

Communication Policy



Communication Policy for Red Hill School

This policy was developed by the staff of Red Hill School and the Board of Management, in conjunction with school parents in the school year 2024/25. This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Dignity at Work Policy and relevant circulars.

Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on effective and appropriate communication strategies in Red Hill School. The family and home are central to the social and intellectual development of the child and the nurturing of good moral values. The school and the family strive to be mutually supportive and respectful of each other so that the child's education can be effective. All the stakeholders aim to work for the benefit of the child and their learning.

Parents are encouraged to:

- Develop close links with the school
- Participate in meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the professional role of staff members in the school
 - Collaborate with the school in developing the full potential of their children
 - Share the responsibility of ensuring that the school remains true to its ethos, values and distinctive character.
 - Become actively involved in the school/parent association
 - Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them.

Structures in place to facilitate open communication & consultation with Parents

- Parent/teacher meetings.
- Parents receive a school report for their child at the end of each school year.
 - Ongoing consultation throughout the year
- Written communication via written messages in homework journal, Seesaw App, Text-A-Parent messaging system and School's newsletter.
- Through the Parents' Association, parents are invited to discuss concerns and to contribute to initiatives and projects in the school.
- Regular newsletters to keep parents up to date with school events, holidays and school concerns
- Parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. Christmas Fair and Concerts.

Parent / Teacher Communication

Informal Parent/Teacher Meetings

The School encourages communication between parents and staff.

The class teacher, who as the collaborative educator with the parents, is the first and primary point of contact for every parent. If a parent has a concern about any issue, they are advised to contact the school secretary to arrange a meeting, (face to face/phone/online) at a mutually

suitable time. When speaking to the school secretary, parents should give a brief description of the issue involved so that both parties can be prepared for the requested meeting. The teacher will endeavour to deal with the matter promptly.

If the Principal is contacted directly about an issue of concern to a parent, she will refer the matter back to the class teacher to be dealt with. Where the issues raised with the teacher have not been satisfactorily resolved, the Principal will then get involved in helping to find a resolution.

The exception to this is where child protection issues of any sort arise and the Principal's involvement is required as Designated Liaison Person.

Formal Meetings – Student Support Plans /Meetings & Review Meetings

Formal Parent/Teacher meetings will be held twice a year. The first round of meetings will generally take place towards the end of October and/or beginning of November. Parents will be given the option of attending in person or receiving a meeting via a phone call.

Review meeting will be arranged with parents in February at other times throughout the year. These meetings will be attended by the Class Teacher and the parents.

If a parent wishes to arrange a meeting with the Class Teacher at any stage during the year to discuss their child's progress, they may do so by prior appointment.

These Formal timetabled meetings are to discuss and draw up the priority learning goals for the individual student.(Student Support Plan) The Class Teacher in consultation with the Principal and parents will draw up the document. Recommendations from outside professionals, such as psychologists, occupational therapists etc., will be reflected in the support plan.

Additional meetings may be required in relation to upholding the behaviour protocols of Red Hill School. Class teacher will liaise with parent and Principal to arrange these meetings.

Updating of Information

The school should be informed immediately if a situation arises that could potentially cause anxiety for a child and adversely affect his/her education.

In all matters pertaining to the wellbeing and education of pupils, only the parents/legal guardians named on the enrolment form will be consulted by staff. In this regard, it is vital that the child's and parent/ guardian's contact details are fully up to date. This can be done by contacting the school secretary at or alternatively contacting the school on (061)215760. It is imperative that there is an up-to-date emergency contact detail on every child's file.

End of Year Report Cards

Report cards are issued in June of each year. The report cards provide for reporting in four key areas:

1. The child's learning and achievement across the curriculum
2. The child's learning dispositions
3. The child's social and personal development
4. Ways in which parents can support their child's learning

Text-a-Parent

The purpose of this messaging service is to communicate to parents in relation to items such as

- emergency school closures
- implications of weather warnings
- power outages
- general messages

It is also used to contact bus escorts and bus drivers when needed.

