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**Parent and Carer**  
**Communications Policy**



# **Crieff High School**

# **Parent and Carer** **Communications** **Policy**

**August 2023**

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

- 1.1 This policy seeks to define the means by which the school maintains good communications with parents/carers and other stakeholders. It should provide an overview of what parents/carers can expect of the school and, in turn, what the school will expect of parents/carers.
- 1.2 This policy complies with relevant Perth and Kinross Council policy documents, including the [Customer Service Standards](#) (July 2010).
- 1.3 This policy reflects that the school's vision statement:

**A rights respecting school that nurtures, encourages and inspires young people to be the best they can be.**

and our underpinning values:

**Confidence, Teamwork, Determination, Encouragement, Community and Trust.**

**Article 3** - The best interests of the child must be top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children. Its focus on the importance of communication with our community and cultivating trust and respect. It is an important principle that the views of all are listened to so that together we can build the best possible experience for our young people.

## 2. PARENT AND CARER COMMUNICATION WITH THE SCHOOL

The school commits a considerable amount of its time and resources to pupil guidance and support. Each member of the Support for Pupils team works closely with a particular group of pupils whom he or she gets to know well.

They are the first point of contact with the school for any parent/carer wishing to make general enquiries about personal matters or pupil progress in school. Support for Pupils staff work hard at developing good individual relationships with pupils and take a sympathetic and constructive approach to any problems. The team also works in close co-operation with the Educational Psychology Service, Social Work Department and other agencies as needs arise.

Support for Pupils staff, together with Form teachers, monitor attendance and timekeeping on a day to day basis. They are also at the heart of the programmes of social education, personal, curricular and vocational guidance which the school runs. Form teachers are an important part of our school's nurturing approach to supporting young people.

**Parent Council** - There is an active Parent Council which promotes the relationship between school, home and the community. The Parent Council are always keen to hear from parents/carers in order to represent you more closely.

They also welcome parents/carers to join them, getting involved at whatever level suits you. There is more information about the Parent Council in the Parent and Carer section of the school website.

You can contact Cathy Tilbrook, the chairperson for 2023/2024 session, through the school office.

## 2.1 Enquiries

2.1.1 Parents/carers are welcome to raise matters with the school by visiting reception or by telephone **01764 657700**. In many cases, including where a message has to be passed to a pupil, such enquiries can be dealt with directly by the school office staff. Where another member of staff is required to respond, the following will apply:

- **Pupil Absence and Sickness** - The school has a statutory obligation to maintain accurate records of pupil attendance. If your young person is absent from school please alert the school by phone (01764 657799) or by email (CHSAttendance@pkc.gov.uk ) as soon as possible. On the young person's return to school please again, phone, email or send in a letter explaining the reason for the absence. If your young person is absent from school, and we do not know the reason, the school will send you a text message. Any special requests for leave of absence should be made in writing to the Headteacher.
- **Non-urgent enquiries** - In such cases, a message can be left with the office staff who will forward it to the relevant member(s) of staff. In line with the **Council's [Customer Service Standards](#)**, general correspondence (letters, emails and enquiries) will be responded to within **15 working days**. In many cases, however, particularly where there is a time factor, responses will be quicker.
- **Matters requiring an immediate response** - Where a matter is of such urgency that it requires an immediate response, it will be passed to the most appropriate member of staff who will usually be a member of the school's Senior Leadership Team. In most cases, the member of staff will be available to deal with such enquiries at the time of contact. If not, they will advise you when you will be contacted; usually the same day or within 24 hours.
- **Logging of enquiries** - All enquiries that require a member of staff to respond to a parent/carer are logged centrally by the office team, with details of the time and date and the member of staff to whom the enquiry has been passed to. This document is reviewed by the office team daily to quality assure response times. All relevant staff have access to this log for editing and review.
- **Enquiries by email** - All enquiries by email should be directed to the school's generic account [CrieffHigh@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:CrieffHigh@pkc.gov.uk) or direct to a young person's Guidance teacher via:
  - [CHSBarvickHouse@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:CHSBarvickHouse@pkc.gov.uk)
  - [CHSTurretHouse@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:CHSTurretHouse@pkc.gov.uk)
  - [CHSKeltyHouse@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:CHSKeltyHouse@pkc.gov.uk)

This will allow enquiries to be logged for the purpose of quality assurance and for them to be forwarded to the appropriate member of staff, with line managers copied in as appropriate. Parents/carers are advised on the website of broad remit areas within the school in order that they can mark their email for the attention of that person.

Any email to the school will also receive an automated reply confirming receipt and reminding parents/carers of the [Customer Service Standards](#) timescale for responses.

2.2 **Social Media** – parents/carers should not use social media personal/private messaging to contact members of staff.

