



Milford Haven School

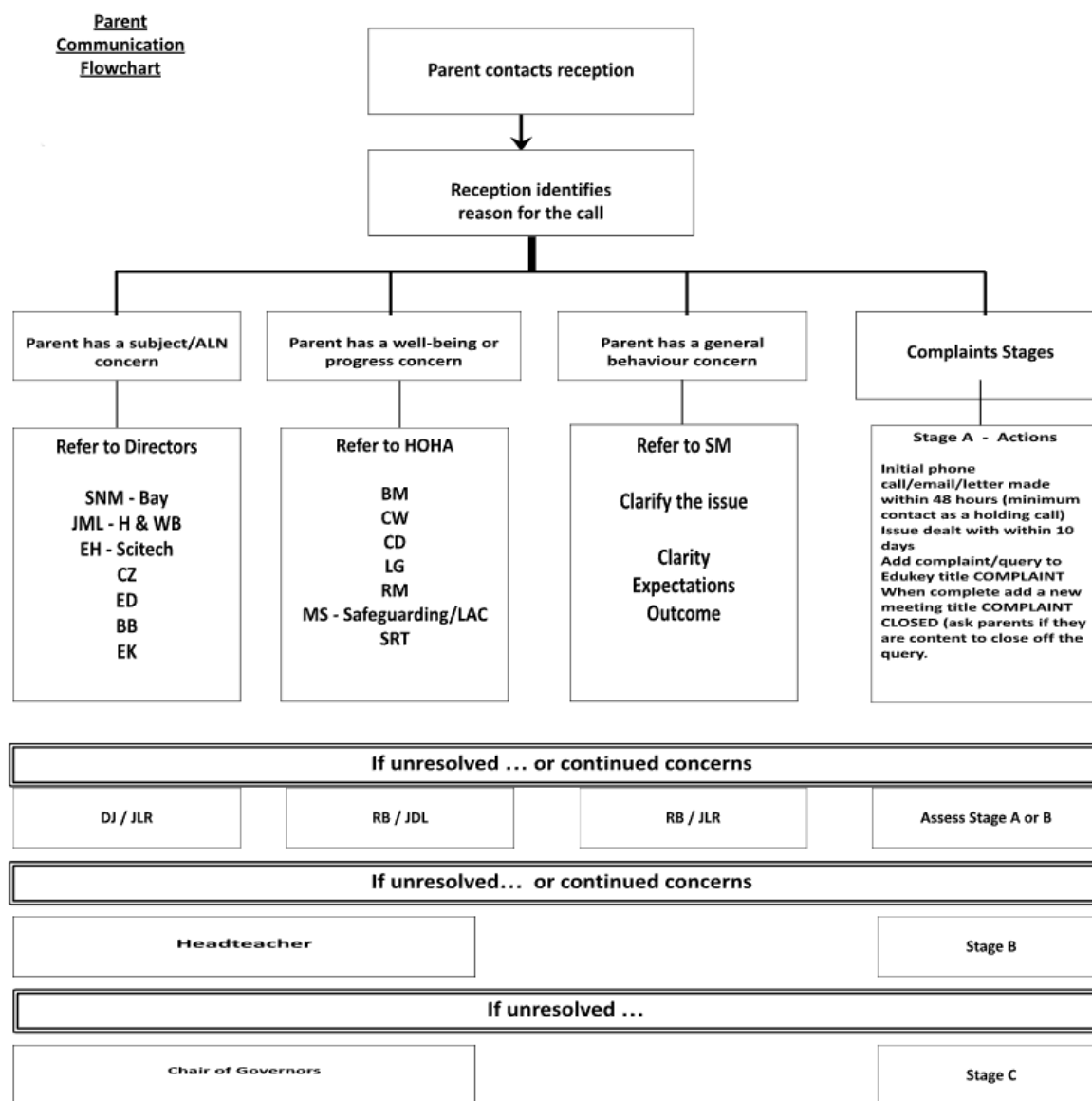
Communications Policy

Date to be reviewed: Spring 2025

Policy created and reviewed by: Headteacher

Policy reviewed and agreed : 23.05.2023

Complaints Procedure Flow Chart



Communications and meeting requests.

The following outlines the school policy with regard to written communication and requests for meetings between home and school, including email communications.

Email and written communication

All communication must respect the dignity of the recipient.

1. Within 48 hours – receipt of letter or email will be acknowledged (during term time but not over a weekend).
2. Within 5 working days – provide a response to the letter or email by telephone or in writing (including by email). This may include informing the sender that more time is

required to provide a full response. If this is the case staff should indicate a time frame in which a response should be expected.

3. If a member of staff is not able to deal with the matter directly or it is a matter more appropriately managed by someone else, they will pass it on to that person and inform the sender that they have done so.
4. Staff are not expected to monitor or respond to emails out of their normal working hours (including weekends and published school holidays). Mobile phones and other electronic devices that enable staff to access their school emails when away from school can make it difficult to 'ignore' a message from a parent, leading to unnecessary worry and anxiety on the part of the staff. To safeguard the welfare and workload of staff, we request that emails are not sent outside of 'normal office hours'.
5. Whilst this is rare, if a member of staff receives an email which is of an aggressive tone, sets unreasonable demands or could otherwise be interpreted as harassment, they will refer this to a senior line manager in the school, who will decide if consideration needs to be given to dealing with further communication under the schools policy for managing serial and unreasonable complaints.