Emails and Phone Calls to Staff

Teachers' primary responsibility is to the teaching and learning in their classroom and the supervision of the children in their care. With this in mind, parents are reminded that messages and e-mails sent to teachers and S.N.A.s during the school day, **may not** receive an immediate reply. Staff will undertake to reply to all messages received, at their earliest

convenience.

If a parent/guardian urgently wants to contact the teacher or leave an urgent message for their child, they should phone the main office and the school secretary will relay the message to the relevant person.

All staff members and parents/guardians have a right to their discrete free time. With this in mind, communications to the school and from the school should take place during normal working hours. Contact at night, at weekends, on days off and during holidays should never take place. When emailing staff, parents are asked to schedule all emails that are being sent outside of the normal working day.

We ask you strongly to respect this and we undertake to do likewise.

Staff members' private mobile phone numbers, email addresses or social media accounts, including WhatsApp, should only be used with prior consent to contact staff in relation to school business. General contact with staff should be via

- the main school email address : secretary@redhillschool.ie
 - Principal: e.bensonryan@redhillschool.ie
 - the staff member's professional email address: (e.g., "teacher'intial.lastname"@redhillschool.ie")
 - phone at 061 215760
- All written messages sent to staff should be written in a respectful and courteous manner. When writing messages, parents/guardians should keep in mind that written messages containing information relevant to the future care needs/education of a student, may be uploaded and saved to a student's file.
- Staff should not be asked to speak about another parent's child or another staff member. The staff of the school will respect your child's right to privacy so it is asked that parents respect other children's and adults' rights to privacy
- When stakeholders meet, it is important for all parties to be punctual. Duration of meetings should be agreed beforehand and this should be respected.

The school's *Parental Complaints Procedure* outlines a mechanism for dealing with an issue of concern or a complaint as speedily as possible and at the simplest level.

Communication between Staff:

The school encourages openness in internal communication and the sharing of relevant and appropriate information through a variety of mechanisms.

- Staff Email: Each staff member is assigned a school email address. This is for teacher's professional use and is used for school/professional work only. Teachers may use this email address for liaising with parents and/or the wider school community. The use of the email for students and parents is at the discretion of each class teacher.
- Z Drive - School documents are shared between teachers on the Z Drive.

- Internal Tannoy system - Each classroom has a speaker that can be used to call the secretary during the school day.
- The Intercom is used for messages that need to be communicated to students and staff.
 - WhatsApp groups are used to communicate school related news and arrange meetings.
 - Staff meetings are held on a regular basis.
 - ISL meetings are held on a regular basis.
- Teachers at each class level meet informally on a regular basis to collaboratively plan for their respective classes.

The school will use *Instagram* to relay news and to celebrate or notify people of events taking place in the school. We would ask that social media platforms, as well as personal social media accounts (including WhatsApp,) are NEVER used for commenting in a negative way on school matters or members of the school community. All stakeholders have a right to their reputation.

In relation to school WhatsApp groups: RHS Teacher Group, RHS SNA Group and RHS ISL Group. Each staff member has consented to be part of these groups. The purpose of these groups is to communicate to staff in relation to items such as

- emergency school closures
- implications of weather warnings
- power outages
- road closures
- road conditions
- accidents
- Draft notices that are available for viewing
- Acknowledgement of births, marriages, bereavements

This list is not exhaustive. Each member of staff has a responsibility to conduct themselves professionally, to be courteous and respectful to their colleagues and not to engage in unacceptable behaviour.

What is not permitted on this forum is any comment that can be deemed defamatory, bullying or harassment. School issues that are best dealt with through arranged meetings with management or at staff meetings as per meeting agenda.

These issues must be dealt with in the spirit of collaboration and have respect for the dignity and professionalism of all involved.

The *Dignity at Work Policy* outlines a mechanism for dealing with an issue of concern or a complaint as speedily as possible and at the simplest level.

