



# The Levels Academy Trust

Raising Aspirations, Realising Potential TOGETHER

## Communications Policy (Parent/Carer)

Date adopted: 18/10/16

Signature: [Handwritten Signature]

Review date: October 2017

The Levels Academy comprises four schools, namely:  
Hambridge Primary School (including Hambridge and Barrington Pre-Schools)  
Huish Episcopi Primary School  
Middlezoy Primary School  
Othery Village School

This policy has been reviewed to cover each of the above schools.



## **Introduction**

The Levels Academy recognises the importance of clear and effective communications with all stakeholders (pupils and parents/carers, collaborators, governors, Local Authority, outside agencies, national bodies, etc), and is committed to being open and accessible for all who have an interest in the Academy

The key stakeholders for an Academy are parents/carers and pupils and this policy addresses the main ways in which the Academy ensures effective two-way communication between home and Academy.

## **Parents/Carers as partners in their child's education**

Parents and carers have a key role to play in their child's education. The Levels Academy will make every effort to encourage and make arrangements for parents/carers to contribute to the shared view of their child's needs.

### **Aims of the policy:**

- To ensure that effective communication and consultation takes place between the Academy, parents/carers, pupils and other stakeholders.
- To ensure robust processes for consultation between the Academy, parents/carers and pupils on key service areas.

The Academy recognises that engaging and working with parents/carers is a vital key in providing their child an excellent education. On an annual basis the Academy will ask parents/carers what they expect from and what they think of the Academy. We intend to involve as many parents/carers in their child's education as possible as part of the community aspect of the Academy's work.

Our aims include the following;

- To make the Academy Schools as welcoming and inclusive as possible. Signage will be clear, informative and positive
- All written and telephone enquiries from parents are to be dealt with promptly
- A variety of forms of communication with parents/carers, for example, telephone contact, email, post, text, notice board, social media and home/school visits are encouraged

- Parents/Carers are contacted for positive as well as negative reasons
- Information on what pupils are taught will be provided to parents/carers and tips for helping their child circulated.
- Arrangement of parent evenings and reports.
- Parents/Carers will be encouraged to help or support their children's learning at school and at home. Information or training will be provided to enable this support to be effective.
- The Academy will encourage the use of parents as volunteer helpers within the boundaries relating to safeguarding children.
- The Academy will promote family learning and family fun activities
- In conjunction with relevant providers, carers/parents will be encouraged to participate in daytime or out of school learning programmes organized by the Academy.

### **Communication**

Communications can take a variety of forms: verbal (through meetings or by telephone) written (through letters, newsletters, or email) or through social media eg Facebook. Our aim is to utilise all means of communication effectively.

Staff will endeavour to reply to parent/carer letters as quickly as possible. Any letter of complaint will be referred to the Headteachers for advice prior to response.

Communication between the Academy schools and parents/carers will operate in the following ways:-

- All prospective parents/carers may receive an Academy school's prospectus upon request within the schools themselves.
- Prospective parents/carers are invited, along with their child, to an induction evening where the main channels of communication are outlined, essential information given and information about the Academy school is presented
- Parents/Carers are invited to attend parents evenings at each of the academy schools at least twice a year to review the academic and personal and social progress of their child. There are many other less formal opportunities which the parent/carer can arrange with their class

teacher/head teacher (when appropriate).

- Parents/Carers will receive a report of academic, personal and social progress at least once a year.

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in the academy schools, where teachers may be teaching full time and running clubs or otherwise working with pupils at lunchtime or after school. Parents/Carers may be frustrated if they feel that a message elicits no immediate reply, when in fact there has been no available opportunity for the member of staff to reach a telephone to return a call.

For this reason the Academy will be particularly proactive in encouraging use of a wide range of communication methods, with office email contacts being publicised regularly in newsletters and on the schools' websites and all parents/carers being encouraged to give an email address for prompt and effective communication.

### **The Levels Academy and Academy Schools Website**

The Levels Academy website will become the portal for the academy schools' websites. Each website will also be a good source of general information and will include;

- ✓ School prospectus
- ✓ The Curriculum
- ✓ Holiday dates
- ✓ Copies of letters to parents/carers
- ✓ Information about lessons/additional study where appropriate
- ✓ Special events
- ✓ Newsletters and updates

### **Social Networking Sites/Blogs etc**

Staff are not permitted to communicate with parents/carers or pupils via social networking sites (such as Facebook) or accept them as their "friends". This is part of our safeguarding procedures to protect pupils and staff.

## **Home to School books**

Each pupil has a home to school book for noting down homework and the date for completion. It is also an important tool for communication between parents/carers and teachers.

## **E-mail**

Parents/carers may wish to contact the Academy school via e-mail as an alternative to telephone or letter. The individual school e-mail addresses are:

Hambridge Primary School: [hambridge@educ.somerset.gov.uk](mailto:hambridge@educ.somerset.gov.uk)

Huish Episcopi Primary School: [office@huishepiscopi-pri.somerset.sch.uk](mailto:office@huishepiscopi-pri.somerset.sch.uk)

Middlezoy Primary School: [office@middlezoy.somerset.sch.uk](mailto:office@middlezoy.somerset.sch.uk)

Hambridge Primary School: [office@otheryvillage.somerset.sch.uk](mailto:office@otheryvillage.somerset.sch.uk)

## **Celebrating success**

Parents/Carers will be invited to special assemblies, events and presentations throughout the course of the year.

## **Parent/Carer Involvement.**

All parents/carers will receive a questionnaire on many aspects of the service provided by the Academy schools. Replies are confidential and will be collated and analysed by the schools. Issues arising will be shared with the individual governing bodies, the ELG, staff and the pupil council.

## **Supporting parents/carers of children with SEN**

The Levels Academy recognises the importance of positive relationships with parents/carers of all children with additional needs. The SEN Code of Practice emphasises the importance of positive, supportive attitudes to parents/carers and user-friendly information and procedures. All professionals will make every effort to ensure effective communication with parents.

All staff within the Academy schools are expected to help parents/carers understand how to contribute effectively to their child's education and will make every effort to ensure that parents/carers understand their rights and responsibilities. All relevant information will be provided in a way for all to

understand and respond to. (Please see SEN policy)

### **Home- Academy communications**

- A calendar of school events is produced and issued to parents /carers and pupils through the school newsletter and website.
- Each Academy school has a Newsletter which is made available to parents/carers on a regular basis. It contains general details of school events and activities and a copy is placed on the schools' websites.
- The Academy schools encourage parents/carers to share any issues about their child at the earliest opportunity. The relevant member of staff will arrange to see parents/carers as soon as possible.
- Where appropriate, the Academy schools will arrange various meetings for parents/carers throughout the year. Meetings are held prior to any residential trip to inform parents of planning, content and arrangements.
- If a child is absent from school, and we have had no indication of the reason, the Academy schools' office will contact a parent/carer (by telephone, if possible) to find out the reason for the absence.

### **Accessibility of Information**

At regular intervals throughout the year The Levels Academy will monitor our effectiveness in communicating to improve the quality of our service, anticipate and plan for the needs of parents/carers better and make best use of our resources.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

The Trust Board will review this policy at least every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the Academy.

