



Moorlands
Learning Trust

Communications Policy

	Position/Committee	Date
Prepared by	CEO/CFO	December 2019
Approved by	TRUST BOARD	December 2019
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Communications Policy

At Moorlands Learning Trust we strive to build strong relationships with parents and visitors, in order to help create a stimulating learning environment which continues from school to home and the wider community, providing all our students with the opportunity to achieve their Personal Best.

Our staff come to work to educate and support our students and we believe it is important for everyone involved with school life to communicate in a positive way, whether in person, on the phone, or online. In this way, staff, students, parents, carers and members of the public convey courtesy and respect to each other at all times, which helps to promote the most constructive working and learning environment.

Moorlands Learning Trust therefore asks parents and visitors to:

- Positively support the ethos of Trust schools by setting a good example in their speech and behaviour (including online) towards all students, staff members and other adults.
- Work constructively with staff members to resolve any issues of concern, including clarifying specific events in order to bring about a positive solution. (Details of who to best contact depending on the issue being raised can be found on each school's Trust website.
- Work supportively with Trust schools to improve their child's behaviour where necessary.
- Send emails to staff that are positive in tone and include appropriate salutations. N.B. Staff should be given at least two working days to acknowledge receipt, though we will always endeavour to respond as soon as possible.
- Make reasonable requests for meeting times, and not expect to see any member of staff without a prior appointment. We will always try and accommodate a meeting or phone call as soon as possible but do have many commitments and issues throughout the day and we would ask that you understand and respect this.
- Meet with a designated member of staff as identified or delegated by the Headteacher, in the event of a dispute or disagreement. N.B. The designated member of staff will be commensurate with the stage and scale of the concern.
- Make every effort to positively promote the Trust school to the wider community and not publicly undermine the school or the implementation of school policies.

Any abusive, foul or insulting language, physical attacks or aggressive or threatening behaviour towards staff members, governors, students, parents or any member of the public within our premises, on the phone or online will not be tolerated under any circumstances. This also extends to posting or publishing comments online that risk bringing an individual or a Trust school's reputation into disrepute.

Anyone exhibiting these behaviours will be formally warned by the school that this will not be tolerated and any future violation of this policy could then result in all future communications with the school being restricted to writing, with legal action being considered as appropriate.

All members of the Moorlands Learning Trust community have the right to work without fear of abuse or violence at all times.

This Policy outlines the manner in which everyone is expected to act whilst on school premises, as well as further detailing the type of behaviour which will not be tolerated.

In addition to the details below, all staff at Moorlands Learning Trust:

- Are required to demonstrate the highest possible professional standards
- Deal with all students, fairly and consistently
- Communicate with all parents and visitors with the highest level of professional courtesy
- Be aware of and conform to all safeguarding routines in the Trust
- Uphold the professional integrity of the Trust at all times

Adapted from the IGS staff handbook and code of conduct

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Education Act 2011
- The Equalities Act 2010
- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 2004

1.2. This policy also has due regard to statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2018) 'Keeping children safe in education'

2. Related Trust policies

2.1. This Communications Policy has due regard to the following school policies and procedures:

- **Health and Safety Policy**
- **Complaints Policy**
- **Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy**
- **E safety Policy**
- **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

3. Expected behaviour

3.1. Simply put, we expect that all parents, visitors and members of the public will treat each other, staff members, students and external agencies with dignity and respect.

3.2. Parents should be aware of school policies, and know that copies are available via the school's website or from the school directly. When raising a concern, we would ask parents to ensure that they act in accordance with school policies and maintain a positive approach at all times whilst on the school premises and in their communications with school.

3.3. Concerns regarding another parent's behaviour or conduct should be raised directly with the student's Head of Year or a member of the Leadership team.

4. Inappropriate behaviour

- 4.1. Though fortunately rare, the school takes any instances of inappropriate behaviour very seriously and will not tolerate any circumstances which may make students or members of staff feel threatened. A perceived threat, or any action which makes another individual feel threatened, can be sufficient to bar parents from the premises.
- 4.2. The use of foul and abusive language will not be tolerated on any Trust school premises or over the telephone
- 4.3. Any individual at Moorlands Learning Trust should not be discriminated against, whether a staff member, student or another adult, on the basis of their age, race, ethnicity, religion, cultural belief, attainment, disability, gender, sexuality or background.
- 4.4. Bullying, harassment or intimidation, including physical, sexual and verbal abuse, will not be tolerated under any circumstances.
- 4.5. The Trust holds the right to escort anyone off the premises who is displaying aggressive or disruptive behaviour.
- 4.6. Under section 547 of the Education Act 1996, it is an offence for any person to cause a nuisance or disturbance on school premises, and that the police may be contacted to assist in the removal of individuals from the premises, where necessary.
- 4.7. As outlined in this policy, the persistent occurrence of unacceptable behaviour can result in individuals being permanently banned from the premises.
- 4.8. The sending of abusive or threatening written or email messages will be treated in the same way as any other abusive or threatening behaviour.
- 4.9. The following are examples of inappropriate behaviour which may result in sanctions being issued against an individual:
 - Causing intentional damage to school property
 - Breaching the school's security procedures
 - Verbal abuse: swearing, talking in an aggressive manner, using offensive language or raising their voice at another individual
 - Making racist or sexual comments, or discriminating against any member of staff or student for any reason of position, gender or any other personal characteristic or behaviour
 - Physical violence
 - Physically intimidating an individual such as by standing in very close proximity to him/her
 - Writing or online messaging abusive or defamatory comments regarding an individual or the school, including on social media

5. Use of social media

- 5.1. Everyone is expected to act in an appropriate manner when communicating about the school on social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
- 5.2. Parents and visitors must not attempt to befriend or otherwise contact members of staff or students through social media. Where contact has been attempted, this should be reported to the headteacher.
- 5.3. Online content which is damaging to the Trust/school or any members of the school community should not be posted. In the event of defamation, the Trust/school will consider legal action.
- 5.4. All members of the Trust community, including parents and visitors are encouraged to use social media responsibly in order to set a positive example for students.
- 5.5. Cyber bullying of any kind will not be tolerated and will be dealt with as a serious incident.
- 5.6. Any cases of social media use that breach the guidelines of this policy will be reported to the Leadership Team immediately.
- 5.7. The Leadership Team will report offending individuals using the appropriate 'report abuse' section on the specific social media site, and will arrange a meeting with the individuals concerned to discuss their use of social media.
- 5.8. The individual will be advised to remove any posts or comments that are harmful, immediately.
- 5.9. The Leadership Team may contact the police for legal action where necessary.

6. Managing inappropriate conduct

- 6.1. In the instance of inappropriate behaviour, the Trust school will follow a number of procedures, depending on the severity of the situation:
 - 6.1.1. Contact will be made by a member of the Leadership Team to discuss the issues raised in a meeting or a written warning will be issued
 - 6.1.2. Anyone who is creating a nuisance or disturbance will be asked to leave the premises. The school may issue a letter banning any individual from the site.
 - 6.1.3. If an individual has been previously barred from the premises, or is causing a serious disturbance, the school will contact the police in order for the individual to be removed from the premises.
 - 6.1.4. The school will always contact the police in the event of any serious threat or incidence of violence and assault, and in the event of any actual harm caused to an individual.

7. Monitoring and review

- 7.1. This Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis by the CEO and Board of Trustees and any changes made will be communicated to all parents and staff at the school.