



Communication Strategy

Protocols for staff and parents* to support effective communication

September 2018

*The term 'parent' includes any person or body with parental responsibility such as a foster parent, carer, guardian or local authority



Communication Strategy

Rationale:

In meetings with parents and other stakeholders, the root of many concerns is the quality and reliability of communication between parents, our community and school staff. This often means that concerns or issues that could easily be resolved, escalate and present significant challenges for students, parents and staff alike. This communication strategy is intended to provide clear guidance to all stakeholders, to ensure we have a shared understanding of the importance of communication, and also to ensure we all have reasonable expectations of each other in order to achieve a culture of mutual respect and accountability.

Primary means of communication from Ralph Thoresby School:

The strategy details the ways in which Ralph Thoresby School will communicate with our parents and stakeholders. Our primary means of communication are as follows:

- **Parent Mobile App:** This is the primary method of communication and we would like to ensure that ALL parents use the app. Whole school communication, along with year group and individually specific messages to parents will be sent through the app. The app replaces letters home as we will send PDF documents of letters via the app, as well as electronic copies of academic reports.
- **The Ralph Thoresby School Website:** Weekly communication from the Headteacher, all key policies and procedures, the school Calendar and up-to-date news items will be communicated through the website.
- **Social Media:** All news items and weekly updates posted on the school website will be replicated through social media (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram)
- All other means of communication are detailed in the table below, along with guidance for parents, students, staff and other stakeholders.

Implementation:

The protocols detailed within this Communication Strategy will be:

- shared with parents on Monday 10th September 2018 via the Headteacher's weekly update
- shared with Ralph Thoresby School staff via morning briefing and a training session.
- posted on the school website and promoted via social media
- ratified by Governors during the first governors meeting of the academic year

The impact and effectiveness of this Communication Strategy will be reviewed termly, with any amendment communicated to parents and stakeholders.

