



OLDFIELD SCHOOL

Home-School Links Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1. Oldfield School is committed to maintaining channels of communication with parents. Expectations are set out in the Home-School Agreement, signed by the school, the parents and the student. The Home-School Links Policy sets out how the channels of communication should work.
- 1.2. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy (June 2014)

2. Implementation

- 2.1. All staff (teaching and support staff) encourage the correct procedures for Home-School communication. Parents are encouraged, in the first instance, to contact their child's tutor.
- 2.2. Parents are expected to attend all consultation/information meetings. Students should accompany their parents to all subject consultation evenings.
- 2.3. Parents and students are encouraged to support school events.

3. Home-School Agreement

- 3.1. The Home-School Agreement is signed by the parent, the tutor and the student annually. It applies to all students in Years 7-11. It is displayed in the contact book and on the school website. It provides a set of core principles that each stakeholder must follow (See Appendix 1).

4. Sixth Form Agreement

- 4.1. The Sixth Form Agreement is signed by all students in the Sixth Form annually. It provides a set of core principles that they must follow. It is displayed in the Sixth Form Common Room and the School Website (See Appendix 2).

5. The Contact Book

- 5.1. The Contact Book is designed to be the most important means of communication between home and school.
- 5.2. It is also designed to assist the students in organising themselves. It contains:
 - Home-school agreement
 - Spaces to write in homework / passwords
 - School timetable
 - Absence notes / attendance checklist
 - Appointment sheets for Parents' Meetings

- Uniform requirements
- Important dates and information
- A section for parents to give permission to bring a mobile phone to school
- A section to record targets / current progress
- A section for the collection of house points

5.3. The use of the Contact Book is monitored by the Tutor and the Head of House. Parents are expected to sign it weekly.

5.4. The Contact Book is reviewed annually. Student views are gathered via the School Council regarding its layout and content.

6. Parents' Consultation Meetings

6.1. During each academic year, there is a formal opportunity for parents and students to consult with subject staff. These dates are given to parents at the beginning of the school year via the school calendar. Nearer the event the consultation meeting is promoted by letter and the newsletter.

7. Telephone Calls

7.1. The receptionist faces a difficult job in routing callers. The objective of these guidelines is to avoid "going straight to the top", because the most useful response to a call will come from the point where the problem is being felt. Callers need to understand that staff schedules mean that replies will be reliable, but cannot be immediate.

7.2. Initially, calls regarding individual, named students will be routed as follows:

| Query | Who? | Notes |
|--|----------------------------------|---|
| Absence from school | Main office | Message taken for relevant tutor |
| Medical | Qualified First Aider | Can listen, send out a Health Care Plan, check medication and inform of school procedures. |
| Lost property | Main office | Can listen, send out messages to relevant staff. |
| Home / out-of-school problems | Tutor | Message taken for relevant staff member. The teacher will have responded within 5 working days. |
| Behaviour problems / Lesson / Homework problems in one subject | Subject teacher | |
| Continual behaviour / Lesson / Homework problems in one subject | Head of Subject /Head of Faculty | |
| Behaviour / friendship / attendance problems (general) | Tutor | |
| Persistent poor behaviour / friendship / attendance problems | Head of House | |
| Requests for authorisation for absence for exceptional circumstances | Main office | Main office inform parents that a request must be made in writing to the Assistant Headteacher: Pastoral |

- 7.3. If any of these issues seem too sensitive for normal routing, the Head of Subject/Faculty or the Head of House will be contacted.
- 7.4. General concerns, e.g. about a group of unnamed students, can be referred directly to the Heads of House/Assistant Headteacher: Pastoral.

8. Confidentiality

- 8.1. The following should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy.
- 8.2. Staff are aware that students who seek information or help through them often do not want their parents to know about their “private” lives. Sometimes staff become aware of risks to students through indirect means.
- 8.3. School staff, in loco parentis, have the responsibility to inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they feel that a student is at risk.
- 8.4. Staff need to tell students from the start of a disclosure that they may not be able to keep this kind of information confidential, so the student must think before she/he informs a member of staff.
- 8.5. We emphasise that, in our experience, being honest with parents usually leads to a better understanding at home, and that we can be useful in helping to get a parent and child talking to each other.
- 8.6. When there are child protection issues, the designated teacher will inform the parents that a referral is being made, unless it is felt that it would not be in the child’s best interest to do so. A referral is then made to Social Care.
- 8.7. The fact that a student seeks information does not imply that she/he is at risk. In the PSHE programme, students are given information and told where to find out more. This is supplemented publicly through posters and leaflets. If a student wants to know more, she/he can be referred to someone who is allowed to deal with them in private, ie medical professionals such as GPs, School Nurse, or Clinic staff.
- 8.8. Medical appointments at clinics and GP surgeries can be made for times after school hours without the school needing to make any checks or contact.
- 8.9. However, making an appointment so that registration is missed will result in the tutor requesting a note from the parent / guardian to explain the absence.

