



PACE

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION - ADULT EDUCATION - VIRTUAL EDUCATION

Communication Plan, July 2025

Portland Public Schools Communication Plan

<https://www.portlandk12.org/about/communication-plan>

Portland Public Schools has created a district wide communication plan to explain the strategies used by the district to share and receive information with all stakeholders.

Portland Public Schools Website

<https://www.portlandk12.org>

Portland Public Schools Organizational Structure

Board of Education

Beth Goodman
Angela Shinaver
Patrick Duff
Brian Pohl
Andy Huhn
Kurt Sandborn
Susan Moyer

Central Office

William Heath, Superintendent
Derrick Stair, Associate Superintendent of Finance and Operations
Gary Bond, Director of Operations
Emily McAlpine, Director of Elementary Education
Jennifer Warner, Director of Secondary Education
LAcY Schneider, Special Education Supervisor

PACE Staff

Principal: Anthony Deardorff - adeardorff@portlandk12.org
Secretary: Jess Bozung - jbozung@portlandk12.org
Administrative Assistant: Karla Wittenbach - kwittenbach@portlandk12.org
Counselor: Katie Todd - ktodd@portlandk12.org

Math Teacher: Ken Fish - kfish@portlandk12.org
English Teacher: Jennifer Stephens - jstephens@portlandk12.org
Science Teacher: Tracy Gibbs - tgibbs@portlandk12.org
Social Studies Teacher: Breezy Sandborn - bsandborn@portlandk12.org
Virtual Math Teacher: Kayla Green - kgreen@portlandk12.org
Virtual English Teacher: Ariel Davids - adavids@portlandk12.org
Virtual Music Teacher: Mike Sulecki - msulecki@portlandk12.org
Virtual Spanish Teacher: Kari Welch - kwelch@portlandk12.org

Special Education Case Manager: TBD

PACE Communication Plan

Staff to Parents/Guardians

Effective communication between teachers and parents/guardians is crucial for the success of students. Here are some key principles and strategies for effective teacher communication with parents/guardians:

Establish Consistent Channels of Communication: Create clear channels of communication through which parents can easily reach out to you. This could include email, phone calls, parent-teacher conferences, or a communication app/platform. This should be communicated to parents/guardians and students through the course syllabus.

Timely Responses: All responses should be completed within 48 hours of contact from a parent/guardian.

Be Proactive: Initiate communication with parents regularly, not just when there are problems. Update them on their child's progress, upcoming events, or any changes in the classroom. Provide concrete examples and actionable steps they can take to support their child's learning. It is important to collaborate with the family in order to best support their child.

Be Approachable and Open: Create a welcoming atmosphere where parents feel comfortable approaching you with questions, concerns, or feedback. Respond **promptly** and empathetically to their inquiries. Also, understand that each family has unique circumstances and challenges. Be flexible and accommodating in your communication approach, taking into account the cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity of your students and their families.

Seek Feedback: Encourage parents to provide feedback on your communication efforts. Ask them how you can better support their needs and preferences when it comes to communication.

Staff will be expected to communicate through the following platforms in order to provide updates on instruction, course pacing, academic achievement, positive behavior, discipline and any other pertinent information.

Course Syllabus:

A course syllabus is required to be sent out at the beginning of each course. The course syllabus should include the following -

- Course name and description
- Teacher name, preferred method of contact, any important information regarding the teacher specifically

- Course pacing overview
- Grade expectations and scale
- Supplies needed
- Any information specific to the class that should be communicated with parents/guardians and students

Email:

1. Staff are able to utilize their school email to communicate with parents/guardians to inform them of the following -
 - Instructional updates
 - Changes in course pacing
 - Student academic achievement
 - Positive behavior
 - Discipline and/or behavior concerns
 - Any other pertinent information
2. Staff are expected to respond to parent/guardian email communications within 48 hours of the received message.

Phone:

1. Staff are able to utilize their school phone to communicate with parents/guardians to inform them of the following -
 - Instructional updates
 - Changes in course pacing
 - Student academic achievement
 - Positive behavior
 - Discipline and/or behavior concerns
 - Any other pertinent information
2. Staff are expected to respond to parent/guardian phone communications within 48 hours of the received message.

Skyward:

1. Course grades must be updated on the Monday of each week.
2. Grades must be current and up to date with current assignments, and assessments.

Staff to Students

Effective communication from teachers to students is essential for creating a supportive, engaging, and productive learning environment that fosters academic growth and personal development.

Capturing Kids Hearts:

The EXCEL model will be utilized consistently throughout the school environment. It will provide the foundation and development of healthy relationships between staff and students.

Please see the EXCEL model below for the structure utilized within the classroom setting. The classroom Social Contract should also be clearly posted and interacted with throughout the school day.