Requesting a meeting

There are a number of occasions when a face to face meeting with a member of staff would be useful. A meeting can be an excellent opportunity to share information that is sensitive or may need clarification of detail, which would be difficult to communicate concisely and unambiguously in writing.

A parent or carer may request a meeting with an appropriate member of staff to discuss any matter relating to their child's education or welfare. Parents cannot however demand a meeting with a specific member of staff or for a meeting to take place at a specific time, nor can a parent arrive at school and expect to meet with a member of staff immediately.

A request for a meeting can be made in writing via a letter, email or telephone. All requests should include the reason or subject to be discussed at the meeting and the name or Job Title of the persons you would like to meet. The requests should be addressed via the school office who will then forward the request to the most appropriate member of staff. This may not be the member of staff you are requesting to meet with but the most appropriate person to respond to your request or their line manager.

In most cases your child's House Tutor or Head of House would be the most appropriate person to meet with if it is about the child's welfare, well-being or general progress. If the matter relates to a specific subject or lesson then the class teacher or the Director is the most appropriate person.

In most cases a member of the administration team will contact you to discuss and agree a time, date and venue for a meeting. Staff will do their best to accommodate any reasonable request for a meeting and for this to be at a mutually convenient time. However, meetings would generally be expected to take place at school, during the working day or within 30 minutes of the start of the day or no more than one hour after the end of the day.

The start time and the expected duration of the meeting should always be observed. If it becomes apparent that a meeting is going to require more time than was first anticipated then the meeting should be adjourned and continued at a later date. Under no circumstances is it acceptable for a teacher to be delayed from attending to their other duties as a result of a meeting which overruns.

At the end of a meeting, those involved need to ensure that there is a clear agreement and understanding of the conclusion of the meeting. This may include: no further action, a written record of the meeting or agreed actions. Where actions are agreed then these should include dates for completion, monitoring or follow up.

Meetings may not always reach an agreed conclusion. When this is the case the school will make sure that all those involved are clear about "the school's" view or position with regards to an issue, even when others may not support or agree with that position. Hopefully this will be rare but this will help to provide unambiguous clarity for future reference.

The covert recording (video, audio or other electronic format) of a meeting is not allowed. If a note taker is not available then a meeting may be recorded but only with the knowledge of those present. Contemporaneous notes made in a meeting by an individual do not constitute any part of the official record and remain wholly and solely the property for the individual making the notes, unless that person's role in the meeting is to act as clerk or note taker, in which case that person will provide all parties with a set of notes or minutes of the meeting (or part of a meeting which they attended), should they request such.

Unacceptable Behaviours

In line with school and county policy every person has a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Staff are school employees and as such are afforded employment rights which protect them from harassment, abuse, assault, intimidation or any other form of unacceptable behaviour at work.

Should any member of staff experience unacceptable behaviour directed towards them or a colleague then they will bring a meeting to a close, request that the person leave the school site and report the matter to their line manager or a senior leader. If necessary the police will be contacted to remove offenders from the school site.

Should a parent, carer or other attendee at a meeting believe that a member of staff behaviour is unprofessional or otherwise unacceptable then this should be reported and the matter will be dealt with under the school's complaints and where appropriate Staff Discipline procedures.

Whilst rare, aggressive or abusive behaviour towards any member of staff is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. Should this occur you will be instructed to leave the school site and the incident will be reported to the police. Any subsequent communication or meetings will only take place if the Governors believe the safety, welfare and dignity of staff can be assured.

The Unacceptable Actions

Pembrokeshire County Council "The Unacceptable Actions by Complainants Policy" explains what the PCC and the School Governors considers to be unacceptable actions from anyone communicating with or making a complaint and how the school will communicate with those concerned.

PCC Policy quotes:-

Why have a procedure?

2.1 The Data Protection Act 2018, Article 12(5), The Freedom of Information Act 2000, Section 14, and the Environment Information Regulations 2004, Reg.12, have provisions which deal with the concept of excessive, persistent and/or vexatious requesters and authorise a reduced level of compliance to such requests and these statutory provisions have a separate system for appeals, which does not include the School's complaints procedure.

2.2 The Local Government Ombudsman's publication "Guidance note on 'unreasonably persistent' complainant and 'unreasonable complainant behaviour' by analogy is applicable. It states:

"Having a policy on unreasonably persistent and unreasonable complainant behaviour and corresponding guidance for staff on procedure should help authorities deal with complainants in ways which are demonstrably consistent and fair. It also helps staff to understand clearly what is expected of them, what options for action are available, and who can authorise these actions. In the absence of such guidance staff are likely to have greater problems with unreasonable and unreasonably persistent complainants. In addition, it provides a yardstick against which performance can be assessed for monitoring purposes."