



# THE EAST MANCHESTER ACADEMY

## PARENT/CARER COMMUNICATION POLICY (including) HOME ACADEMY AGREEMENT

**Policy Name: Parent/Carer Communication Policy**

**G Hutchence**

**Date: November 2009**

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## Introduction

The East Manchester Academy recognises the importance of clear and effective communications with all stakeholders (pupils and parents/carers, 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 East Manchester 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. At regular opportunities throughout the year, 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 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 and home visits are encouraged
- Parents /Carers are contacted for positive as well as negative reasons
- Information is given to parents /carers on what pupils are taught will be provided and tips for helping their child circulated

- 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 the collocated District Library, adult education providers will be encouraged to organise daytime or out of school learning programmes for parents.

## Communication

Communications can take a variety of forms: verbal (through meetings or by telephone), written (through letters, notes in planners, or email) or through the Academy Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). 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 Principal or Vice Principals for advice prior to response.

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

- All prospective parents /carers may receive an Academy prospectus upon request or in person at various community locations, within primary Schools or by coming to the Academy reception or library.
- Prospective parents /carers are invited to an Open Evening in the September preceding the year of entry to the school.
- Prospective parents /carers are invited, along with their child, to an induction evening in July where the main channels of communication are outlined, essential information given and information about the Academy is presented
- Parents /Carers are invited to a "Year 7 Settling In Evening" in the October of Year 7 to meet the pupil's form tutor and review how the pupil has settled into the Academy. Academic and pastoral information will be duly shared.
- Parents /Carers are invited to attend one full parent carer consultation or evening each year to review the academic and personal and social progress of their child.
- Parents /Carers will receive a report of academic, personal and social progress each term.

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in an Academy or school, 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 all parents/carers being encouraged to give an email address for prompt and effective communication.

Key Academy documents will be translated in community languages and a translator made available, if required, to ensure effective communication.

## **The Academy VLE**

As the Academy moves towards the use of e-portfolios and an online curriculum, much more information about learning expectations will be accessible to parents/carers via the internet.

The VLE will be a powerful tool for motivating pupils as it will give them more choice and flexibility about when and where they complete their learning. It will also encourage parent/carer involvement in learning, especially with extended learning tasks.

The e-portfolio will become an important record of progress and achievement which will give a more holistic view of progress for parents, allowing them to have more meaningful discussions about their child with Academy staff.

The Academy VLE will also be a good source of general information and will include;

- ✓ School prospectus
- ✓ Curriculum resources
- ✓ Holiday dates
- ✓ Copies of letters to parents/carers
- ✓ Information about lessons / additional study
- ✓ Special events
- ✓ Newsletters and updates
- ✓ Essential Academy Emergency details

Parents/Carers will also have access to data about their child's attendance via the VLE.

## **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.

## **Academy Pupil Planners**

Each pupil has a planner for noting down homework and the date for completion. It is also an important tool for communication between parents /carers and teachers. It contains for example;

- ✓ Uniform list
- ✓ Timetables
- ✓ House activities
- ✓ Holiday dates
- ✓ Notes for /from parents /carers
- ✓ Acknowledgment of letters
- ✓ Weekly comments / notes section

Parents /Carers are asked to sign the planner on a weekly basis. They are also asked to write notes regarding a child’s absence on the page for the day of absence.

## **E-mail**

Parents /carers may wish to contact the Academy via e-mail as an alternative to telephone or letter. The school e-mail address is: [office@theeastmanchesteracademy.org.uk](mailto:office@theeastmanchesteracademy.org.uk)

## **Celebrating success**

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

## **Parent / Carer Consultation Group**

Our intention is to establish regular meeting with parents /carers who may wish to support the Academy with ideas for progression.

## **Parent /Carer Involvement.**

All parents /carers will receive a questionnaire on many aspects of the service provided by the Academy. Replies are confidential and will be collated and analysed by the Community Vice Principal. Issues arising will be shared with the Principal and discussed by Governors, the Academy Leadership Team, staff and the pupil council.

There will be a twice weekly parent /carer's drop-in surgery.

## **Parent/Carer Support Adviser**

There will be a school-based Parent /Carer Support Adviser within the Academy whose role will include;

- Encouraging pupils, with support from their families, to lead healthy lifestyles – taking regular exercise; having a good diet; understand the necessity to be well hydrated; get plenty of sleep and have good levels of drug awareness
- Helping parents and carers to be more involved in their child's learning; developing better expectations of attendance and punctuality and help families to improve this
- Enhancing parents and carers' expectations of their children taking qualifications and staying on at the Academy at post 16.

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

The East Manchester Academy recognises the importance of positive relationships with parents/carers of all children with additional need. 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/carers to ensure effective communication with parents.

All staff within the Academy 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 and EAL policy)

## **Home- Academy communications**

- A calendar of school events is produced at the start of each term and issued to parents /carers and pupils.
- A school Newsletter is made available to parents /carers at the end of each term. It contains general details of school events and activities. We will send other letters of a general nature when necessary and store copies on the school's website.

- The Academy encourages 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.
- The Academy 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 Support staff will contact a parent/carer (by telephone, if possible) to find out the reason for the absence.

## **Communication with other schools and outside agencies**

Prior to pupils joining Y7, they are visited in their primary schools to gain further information about them to help and support their transition to The East Manchester Academy. We recognise that children have diverse needs, and we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed on better ways to meet these needs, so that children may participate more fully. Support comes from medical services (such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy), from Educational Psychologists, from health professionals and specialists.

It also comes from various welfare-focused services, such as Educational Welfare, Social Services and Child Protection Units. We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our school should provide a safe and secure environment. (See the Academy Safeguarding and Child Protection policy)

We hold information on all pupils in our Academy and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. Details will be sent to parents /carers about the types of data we hold, why we hold that data, and who we may pass it on to. This is a requirement under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Parents /Carers have a right to view the information we hold and we have contact details of the agencies to which our information is passed.

## **Accessibility of Information**

At regular intervals throughout the year The East Manchester 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.

**Adopted by the TEMA On** .....

**Chair of Academies Trust Board** .....

**Principal** .....

**Review date** .....