9. Making contact with ‘hard to reach’ parents

- 9.1. Definition: parents who are difficult to contact and/or do not attend parents’ evenings or other school events.
- 9.2. Possible strategies for inviting parents into school keeping in mind that each case is different:
 - Involve Pastoral Support Worker (PSW) to make contact over the phone/ email
 - Phone call from a member of staff who has developed a relationship with the parent

- Suggest that the parent brings along someone for support
- Letter home with a copy in the home language
- Offer an alternative to parents' evening. This may involve the PSW collating information from teachers and then meeting with the parent.

9.3. Possible people/agencies that may know the family and are able to help the school in getting the parent to engage can be contacted (a full list of agencies with contacts for 'Hard to Reach' groups in B&NES is kept in the Assistant Headteacher: Pastoral office). These include:

- Inclusion Manager / SENCO
- In the case of Year 7, a contact from the primary school
- Off the Record
- Education Welfare Officer
- School Nurse
- Social Care
- Black Families Support Group
- Young Carers Group
- Mentoring Plus
- Member of the Polish Community for translation and/or support
- Church / Youth Groups
- EMAS (Ethnic Minority Achievement Service)
- SARI

9.4. Alternatives to parents coming in:

- Referral to Pastoral Support Worker who may, if appropriate make a home visit.

10. Other Events/Activities

10.1. Parents are notified of all school events by:

- The monthly newsletter
- The school calendar
- Individual letters home via Parent Pay from subject staff for faculty events, or the appropriate teacher for an extra-curricular club, event or visit.

10.2. Parents are welcomed to assist in school visits/events by agreement (subject to the procedures laid down the Safer Recruitment Policy; namely an enhanced DBS check where appropriate).

11. Monitoring of Home School Links

11.1. The school monitors the content and quality of home-school links as follows:

- All parents are invited to Parents' Consultation Meetings by the Heads of House, who record their attendance. Follow-up, if necessary, is by a further invitation to parents.
- All communications home by letter are monitored by the Headteacher.
- All phone calls (both ways) are recorded and filed in the student's file.
- Contact Books are signed weekly by the Parent and the Tutor. Heads of House monitor a sample each term.
- Parents are invited to give feedback on specific events held at school e.g. Parents' evenings.

- Parents are consulted on major school issues e.g. School Uniform Policy/ Timing of the School Day.
- Parents complete questionnaires to improve home-school liaison e.g. Transition.

12. Evaluation

12.1. The Home-School Agreement & Policy is reviewed regularly. It is evaluated formally by SLT with opportunities for other staff, governors and parents to have an input.

12.2. The Home-School Links policy is reviewed formally by the Assistant Headteacher: Pastoral every two years.

12.3. This policy will be approved by SLT every two years.

12.4. Date when policy was last approved: February 2015

12.5. Date when next review is due: February 2017

Home-School Agreement

THE SCHOOL UNDERTAKES TO:

- provide a high quality education appropriate to the needs of your daughter/son including a broad, balanced curriculum and a range of out of school activities and visits;
- foster an environment of consideration, appreciation and respect;
- keep you regularly informed of your daughter's/son's academic progress, and their standard of behaviour, through consultations, assessments, reports and the full use of the Contact Book;
- keep you informed about school matters through the newsletter and other notices as appropriate;
- demand the highest possible standards of behaviour and administer the code of conduct and disciplinary procedures with firmness and fairness;
- provide you and your daughter/son with guidelines for homework and to set it regularly and mark it promptly;
- monitor carefully your daughter's/son's attendance and give you early warning signs of problems;
- encourage a sense of identity through the wearing of school uniform;
- be welcoming at all times and offer opportunities for you to become involved in school life.

Signed _____

Tutor _____

AS A STUDENT I WILL UNDERTAKE TO:

- do my best in all lessons and make the most of all opportunities the school has to offer;
- consider, appreciate, respect and value equally all members of the school and their property;
- respect and maintain the good reputation of Oldfield School at all times;
- use and care for my Contact Book as a vital part of my school life;
- accept the school's mobile phone and other electronic devices policy
- keep all the school rules and accept the school's behaviour policy;

- attempt all homework set and hand it in on time;
- always be punctual and attend school regularly;
- wear the school uniform correctly and always be fully equipped for lessons;
- contribute to maintaining a pleasant school environment.

