

## Bedford College Academies Trust

### Communication with Parents and Carers Policy

<b>Status:</b> Advisory	<b>Member of staff responsible:</b> Principal/Headteacher	<b>Implementation date:</b> <b>September 2017</b>
<b>Issue No:</b> 1A	<b>Approved by:</b> <u>BCAT June 2017</u>	<b>Next Review Date:</b> <b>June 2018</b>

#### Our Vision

“The BCAT vision is to support students to achieve their absolute best whatever their ability or background. We aim to:

1. Work collaboratively to deliver an inclusive and outstanding education to all students, thereby driving up local standards.
2. Maximise social mobility and life chances, through the highest expectations of and aspirations for all students.
3. Encourage and support a range of high performing and distinctive educational establishments for local communities.”

#### Our Values

**Student focus** - We will seek to achieve a high quality learning experience for every student

**High performance** - We will strive for consistently high levels of performance in all aspects of our work

**Respect, openness and honesty** - We will treat everyone with respect, encourage openness and honesty, and recognise each other’s contribution and achievements.

#### Introduction

At each Academy of Bedford College Academies Trust (BCAT) we believe that it is important to work in partnership with parents and carers, and that clear communication between school and parents is important to help students benefit as much as possible from their time in school. We are committed to improving parents’ understanding of our school and in encouraging parents to play an active part in their child’s education. We welcome discussion with parents on all aspects of their child's education, their personal and social development and care and welfare.

The aim of this policy is to describe how staff will communicate with parents about these issues and how we would like parents to communicate with us.

#### Strategies

##### Visiting the Academy

Parents are always welcome at Wixams Academy. If you are visiting the Academy to attend a meeting, a member of our Admin team will welcome you and show you to your meeting room or to where you can wait before the meeting.

Parents are always welcome to join us for special events and assemblies that are held throughout the year – you will be invited to these events through the school newsletter or a letter of invitation.

### Contacting the Academy by Telephone

The Academy office will be open during school hours. Please contact a member of the Admin team if you would like a message to be passed to your child's tutor or pastoral team.

If you have an urgent enquiry that can't be discussed with your child's pastoral teacher, please contact a member of the Admin team and ask to speak to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

The members of the Senior Leadership Team are:

- Academy Principal/Headteacher
- Assistant Principal/Deputy Headteacher
- SENDCo

When you telephone, we will try to contact you by the end of the school day. If you need to speak to a member of staff urgently or wish to have a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team, please telephone the school who will arrange for you to see a senior member of staff as soon as possible.

### Home – School Communication Books (Planners)

It is the Academy policy that all children will be provided with a home - school communication book (Planner).

Staff will use the planners as a method of communication where necessary. All messages will be dated and include the initials of the member of staff who has written the message. We ask that you let us know that you've read each message in the book by writing your initials at the end of the message.

We ask that you use the planner to let us know what your son or daughter has been doing outside of school. This line of communication can be very useful in creating a holistic understanding of your child, and the sharing of your child's achievements supports the development of strong relationships with staff.

### School Letters

During the year we will write to you with information about activities that will involve your child – these could be educational visits, sporting activities or special events in school. Letters will also be held centrally on the school website.

### Newsletters

The Principal will write a newsletter once each month. This will provide general information for parents in addition to items of news and events. Parents will be sent a text message when the newsletter is distributed (see the section on Text Messages). Newsletters will be published on the Academy website and will be available to download.

In addition, the Academy publishes a newsletter at the end of each term which has articles and lots of colour photographs about some of the activities that have taken place at the Academy during the term.

### Text Messages

We use a text messaging service to contact parents with reminders about school events, the publication of newsletters and urgent information – for example if it is necessary to close the school in an emergency. Please help us by making sure that we always have your correct mobile telephone number. A copy of the information that we have on the Academy's records will be sent to you at the beginning of

each Academy year – please check this and return the information to the Academy as soon as possible, making any changes that might have taken place.

### Annual Review Meetings

Each year we will arrange a review meeting to discuss your child's progress, health and well-being and agree targets for their educational, social and emotional development. We will inform you of the arrangements for this meeting as soon as possible at the beginning of the Academy year.

If you are unable to attend this meeting, please contact the school office as soon as possible and we will arrange an alternative date and time.

When we inform you of the date of your child's review we will also ask you if there is anyone in particular that you would like to be invited to your child's review meeting; we will invite any professionals who work with you and your child to attend. If your child has a Child Care Review meeting arranged by the local authority, we will try and arrange that the Academy review meeting takes place at the same time as your child's Child Care Review to enable as many of the people who are important to you and child to be together at the same time.

### Subject Consultation Meetings

In addition to annual review meetings, we will arrange consultation meetings to discuss key learning priorities for your child. For the parents of students in Key Stages 3 and 4 these meetings will be held during the autumn term and for the parents of Post 16 students during the spring term. These meetings will be arranged after school on 2 consecutive weeks and will provide an opportunity for a 15 minute consultation meeting with your child's class teachers. If you find it more convenient your child's class teacher will telephone you to discuss your child's learning priorities.

### Residential Activities

If it is planned that your son or daughter will take part in a residential visit, you will be invited to a planning meeting when details of the visit and programme will be discussed. The Group Leader will make individual arrangements with each parent regarding communication during the visit and parents will be provided with a telephone number to contact the Group Leader in the event of an emergency.

The Group Leader will keep in regular contact with school and parents will be provided with regular text updates on how the visit is going.

### Email

We are aware that some parents may prefer to be contacted by email rather than use a home school communication book. If this is your preference please discuss this with your child's form tutor. Each pastoral team has its own email account and each member of the pastoral team has access to the messages to provide as much continuity of support for your child. If you wish to send an email message directly to your child's class teacher, rather than the general pastoral email account please contact them.

### Website

The Academy website contains information on the school curriculum, newsletters, school policies, term dates and other important and useful information. We encourage parents and students to engage with the website on a regular basis as this is an important method of communication.

### Contacting staff Outside of the Academy

We welcome discussion with parents and carers on all aspects of their child's education, and personal and social development. It is the school's policy that these discussions must take place on the school premises or in other professional settings. This enables us to have the right information available to discuss your child's needs.

Please note that discussions or contact with staff must not take place via any unofficial channels. Please do not contact staff outside of their professional role or by personal communication such as their private email addresses, personal telephone numbers or via social media such as Facebook or Twitter. Staff should not be contacted outside of working hours or consulted in their own homes, as this represents an intrusion into their private life.