

LANGUAGE

AND COMMUNICATION POLICY



Language is the ability to understand words and sentences so that we can follow what is being said to us. It involves organizing our thoughts and ideas using appropriate vocabulary into grammatically correct sentences ready for talking.

Speech is the ability to combine sounds together to make words.

Communication is the ability to say the right thing, at the right time in the right way. It involves using speech and language skills to send messages we want to send to others.

Non-verbal communication is the ability to understand and use gestures, body language, facial expression and our voice to help communicate our message.

Speech, Language and Communication Need encompasses difficulties children may experience with all three areas of communication. Some children may only have difficulties in one area whilst others may have problems in all three.

AIMS

To encourage children to communicate confidently by providing them with purposeful language interactions and experiences.

- To create an environment which promotes active listening and learning and productive talking: a caring environment where others listen, show an interest and value what they say.
- To encourage children to communicate in a style appropriate to the audience and purpose of the task.
- To provide real situations, affording the children the opportunity to develop a range of strategies and skills which will enable them to function in society as confident well-spoken adults.
- To create opportunities for speaking and listening across all areas of the curriculum, as we believe speaking and listening is a vital part of the whole learning process and can not be developed in isolation.

Principles

- Activities for speaking and listening should reflect inter-relationships with reading and writing and recognize each enriches the development of the other.
- Communication skills underpin the basis for all future learning and are fundamental for accessing all areas of the curriculum.
- Where appropriate, all staff use basic signing and symbols to augment spoken language.
- Speaking and listening activities should include real purposes and audiences.

ASSESSMENT AND RECORDING

On initial entry to school the students are assessed and any causes for concern are identified and monitored. Additional plan is designed for students with learning disabilities.

Referral Process

If a parent or staff member has any concerns over a child's speech and language needs, they will speak to either the class teacher. The school will ensure that parents are kept fully informed with proceedings and will fully engage with Language services to ensure effective support and delivery of these special programmes.

Staff Development

All new members of staff will receive training on the strategies and approaches followed by the school.

COMMUNICATION

Communications Policy

1 Purpose

To promote partnerships between the school, parents, students and the wider community through efficient and effective communication.

2 Definition of communication

Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications and needs to recognize that the quality of their communications reflect on the school's reputation. Parents and students also have a part to play in reflecting the school's reputation. We strive to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and effective in their purpose.

3 Principles

Communication on issues that affect the safety and wellbeing of a student will be treated as a priority. The school holds emergency contact details for all students and families are asked to alert the school immediately if contact information needs to be revised.

Staff will always seek to establish friendly relationships with parents, but they will ensure relationships are professional and parents will be addressed in a formal manner. Staff are to avoid developing close relationships with parents or guardians.

4 Introduction

American Academy school recognizes the importance of clear and effective communications with all involved parties (students, parents and staff, the local and wider community outside agencies, etc), and is committed to being open and accessible for all who have an interest in the school.

Parents have a key role to play in their child's education. The school will make every effort to encourage and make arrangements for parents to contribute to creating a shared view of their child's needs.

5 Aims of the policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that effective communication and consultation takes place between the school, parents, students, and other interested parties and that there are robust processes to facilitate this.

The school recognizes that engaging and working with parents is a vital key in providing their child with an excellent education. Parents are welcomed throughout the year to convey to us what they expect from and think of the school.

Our aims include the following:

- To make the school as welcoming and inclusive as possible.
- All written and telephone enquiries will be dealt with promptly.
- A variety of forms of communication with parents for example, telephone contact, e-mail, post and text.
- Parents are contacted for positive as well as negative reasons.
- Information is given to parents on what students will be taught and tips for helping their child will be provided.
- Parents will be encouraged to help or support their child's learning at school and at home. Information will be provided in a timely way to enable this support to be effective.

6 Letters

Staff will always reply to a letter from parents as quickly as possible. Copies of important correspondence with parents will be placed in student's files. Any letters of concern or complaint should be dealt with in accordance with the Head of School and letters should be placed in the student's files.

The school will use the school's official letterhead for letters where possible.