Signed

Student

THE HOME: AS PARENTS/GUARDIANS I/WE WILL UNDERTAKE TO:

- encourage a positive attitude to school by taking an interest in my child's learning and participation in school activities, events and visits;
- ensure that the school is aware of any problems that might affect my child's learning or behaviour;
- attend parents' consultation meetings, and check and sign my child's reports and Contact Book;
- keep ourselves informed by regular reading of newsletters and notices;
- support the school in maintaining high standards of behaviour in line with our school's behaviour policy;
- oversee my child's homework, give it priority and provide him/her with a quiet place in which to work;
- ensure that my child attends school regularly and punctually and authorise their absence only when absolutely necessary;
- provide my child with the appropriate school uniform;
- support the school by seeking opportunities to become involved.

Signed

Parent/Guardian

My child has my permission to have a mobile phone in school under the conditions outlined in the mobile phone and other electronic devices policy.

Signed

Parent/Guardian

Appendix 2

Sixth Form Agreement

Attendance

In order to do well at A level it is essential that you attend all your lessons. We also expect you to attend any House or school event or lesson that you have been involved with. However, you are allowed to study at home for any morning or afternoon where you have no lessons or other school commitments as part of the home study arrangements. A signing in and out book is kept in the Sixth Form Office. When leaving the school site for any reason students are expected to sign out. Failure to do so may lead to Home Study being withdrawn. Similarly, with the exception of arriving in school for AM or PM registration, students must sign into school. On return to school you will be registered in your first lesson or registration period. Failure to attend lessons, complete work, meet deadlines or if there is a concern over your level of effort, will result in home study being withdrawn.

We expect a letter from home in advance of any foreseeable absence. Where absence is not foreseeable you should make a phone call on the morning of absence, to the main office, to warn staff of your non-attendance that day. A letter signed by parent/carer to explain your absence should be provided to your tutor on your return to school.

We will monitor attendance on a weekly basis. If a student misses a registration without authorisation, either with their tutor or for a subject, in any one week then parents will be contacted. Where there is repeated failure to achieve full attendance, further contact will be made with home. Exam entry is not automatic unless attendance, including authorised absences is 90% or above. These expectations are in line with what employers would expect of their employees and, therefore, reflect the adult world of work.

Holidays

During term time, time off for holidays is highly disruptive for you and your learning. Holidays are recorded as unauthorised absence and should be avoided if at all possible. Time away from school involving your family can only be authorised under exceptional circumstances.

Study Periods

During study periods you are expected to be in school studying. There are many suitable locations set aside for this purpose. Many subjects will provide their students with a timetabled period of independent study specific to that subject and all students will be expected to use that time productively.

Part-Time Work

Many students need to work in order to have an income and this work can often provide very useful experience. However, excessive part-time employment invariably leads to students performing below their potential. Working more than 8 or 10 hours a week is likely to seriously hinder your academic progress. Under no circumstances should students undertake paid employment in school hours.

Conduct

All students must abide by the school rules. We expect all students to set a good example to other members of the school community in the way they behave. In particular the use of foul or abusive language in any part of the school is unacceptable. We expect all students to uphold the good name of the school both in and outside school.

Sixth Form Communal Areas

ALL Sixth Form students are responsible for the care of these areas. You should treat the rooms better than at home. No-one will clear up after you. The washing-up of mugs, plates and cutlery is the responsibility of the person who uses them.

No public music is permitted in or around the common room. Students may listen to music – as long as it remains personal!

Car Parking

Parking facilities at Oldfield are not extensive. There are not enough spaces for staff. Sixth form students are therefore not allowed to bring their vehicles onto the school site.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones should be switched off at all times when you are in lessons or moving round the school. This includes study areas such as the Learning Resource Centre. You may, however, use a mobile phone discreetly in the common room.

Dress Code

There is no uniform in the Sixth Form but all students are expected to dress in an appropriate manner for an office environment at all times of year. As Sixth Form students you are role models for younger students and you are therefore asked to be smart.

Alcohol, Tobacco and Illegal Drugs

Students should be aware that the possession of alcohol, tobacco or any illegal substance is entirely prohibited on, or in the vicinity of, the school site or on any school visit.

Please sign to indicate that you understand and accept these conditions for studying at Oldfield Sixth Form Centre.

Student name..... Tutor Group.....