints Policy.

Policy documentation control

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