- 2.3 **Parent/carers complaints** - Should a parent/carers wish to make a formal complaint about any aspect of the school, this should be addressed to the Headteacher. The school follows the [Perth and Kinross Complaints Procedure](#). Such complaints can be made by email, letter, telephone or in person.
- 2.4 **Subject Access Requests (SAR)** – the Data Protection Act 2018 protects individuals from possible misuse of their information, while giving them legal rights to gain access to the information held about them by an organisation or individual within it. If a parent/carers wishes to access information about themselves or their young person this should be submitted in writing to the Council’s Data Protection Team at: [DataProtection@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:DataProtection@pkc.gov.uk)
- 2.5 **Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests** – Members of the public have a legal right under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 to access information held by the Council. If you wish to request information from the Council, please contact the Council’s Freedom of Information Team at: [FOI@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:FOI@pkc.gov.uk)

### 3. THE ROLE OF PARENTS/CARERS IN GOOD HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

The school is keen to work in close partnership with parents/carers – this is the way we work most effectively and achieve the best outcomes for our young people.

Parents/carers’ views are sought on an annual basis through an electronic survey, the findings of which inform our improvement priorities for the coming year.

It is important that parents/carers are aware of developments in education within the school and at a national level. Each session, we hold a series of information evenings to share with parents/carers where we are at and how we can best support young people together. These include events at key times, for example, just before a young person comes to the High School and at times of transition (S2 to S3, S3 to S4, S4 to S5/6).

Presentations from these events are posted on our website.

Communication between the school and home is at its most effective where parents/carers are clear of what is expected of them. The following are ways in which parents/carers can support the work of the school in terms of communication:

#### 3.1 Pupil absence

- 3.1.1 The school’s over-riding obligation is to ensure the safety of the young people entrusted to it, and it is of the highest importance that reasons for any pupil absences are established as a priority each morning. It is therefore essential that parents/carers notify the school as early as possible by telephone where circumstances are likely to result in their young person being absent from school.
- 3.1.2 Where no such notification has been received, parents/carers will be sent a **Groupcall** (see 4.3.1 below) message asking for such information. Parents/carers are requested to respond to such messages as a matter of urgency, as the school will continue to pursue absences until such time as it has established a reason for an absence.

## **3.2 Information Returns**

- 3.2.1 Throughout the session parents/carers will be asked to make returns to the school by a stated deadline. These could be for a number of reasons, such as information data updates, confirmation of attendance of a pupil on a school trip or activity, feedback on reports etc. Whatever the reason, it considerably eases the administrative burden to the school when parents/carers adhere to the deadlines provided.

Communication via email should be directed to the school's generic account:

- [CrieffHigh@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:CrieffHigh@pkc.gov.uk)

## **3.3 Updating the school on personal matters**

- 3.3.1 All our pupils can be affected by things going on at home or in their personal lives and these in turn can have an impact on their learning. It is very helpful for the school to be made aware of anything that a young person may be experiencing away from school that could be having an impact on how they are feeling in school. This could be something such as a family bereavement or friendship difficulties.

Communication via email should be direct to a young person's Guidance teacher via:

- [CHSBarvickHouse@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:CHSBarvickHouse@pkc.gov.uk)
- [CHSTurretHouse@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:CHSTurretHouse@pkc.gov.uk)
- [CHSKeltyHouse@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:CHSKeltyHouse@pkc.gov.uk)

This will allow enquiries to be logged for the purpose of quality assurance and for them to be forwarded to the appropriate member of staff, with line managers copied in as appropriate.

Parents/carers are advised on the website of broad remit areas within the school in order that they can mark their email for the attention of that person.

## **3.4 Updating the school in the event of change of contact details**

- 3.4.1 It is very important that the school has current contact details for parents/carers and other relatives. Parents/carers are requested always to notify the school of such changes, both to their own contact details and those of relatives. This can be a particular problem for the school when it comes to mobile phone numbers.

Communication via email should be directed to the school's generic account:

- [CrieffHigh@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:CrieffHigh@pkc.gov.uk)

## **3.5 Use of Social Media**

- 3.5.1 Consideration should be given regarding the nature of comments made about members of staff on social media platforms. Where a parent/carer has a concern or complaint this should be raised with the school directly so this can be addressed through the complaints procedure (see 2.3 above).

## 4. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND PARENTS/CARERS

### 4.1 The School Handbook

4.1.1 A school handbook is made available to all parents/carers through the school website and is updated by December of each year. This handbook meets the requirements of the Education (School and Placing Information) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 and its purposes include:

- providing a welcome for new parents/carers to the school;
- helping parents/carers to choose a school; and
- helping parents/carers to prepare their young person for school.

4.1.2 The handbook should serve as a practical guide to parents/carers about school, authority and national policies and how these will impact on their young person's experience at the school. It should also give them a good 'feel' for the sort of school that we are.

The school handbook is also available on the school's website or in hard copy upon request.

[Crieff-HS-handbook-2023-24\\_.pdf \(crieffhighschool.org\)](https://www.crieffhighschool.org/Handbook/crieff-HS-handbook-2023-24_.pdf)

### 4.2 Standards and Quality Report

4.2.1 The school is required under the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc (Scotland) Act (2000) to publish an annual report including key performance measures such as those relating to attainment and attendance. This report is published on the school's website in September.

