

BFIS PARENT-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION POLICY

Updated April 1, 2025

I. INTRODUCTION

Each parent at the Benjamin Franklin International School (BFIS) plays a crucial role in our educational community. We strongly encourage parents to communicate with the school regarding issues that are specifically related to their child, including, among others, issues related to the child's academic progress, behavioral and social concerns, and personal safety. Your insights and feedback are invaluable in shaping our educational environment. In addition to student-specific issues, each parent is encouraged to communicate with the school regarding teacher-specific issues, which may relate to a teacher's conduct concerning one child or their conduct regarding the class as a whole. For example, this could include the widespread need for individual tutors to supplement classroom instruction, lack of teacher availability to students, and teacher actions or conduct that negatively impact the class. We also want parents to share their thoughts on school-wide issues. Constructive parent input helps our Board of Trustees and School leadership to implement better policies. .

II. RATIONALE

The BFIS Parent-School Communication Policy is designed to facilitate communication among parents, teachers, and administrators securely and confidentially. This is to ensure that all student-specific, teacher-specific, and school-wide issues are resolved as quickly as possible while protecting the confidentiality of all school community members. All communication should be respectful and honest. If feasible, please avoid anonymous communication. Communications should never be hostile or damage someone's reputation in any way. This policy is intended to encourage all parents to share their concerns and ideas for improving the school, regardless of their personality, language ability, or concerns about impact on their children. Therefore, this policy suggests the most appropriate procedure for addressing student-specific, teacher-specific, and institutional issues. However, this policy is a guideline, not a strict rule for parents. It is understood that many parents may not be fully informed about this policy and may not consistently utilize its procedures. For this policy to be effective, teachers and school leaders will help to direct parent concerns to the appropriate staff in order to find solutions for their issues. We fully recognize that communication from parents is essential to our school's mission and core values and the success of our students' academic, social, and motivational development.

III. COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

- A. Step 1. For **student-specific issues**, which generally relate to a specific child's academic, social, or emotional welfare, the parents should contact and arrange a meeting with the child's class teacher (Elementary School) or the subject teacher and/or the Advisor (Secondary School). Parents may also address social/behavioral concerns to the Section Counselor. The teacher most closely associated with the matter that has arisen can discuss the issue with you to develop the most appropriate solution and, if applicable, can make any necessary referrals. If the matter cannot be resolved at this level, the parents should proceed to Step 2.
- B. Step 2. For all **student-specific issues not resolved in Step 1**, and for all **teacher-specific and institutional issues** that are not student-specific, the parents should contact the relevant Grade Level Leader or, if the issue relates primarily to an academic issue, the relevant Learning Leader (department chair), who will investigate the issue as quickly as possible, and, if appropriate, arrange a further meeting with the teacher concerned. If the problem cannot be resolved at this level, the parents should proceed to Step 3.
- C. Step 3. For all **student-specific and teacher-specific issues that are not resolved in Step 2**, the parents should contact the relevant Head or Associate Head of Section (Elementary or Secondary), who will investigate the issue as quickly as possible, in consultation with the Grade Level Leader or the Learning Leader who considered the issue in Step 2, and, if appropriate under the circumstances, arrange a meeting with the parents to resolve the issue. Although most issues are likely to be resolved during or before this Step, if the matter cannot be resolved at this level, the parents may proceed to Step 4. Parents who would like to express concerns regarding **broader institutional issues**, including, among others, matters related to the general curriculum, additional program development and support, and physical facilities, should contact the relevant Head or Associate Head of Section directly for information and consideration.
- D. Step 4. For all **student-specific and teacher-specific issues not resolved in Step 3**, the parents may request a discretionary review by the Head of School, who may delegate his or her authority to the Associate Head of School. In determining whether to grant a request for review of the issue, the Head or Associate Head of School should consult with the respective Head or Associate Head of Section and request a written summary of his or her investigation and conclusions, a copy of which should be made available to the parents requesting the review. In their sole discretion, the Head or Associate Head of School may grant or deny the request for discretionary review by written notice to the parents. If the request is granted, the Head or Associate Head of School should arrange a meeting with the parents as soon as possible to resolve the issue. In undertaking this

review, the Head or Associate Head of the School, in their sole discretion, may consult further with any of the individuals employed by the school who have been a part of the resolution process and should promptly advise the Chair of the Board of Trustees. The Head or Associate Head of School's decision to deny a request for a review or their decision regarding the issue raised by the parents shall be final.

E. Sensitive Concerns In some rare instances parents may be uncomfortable contacting the designated teacher/administrator given the nature of their concern. In these cases you may choose to provide your feedback to any member of school senior leadership (Head of School, Asst. Head of School, Head of Primary/Secondary, Asst. Head of Primary/Secondary).

IV. THE ROLE OF THE PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

Parents should note that, in addition to the formal procedures outlined in the BFIS Parent-School Communication Policy, our school currently benefits from a strong partnership with our voluntary Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). The PTA provides an array of resources, including Grade Representatives for every grade from Early Childhood through Secondary School. The Grade Representatives link the school and parent community and create grade-level chatrooms for all parents in their grade. The PTA President is a parent volunteer nominated and elected in May of each academic year by currently active PTA members (defined as parents who are Grade Representatives and members of the PTA Core Team). The PTA President appoints two parent volunteers to serve as Grade Representative Coordinators for the elementary and secondary schools, respectively. These Grade Representative Coordinators then appoint parent volunteers as Grade Representatives for each grade level (ideally 2 per grade). These Grade Representatives are introduced to all parents in their grade levels at the beginning of each academic year. The Grade Representatives monitor parent concerns and bring any ongoing issues to the attention of the Head or Associate Head of School in regular, pre-scheduled meetings. In addition, the Grade Representatives may assist parents with identifying the person best positioned to respond to their questions or concerns, as recommended in The BFIS Parent-School Communication Policy. Grade Representatives also participate in regular meetings with School leadership to discuss ongoing initiatives at the School and to seek opportunities for collaboration and input from parents. Parent involvement in this informal, voluntary process is intended to result in improved

communications among parents, teachers, and administrators and enhance support for the school's mission and core values.