Strand	Strategy	Staff		Parents	
		All staff	Middle/Senior Leaders		
1	MyEd App	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary means of communication to and from school The app should be the first port of call for all enquires Everyday school information as well as updates will be found via the app Important communication will be sent first via the app Letters could be sent, via the app, to inform parents about important events, to obtain consent for educational visits or to gather vital information from parents Attendance and late to school messages will be sent via the app 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff to submit messages/letters for approval via the communication team. Staff receiving communication by letter should respond formally by letter within 5 working days. This letter will need to be approved by your line manager and/or the Headteacher. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SLT to approve all school letters prior to distribution on the app. Headteacher to distribute weekly update to parents and staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that you have access to the school app so that you are completely informed with all aspects of school life. To report your child as absent, please send a message using the absence messaging system located under the 'messages' tab Copies of all letters are also made available via our website. It is important that we have your current mobile number at all times. If you change your mobile number, please contact the school immediately. These will also be collected through termly contact detail updates.
2	Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All key policies, news items and whole school communications will be posted to the Ralph Thoresby School website. This will include the school calendar, with key dates such as parents' evenings, notice regarding emergency closures and the contact details for school staff. The website will include a guide for parents about who to contact for specific types of enquiry (see Parent Contact Guide) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All events/trips/items worthy or special mention should be submitted to the communications team to be placed onto the website All letters must be placed onto the school website, via the communications team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific staff have responsibility for the content in specific areas of the school website. Ensure aspects of the website that communicate information relative to your area of responsibility are checked every half term and updated as required. Please notify the communication team regarding any updated content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents are encouraged to regularly check updates to the RTS website (www.ralphthoresby.com) You may quickly find the answer to your question by checking our website. This will be quicker than phoning or emailing the school. The Letters Home section of the website will provide you with an overview and copies of letters that have been sent home throughout the year.
3	Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All key policies, news items and whole school communications posted to the RTS website will also be communicated via Social Media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All social media communication to be approved by the communication team. Inappropriate or offensive posts/comments from staff, parents or students must be reported to the communication team and brought to the attention of the Headteacher. Staff are strongly advised to ensure their personal social media accounts are kept private. No member of staff should accept friend requests from students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents are invited to follow Ralph Thoresby School on their choice of social media: <i>Facebook: RalphThoresbyschool Twitter: @RalphThoresby Instagram: @ralphthoresbyofficial</i> 	
4	Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email addresses for key staff will be published on the school website. After any change to staffing, the HR team will notify the communication team to complete updates to the website. Email will be used as a primary means of communication with individual parents and stakeholders where possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are expected to check email regularly, and certainly during each working day. If communication is received via email, this is the most appropriate media for your response, unless the member of staff feels that a phone call or meeting is more appropriate. Staff must respond to any received email from any listed stakeholders within 2 working days. If a full response cannot be provided, please send a holding email detailing the timeframe for your anticipated response and ensure this is followed-up. Emails received after 5.30pm will be classed as received the following working day and should therefore receive a response within 2 days from the start of the next working day. Emails marked as URGENT, should be prioritised and, where possible, should receive a response the same day. If a member of staff is unable to respond the same day, please refer this to your line manager who will ensure a response is provided appropriately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please ensure you email the most appropriate person to raise any concerns or queries you may have (see <i>Parents' Guide</i>). If you are unsure, please send your email to: letmeknow@ralphthoresby.com Please ensure we have an up-to-date email address for the most effective communication with the school. These will be collected through termly contact detail updates. Abusive emails, or those that are judged to be offensive or aggressive in tone will be referred to the Headteacher to consider further action. If you send an email to a school contact, you should expect a response within 2 	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain an electronic copy of all email communication (sent items) for future reference. 	<p>working days. If the email is sent after 5.30pm, the received time will be taken as the start of the next working day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you email is urgent, please mark the email subject as URGENT. This should be used in the following cases: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> An urgent safeguarding concern; An urgent medical concern. 	
5	Text Messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text messages will only be used if we cannot contact you via the school app. We may send out a text message in an emergency situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff must not send text messages from their personal mobile devices to parents or students. Use the official systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please ensure we have your most up-to-date mobile phone number. Ensure this phone is switched on in case of emergency during school hours. Up-to-date telephone contact details will be collected through termly contact detail updates. 	
6	Classcharts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behaviour and homework information will be shared, with parents, via Classcharts accounts. See the homework policy for specific details regarding the setting and submission of homework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff will ensure that all behaviour (positive and negative) will be placed onto Classcharts with 24 hours of a lesson taking place. Staff will ensure that all homework is entered onto Classcharts in line with the school homework policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heads of department will ensure that all behaviour and homework, in their department, is monitored and discussed at team meetings and line management meetings. SLT will follow up any concerns regarding behaviour and/or homework with heads of department and use Classcharts to scrutinise data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents are expected to use Classcharts to view all behaviour and homework. Parents are expected to hold their children to account for any poor behaviour or failed homework submission. Parents are also encouraged to praise and reward students for positive behaviour.
7	Telephone (school)	<p>The school will contact home to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share/celebrate success Inform you that your child is absent from school To raise concerns about attendance and/or standards of behaviour/uniform To discuss your child's progress If your child is injured or has become unwell Arrange a meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please leave a message if your call is unanswered, explaining who you are, your role and a means for parents to contact you (a telephone number and/or email address). Never leave detailed messages about a child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please ensure the school has an up-to-date emergency contact telephone number. Up-to-date telephone contact details will be collected through termly contact detail updates. 	
8	Telephone (parents)	<p>Parents may phone the school to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> report a child's absence if they cannot use the school app raise concerns to complain to ask for advice or information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a telephone message is received, ensure the call is returned within 2 working days, unless it is stated as URGENT within the message. If urgent, please return the call within 1 working day. If during a telephone call, the caller becomes aggressive or abusive, please remain calm and polite. Explain that you intend to terminate the call if the aggression/abuse continues. Inform the Headteacher of the incident to consider action required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To report your child as absent, please call: 0113 397 9911 Please contact the school by phone if you wish to raise a concern and would prefer to speak to a member of staff. <p>We cannot guarantee the member of staff will be available to talk at that time.</p> <p>Please leave a message with a brief description of the nature of your concern. You should expect a call back within 2 working days. If your concern is urgent, please state this in the message. Urgent messages might include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> An urgent safeguarding concern An urgent medical concern 	