Whole school information is included in a weekly newsletter, published every month. Hard copies of the newsletter are available from the school upon request.

Parents and carers are encouraged to provide the school with a current email address for prompt and effective communication. The use of a parent or staff member's first name is not appropriate, therefore all communications will be to and from Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Dr etc and sign off is always the full name Ms/Mrs/Mr/Dr Teacher's last name.

7 E-mail

E-mail is a quick, effective way of communicating necessary information and is the school's preferred method of communication. Emails should be short and clear and the same care and consideration should be given as when sending a letter.

Parents may wish to contact the school via email for a general enquiry as an alternative to telephone or letter.

Under no circumstances should staff contact students or parents using their own personal email address.

8 Telephone Calls

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school, where teachers may be teaching full-time and running clubs or working with students at lunchtime or after school. Parents 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.

9 Texts

Text is an acceptable form for parents to send short messages on a school phone (excusing an absence etc...)

10 Absence

If a child is absent, parents are asked to contact the school as soon as possible on the morning of the absence, for full details please refer to the Attendance Policy.

11 Meeting with Parents

Parents wishing to meet a member of staff must contact the school to make an appointment. During the meeting the teacher may ask another teacher or staff to observe the meeting.

Staff should call a meeting to a close in the event of the parents becoming angry or abusive. This should be reported immediately to Social Services.

12 Reports and Progress

Parents receive progress report cards every trimester electronically, printed versions can be obtained in the school office. Full annual report is provided at the end of each academic year in printed version.

In addition, parents have the opportunity to meet their teachers twice a year, at parent's teacher conferences. They can meet the Head of School every month at Parent Council meetings. Parents should contact the school if issues arise about their child's progress or wellbeing.

We welcome the presence of any other adult a parent wishes to invite to a school meeting for support or to act as an interpreter.

13 Accessibility

We will make any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary to enable a parent with a disability to participate fully in a meeting or to receive and understand a communication.

14 School Website

The school website provides a range of information about the school, including:

- Inclusion information about American Academy schools
- Handbook information
- Schedule for the whole school year
- School events
- Holiday dates
- Downloadable forms
- School policies

It is used to promote the school to a wider audience and is updated regularly.

15 Google Classroom in Google Apps for Education

American Academy uses The Google classroom platform for students. This gives them more choice and flexibility about when and where they complete their learning.

Parents will also have access to data about their student's attendance and progress via Powerschool.

16 Communication between students and staff

Two-way communication between students and staff is an important aspect of school life. The school welcomes and encourages students to engage in conversation with all members of staff within the school. When communicating with a member of staff students should:

- Stand in front of the member of staff they are speaking with and make eye contact;
- Address the member of staff using their formal name e.g. Mrs. Smith, never referring to a member of staff by their first name;
- Be respectful, do not talk over, raise voice or walk away before the conversation has ended.

17 School trips, visits and activities

The school will endeavor to publish all proposed trips, visits and activities on the school calendar at the start of each academic year. Parents will be notified by letter of trips, visits and activities that their child/children may wish to participate in as early as possible, and within at least six weeks of the proposed trip, visit or activity. Occasionally opportunities arise during the academic year to offer students additional trips, visits or activities that were not known or available when the school calendar was published. The school will always ensure parents are notified of any additional opportunities for their child as soon as possible to ensure parents have adequate time to plan for such events.

American Academy uses all necessary forms for overnight trips (Physical assessment form). As described in our handbook the students may be expelled from the stay in the event of gross indiscipline (destruction of property, smoking, assault of

a classmate, ingestion of alcohol and other narcotic substances, etc.), in which case the parents will bear the cost of his/her premature departure from the event.

Severe weather and emergency closure

In the event of emergency closure communication will be made to parents and students via text or email.

Prospective parents

Prospective parents are invited to an Open Days throughout the school year. Parents can contact our Director of Admissions/Admission office for an appointment and schedule tour of school for or a trial day for their child.

Parent Group

Parents and friends of American Academy organized this parent's association group. This group is working closely with the school to organize events and fun activities for our students.