



Watford Grammar School for Girls

Staff Communication Policy

Date Adopted by SLT	September 2021
Next review date	Based on required updates

This policy sets out guidelines for staff to follow in order to ensure that communication is professional, effective and manageable. All spoken and written communication between members of staff, pupils and parents should be polite and professional at all times. The policy should be referred to in conjunction with the school's ICT Acceptable Use Agreement and the school's E-Safety Policy.

Telephone

1. If calling a parent you must leave a message if they do not answer. This is to ensure that the parent is aware that the school called and which member of staff to return the call to.
2. If you become concerned about the content or tone taken during a phone call you should politely end the call. Then contact your line manager or a member of the SLT to raise your concerns. See the Dealing with Abusive Adult Behaviour Policy any relevant guidance.

Email

1. Staff should check their school email account on each school day when they are in school. They should also log into Sims as early as possible to check lesson cover, room changes etc.
2. The Cover list will be emailed to all teaching staff by 8.15 each day and added to your SIMS profile. On some occasions the list will need to be updated during the school day and affected staff will be contacted directly.
3. Staff should always use their school email account when corresponding with parents, pupils and other individuals when communicating on any matters pertaining to school business, pupils or staff. Staff are not permitted to use a personal email to make contact with a pupil or parent.
4. Staff should reply to emails at their discretion and should not feel obliged to answer emails before school, after school or during weekends and holidays. The exceptions to this include if a pupil is at risk, an event has occurred and a swift response is required, something unexpected has happened on a school trip or any other urgent matter. In these cases the school's contingency plan should be followed. It is advised that staff include this paragraph in the signature line:

To ensure staff well-being Watford Grammar School for Girls advise staff not to reply to emails outside normal working hours. Staff check their emails at the beginning and end of the school day. If your email is regarding a safeguarding matter then please send a copy of the email to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at dsl@watfordgirls.hert.sch.uk.

5. It is recommended that staff only send emails during normal working hours i.e. between 8am and 4pm weekdays, or use the delay facility to ensure the email is sent during working hours.
6. If an email is about a specific pupil the subject line should give the initials of the name and the Form group.
7. Staff should only send emails to 'All Staff' and 'All Teaching Staff' if the content is relevant to all members of the email group. Emails pertaining to specific pupils may be sent to these when relevant, but it is preferable that such emails are only sent to members of staff who teach/tutor that pupil. This information is available on Sims.
8. Subject staff/tutors should copy in their HoD/HoY when corresponding via email with a parent.
9. An email from a parent should be responded to within 3 working days. (excluding weekends and holidays). If the issue raised requires some investigation, a holding email should be sent and then followed up as soon as possible. Emails containing information about pupil's medical appointments or requests for leave of absence should be forwarded to the Attendance Officer; absence@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk (Y7-11) sixthformabsence@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk (Y12-13)
10. Part time staff may wish to include an indication of their working hours / days on the signature line or to use an 'out of office' response on their email.
11. If an email is received that is a Safeguarding matter, then you must contact a Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.
12. Staff should bare in mind that all school emails could be passed to named person in the event of a Subject Access Request.
13. If staff receive an email that includes content that they find challenging, upsetting or aggressive, they should not feel obliged to answer it before consulting their line manager. They should send

a holding email and then discuss with their line manager. A joint response could be sent or the line-manager may respond for the member of staff. A copy of such emails should also be sent to SLT.

14. It is good practice to begin all emails, even if it is a reply, with a salutation and acknowledge the receipt of any email, especially if the sender has completed a task for you.

Letters

Letters will rarely be sent by post from members of staff, except for members of SLT. Letters written on school letter paper should be checked by a line manager before being sent by post. Letters written on school letter paper should only be sent if the subject matter of the letter pertains to school business, pupils or staff.

Face to Face interviews/meetings

1. All meetings may only take place by appointment, and upon agreement with your line manager or a member of SLT.
2. A Teams meeting should be offered initially and then face to face meetings should be arranged only if necessary.

References

1. Staff may be asked to supply references for current and former pupils. All requests for references should initially be sent to the Office Supervisor, Jacqui Paddick, who will forward them onto the relevant member of staff. A copy of pupil references should then be sent to the Office Supervisor to be kept on file. KS4 pupils report will only refer to predicted grades
2. All requests for references from current and past members of staff should go to the Headmistress. A member of staff may also ask their line manager to complete a reference for them. In this case, the line manager may write the reference and should then send it to the Headmistress to be countersigned.

Parentmail

1. Letters and messages to go to parents should be sent out on Parentmail. This is sent out to parents weekly on a Thursday and includes a message from the Headmistress. Chris Bevan coordinates Parentmail. Items to be included should be sent to CB by Thursday 9am in order to be included in the week's Parentmail.
2. Other letters and messages can be sent out to all parents or groups of parents via the office on office@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk

Contacting the School: Guidance for Parents

The most effective method of contacting the school is through email. This will allow teaching staff to respond in a timely way and for your enquiry to be directed to the most relevant member of staff.

All queries will be responded to within three working days, unless the subject matter is related to a child protection issue. Please take into consideration that many members of staff work on a part time basis and this may impact on response time.

Contact by Email

- Contact the school through admin@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk, unless you know the direct email address.
- In the subject line give the initial of your child and their Form.
- If possible, restrict the time that the email is sent to normal working hours i.e. 8am to 4pm

Contact by telephone

- Teaching staff have very high teaching loads and therefore no telephone call will be put through to a member of teaching staff directly. A message will be taken by a member of the administration staff and the member of staff will return your call.
- Please ensure you give a telephone number and a time range which you can be contacted

Face to face meetings

- All meetings must be made by appointment only. Initially meetings will take place via Microsoft teams and then if deemed appropriate on site.