E	Engage	Meet and Greet and Get to Know
X	X-plore	Discover the Individual's Needs and Interests
C	Communicate	You Care and Make Your Message Relevant
E	Empower	Your Teaching Becomes Their Doing
L	Launch	Meaningful Ending and Sending

Course Syllabus:

A course syllabus is required to be sent out at the beginning of each course. The course syllabus should include the following -

- Course name and description
- Teacher name, preferred method of contact, any important information regarding the teacher specifically
- Course pacing overview
- Grade expectations and scale
- Policies (late work, missing assignments, etc.)
- Supplies needed
- Any information specific to the class that should be communicated with parents/guardians and students

Skyward:

1. Course grades must be updated on the Monday of each week.
2. Grades must be current and up to date with current assignments, and assessments.

Parents/Guardians to School Communication

The following information is guidance for parent/guardian communication to the school. It is important to note that we welcome any and all communication even if it is not listed below.

Daily Attendance:

If your student is going to be late or absent to school please call the office at 517-647-2987 or email the Clerical Assistant. Please leave a voicemail if you do not reach someone. If you are unable to call, please send in a note (especially for appointments) within 24 hours with your student. Also, if your student has a doctor or dentist appointment, it is always helpful to get the "school excuse" note from their office. They should drop these items off to the Secretary or Clerical Assistant in the office.

Email:

1. Staff emails can be found on our website - <https://pace.portlandk12.org>
2. Parents/guardians should email staff with any questions or concerns regarding things pertaining to or happening in the classroom. Contact should only be made to Administration if requests to the staff member go unanswered or if concerns are not addressed.

General School Information:

Portland Middle School

Address:

1090 Ionia Rd.

Portland, MI 48875

Phone Number:

517-647-2987

Long Term Absences (3+ days and/or prearranged):

If your student is going to be absent for a longer period of time and this is a prearranged absence (vacation, etc.), notification should be made at least 1 week prior to the absence.

1. Email the student's teachers
2. Request an overview of work that is going to be missed
3. Notify the main office of absence

****Reminder:** it is the responsibility of the student to complete all work missed while on a prearranged absence (no matter the length), unless otherwise agreed upon by the teacher.

Meeting:

If you would like to schedule a meeting with a teacher, please contact the teacher via email or phone to set up a meeting.

If you would like to schedule a meeting with a Building Administrator, please contact the teacher via email or phone to set up a meeting.

Relevant or Important Information:

The following list are examples of situations where it would be appropriate to give the school or staff a heads up in order to fully support your student (please note these are not required to communicate but rather a suggestion or helpful list) -

1. Handle with care situations (ex. Death in the family, life altering events, mental health updates, etc.)
2. Health update or change that may affect the classroom setting
3. Medication update or adjustment that may affect the classroom setting
4. Social concerns or awareness
5. Academic concerns or questions
6. Outside diagnosis that is relevant to the school setting
7. Behavioral concerns or change in consistent behavior pattern
8. Learning style and/or effective strategies to support the student
9. Any information that parents/guardians believe will better support the student’s learning and overall well-being in the school setting.

Students to School and Staff Communication

As a middle school student, it is important to have the confidence in yourself to take an active role in your education. Effective communication will guide a student towards empowerment in their educational career and success in the school setting.

Academic Communication:

How/when and what should I discuss with my teacher...	
Through Email	During Class Time
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request for extra copies of missing assignments 2. I lost something and need assistance 3. Notification of completion of a missing assignment or late work completed 4. Long term absence and request for school work 5. Request for extra help/meeting 6. Struggling or getting behind in class and not comfortable to speak with teacher in class 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Question on current assignment, project, assessment 2. I lost something and need assistance 3. Supplies needed 4. Support needed at that moment in time regarding a social situation 5. Support needed on note taking

7. Information that student is not sharing in person with the staff member	
--	--

Academic Questions:

The following list is composed of examples of topics that may be beneficial to approach your teacher about. This conversation can take place in person, or through email depending on your level of comfort -

1. I have a question regarding a grade on an assignment or assessment...
2. I have a question about an upcoming assignment or project...
3. I did not receive feedback and am looking for some...
4. The notes that I took during class did not meet my expectations, can I get support on note taking...
5. Asking for clarification on course material
6. Seek guidance on academic goals or progress
7. Tips or resources on time management, test preparation, etc.

Academic Support:

1. Speak with your teacher about extra support/help.
2. After School Tutoring: Portland Middle School offers free after school tutoring Monday through Thursday.
3. Saturday School: Portland Middle School offers Saturday School twice per month for extra academic support or behavioral intervention.

Class Schedule:

All class schedule requests and/or changes must go through the Counseling Department.

You can access your class schedule on Skyward at any time.

Discipline:

All discipline will be handled through the Dean of Students and main office. If you are concerned about your own behavior or another student's actions you are encouraged to schedule a meeting with the Dean of Students to discuss.