Please note breaches to the above may be dealt with through the *Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures* as per circular 72/2011 and/or the *Working Together Document*. *The Board of Management of Red Hill School adopted the anti bullying guidelines detailed in the*

Working Together Document as the statutory instrument for dealing with bullying in the workplace. 17/12/2024

Staff meetings will be held in line with stated agenda. Each staff member should be open to hearing & addressing other's viewpoints and to respond in a constructive, appropriate and reasonable manner to any issues raised.

Personal attacks on an individual will not be tolerated.

In Red Hill School we strive for an atmosphere in our school community of professionalism, respect and dignity. Each staff member has a personal responsibility in managing their communication style to contribute to a positive professional working environment.

Ancillary Staff

Our secretary, cleaners and maintenance operative play an important role in ensuring that the school operates in an effective and efficient manner. All requests for support from our ancillary staff should be conducted in a courteous and respectful manner at all times. Classrooms should be left tidy and orderly at the end of each day, to communicate respect to the cleaners working in our school.

Communication among Students

To assist in creating and maintaining a safe and comfortable environment for learning, all students are expected to treat one another, school staff, parents and school community in a respectful manner.

Learning good social and interpersonal skills with one's peers is an important part of school life. Everybody in our school community is required to treat all students with consideration and respect and to have regard for the rights and feelings of others.

Communication with Others:

Communication with External Agencies:

NEPS:

The Principal liaises with National Educational Psychological Services with regard to making referrals where necessary. One-to-one meetings with Parents/Guardians to discuss assessments are organised by the Principal/Deputy Principal. The necessary paperwork in relation to an assessment is undertaken by the Principal/Deputy Principal in consultation with the class teacher of the child in question **All** communication with external agencies is done through the school.

Tusla:

The DLP, the Principal, liaises with the services of Tusla with regard to child welfare. This includes the National Education and Welfare Officer regarding child attendance at school and social services regarding child protection

Newly Appointed Teachers/Substitute Teachers

All new teachers and substitute teachers will have access to a welcome booklet and directions to the Child Safeguarding Statement, SSP's inclusive of IBSP's, PEEPS etc. along with timetables, class lists etc..

Newly appointed teachers are mentored by designated staff members and/or other staff members appointed by the Principal and the Droichead Team, most notably in relation to on-going planning and the Droichead process. Supports are provided if required. Confidentially agreements must be signed by each new staff member.

Behaviour of all Stakeholders in the School

Ensuring a courteous and respectful environment is central to the creating and maintaining of a positive culture among the stakeholders. Positive and respectful communication is of high importance to our school. This not only extends to the children but to all of the stakeholders e.g. the staff, parents and the wider community.

Our school strives to be a place where both adults and children feel safe, secure and respected. While the behaviour of children in our school is of vital importance, adults in the school community also have a responsibility to ensure their own behaviour models the types of behaviour expected of children.

It is important that all stakeholders are responsible for their own behaviours in the school.

- All stakeholders are expected to speak to each other with respect. Shouting or other aggressive tones are not acceptable. If a stakeholder displays anger or aggression to another member of the school community, they may be asked to remove themselves from the building. In certain cases, the Garda Síochána could be called
- All stakeholders will treat our children with the utmost respect while on the premises or grounds

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work:

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 recognises that school staff may be at risk from violence in the form of verbal abuse, threats, assaults or other forms of intimidation. This behaviour may come from pupils, parents, guardians, other staff members or intruders.

In this respect, all staff should be aware of DES Circular 40/97 which deals with the procedures to follow if they feel they have been subjected to any of the above behaviours.

Personal and Confidential Information:

All personal data collected is protected in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. The privacy of personal communications is preserved in accordance with the Human Rights Act.

All staff are bound to take care with the handling and transmission of confidential information, with regard to how and to whom the information is transmitted. Internal communications using electronic media must be conducted under the acceptable Usage Policy of the school.

Implementation, Review & Communication:

This policy was considered and ratified by the Board of Management on _____ 2025. It will be monitored on an ongoing basis and reviewed once every three years or sooner if necessary. This policy will be reviewed again in the school year 2028/29 or sooner should the need arise.

It is available to view on the school website.

Signed:



Chairman:

Date:

13/5/25

Principal:

Date:

13/05/25