[Standards-and-Quality-Report-2021.22.pdf \(crieffhighschool.org\)](https://www.crieffhighschool.org/Standards-and-Quality-Report-2021.22.pdf)

### 4.3 General Communications to all parents/carers

4.3.1 The school uses a variety of methods to communicate with all parents/carers on matters which are of interest to them. We recognise that the use of acronyms for educational terms can add unnecessary confusion. The school aims to communicate educational terms in full with the acronym in brackets afterwards e.g. Broad General Education (BGE).

- **Groupcall** – this facility allows the school to send short text messages to parents/carers and is usually used only for matters that require to be drawn to parents/carers' attention urgently such as unexplained absences, school bus or club cancellations or severe weather closures.
- **Email** – the school holds parent/carers' email addresses for almost all pupils and is increasingly moving towards this as the means of communication in preference to paper. Such changes will be subject to consultation with parents/carers in advance.
- **Headteacher updates** – the Headteacher updates are published at a frequency of twice a term / monthly and provides parents/carers with an accessible overview of the school's activities.

- **The School Website** – the school website is a very useful resource for parents/carers. As well as providing news updates, the website is the place where parents/carers are most likely to find information they need about the school. This includes the school's calendar of events, the school handbook, school newsletters and other key documents. The school website also provides clear details for parents/carers on how they can contact the school. [www.crieffhighschool.org](http://www.crieffhighschool.org)
- **Twitter account @CrieffHigh** – this is particularly useful for providing updates on pupils' achievements both within the school and in terms of extra-curricular activities. Department twitter accounts provide department specific content – these are regularly shared by own school twitter account.

#### **4.4 Communication regarding the curriculum/learning and teaching**

##### **4.4.1 Tracking and Assessing Pupils' Progress and Planning Future Learning**

Tracking and assessing pupil progress in Crieff High is carried out in a variety of ways.

In classrooms, teachers regularly assess pupil work in order to plan next steps for their learning. This information is passed to Principal Teachers to enable interventions to take place to support individual pupils where necessary. Principal Teachers, in turn, work with Support for Pupils colleagues and SLT to best support all young people.

The data gathered through working with pupils in classes is widely shared in school to ensure that staff have high quality information on the progress of pupils across the school; this information is passed to parents/carers via reporting and parents' evening.

##### **4.4.2 Pupil Progress and Reporting**

Over the course of a session there are many opportunities for parents/carers to be given information on their young person's progress in our school. We offer parents/carers a variety of written reports in the course of the session. Each pupil is issued with interim reports and one full report which summarises progress and identifies next steps to be made during the year.

Parents/carers are invited to contact the school at any point during the report cycle if they need clarification or would simply like to discuss the next steps in their young person's education.

##### **4.4.3 Parents' evenings**

There is one parents' evening per year and an annual written report for each subject area. Should parents/carers wish to discuss their young person's progress, contact should be made in the first instance with the Guidance teacher.

Parents/carers and pupils are also provided with course choice booklets to support them in their choices at the end of S2, S3, S4 and S5. Additional details of curriculum can be found on the subject department pages on the school website.

## **5. SEEKING PARENTS/CARERS' VIEWS**

### **5.1 The Parent Council**

5.1.1 The Parent Council, which meets monthly and is attended by the headteacher, is a key vehicle for parents/carers to share their views with the school leadership. These meetings are also used by the school leadership to provide parents/carers with updates on a wide range of issues, ranging from small changes to procedures to very significant government policy changes. The school is committed to harnessing the potential of the Parent Council as a key forum for interaction with parents/carers, and will always seek to support initiatives raised through this body.

### **5.2 Parent and Carer Involvement in school self-evaluation and annual planning**

5.2.1 The school is also keen to involve parents/carers, as well as other stakeholders, in its annual processes of self-evaluation and planning.

### **5.3 Consultation on proposed change**

5.3.1. The school is committed to consulting parents/carers wherever possible, particularly in cases where significant changes in policy or procedures are under consideration. As well as pupils themselves, parents/carers are key stakeholders within the school community and their views are valued and will be taken into consideration in the making of decisions.

### **5.4 On-going evaluation of events**

5.4.1 The school is also committed to seeking regular feedback from parents/carers on activities such as parents' evenings and we will always issue evaluation forms to seek parents/carers' views on how such events might be improved.

### **5.5. Annual parent/carer survey**

5.5.1 In addition to these methods of seeking parent/carer views, the school also conducts a formal parent/carer survey, covering a wide range of the school's functions, towards the end of each academic session. These questions largely remain the same each year which allows the school to note trends – either positive or negative – in terms of parent/carer responses. A summary of this survey is shared annually with the Parent Council and, where appropriate, their views on next steps sought.

## **6. SCHOOL CONTACT DETAILS:**

- Email Address: CrieffHigh@pkc.gov.uk
- Phone No: 01764 657700
- Website: [www.crieffhigh.org](http://www.crieffhigh.org)
- Twitter: @CrieffHigh
- Address: Pittenzie Road, Crieff, PH7 3JN