Email:

1. Staff emails can be found on our school website - <https://pace.portlandk12.org>
2. Students can utilize email to appropriately communicate with teachers and administration.

**It is important to remember to utilize email etiquette when publishing an email. Here are some tips for email etiquette -

- Use a clear and descriptive subject line (this should not be a full sentence)
- Use a polite greeting
- Be clear and concise with messaging
- Use proper grammar and punctuation

- Be mindful of tone and context
- Use a professional sign off (ex. “Sincerely”, “Thank you”, etc. followed by your name)

Illness:

If you are feeling sick throughout the school day, you should request to go to the office to call home or speak with the school nurse. Please do not text/call your parent/guardian regarding an illness unless you have notified the office that you are feeling ill.

Mental Health Support:

Students should utilize the Google Form to submit a request to see the Counselor. The Google Form is located in the portlandk12.org bookmarks for students.

If it is a mental health emergency please speak with your teacher immediately or directly to the office to seek support.

Proposal:

If you would like to form a student group or have an idea pertaining to the school, please reach out to the Principal with your formal proposal. All proposals will be reviewed.

Skyward:

If you have any questions regarding your grades please check Skyward first. If any further questions exist, please reach out to your teacher.

The purpose of the PACE Communication plan is to facilitate timely and efficient communication between all stakeholders.

Internal Communication Organizational Chart for PACE
Who to communicate with on the following categories (in order).

	1st Contact	2nd Contact	3rd Contact
Curriculum/ Instruction	Principal Director of Secondary Education (This relationship is collaborative, please see both)		Superintendent
Discipline	Principal	Superintendent	
Special Education	Case Manager	Principal	Special Education Director
Student Schedule/Course Offerings	Administrative Assistant	Principal	Superintendent
Student Social/ Mental Health	Counselor	Principal	Superintendent
Athletics	Principal	Athletic Director	Superintendent
Budget/Supplies	Principal	Associate Superintendent of Finance and Operations	Superintendent
Maintenance	Principal	Director of Operations	Associate Superintendent of Finance and Operations
Cleaning	Principal	Director of Operations	Associate Superintendent of Finance and Operations
Security/ Emergency Situations (Follow Response Protocol)	Principal	Superintendent	School Board

External Communication Organizational Chart for PACE

Who to contact when you have a question about the following categories (in order).

Topic	1st Contact	2nd Contact	3rd Contact	4th Contact
Academics	Teacher	Principal	Superintendent	School Board
Curriculum	Teacher	Principal	Director of Secondary Education	Superintendent
Discipline	Teacher	Principal	Superintendent	School Board
Attendance	Secretary	Principal	Superintendent	School Board
Truancy	Secretary	Principal	Superintendent	School Board
Athletics	Principal	Athletic Director	Superintendent	School Board
Special Education	Case Manager	Principal	Director of Special Education	Superintendent
Scheduling	Administrative Assistant	Principal		
Transportation	Director of Operations	Associate Superintendent	Superintendent	School Board

PACE Methods of Communication

Topic	Website	Phone	Email
Emergency Alerts	X	X	X
Closings	X	X	X
News			X
Academics / Testing			X
Illness		X	
Attendance	X	X	

**Point of Contact
Progression Chart**



PLEASE REACH OUT TO US

(517) 647-4161

TOPIC	1ST CONTACT	2ND CONTACT	3RD CONTACT	4TH CONTACT	5TH CONTACT
Classroom/Instruction	Teacher	Principal	Director of Ed	Superintendent	School Board
Academics	Teacher	Counselor	Principal	Superintendent	School Board
Curriculum	Teacher	Principal	Director of Ed	Superintendent	School Board
Behavior/Discipline	Teacher	Behavior Coach/Dean	Principal	Superintendent	School Board
Special Education	Teacher	Director of Special Education	Principal	Superintendent	School Board
Athletic	Coach	Activities Coordinator (AD)	Principal	Superintendent	School Board
Extracurricular	Advisor	Activities Coordinator (AD)	Principal	Superintendent	School Board
Technology	Teacher	Principal	Associate Superintendent	Superintendent	School Board
School - Other	Principal	Superintendent	School Board		
Transportation	Director of Operations	Associate Superintendent	Superintendent	School Board	
Food Services	Director of Food Services	Principal	Associate Superintendent	Superintendent	School Board
Buildings & Grounds	Director of Operations	Associate Superintendent	Superintendent	School Board	
District Protocols/Policies	Superintendent	School Board			
Oakwood (517) 647-2991	Westwood (517) 647-2989	Middle School (517) 647-2985	High School (517) 647-2981	PACE (517) 647- 2987	Transportation (517) 647-2993
Student Mental Health		Counselor	Principal	988 Suicide Hotline	OK2SAY (855) 565-2729
School Safety (Immediate Concern Call 911)		Principal	Superintendent	Police Department	OK2SAY (855) 565-2729