



Home-College Communication Policy

Reviewed:	1 Year
To be reviewed:	January 2025
Version	1

NAME OF 1st REVIEWER	Michelle Smith
NAME OF 2nd REVIEWER	Lauren Lawley

Contents

Introduction	2
Aims	2
Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure.....	2
How We Communicate with Learners and Parents/Carers	4
Staff Procedure For College Communication With Parents/Carers	6
How Parents/Carers Can Communicate With The College.....	6
Inclusion.....	9
Parent & Carer Participation Group	9
Equality Impact Assessment.....	9
Monitoring the Implementation and Effectiveness of the Policy	10

Introduction

At Liberty, we believe that effective, consistent home-college communication is vital to the effective support of learners. It is proven to improve learner attendance, behaviour and learning.

However, parents/carers may find that working with the college will be slightly different from the way they may be used to working with a school. This is because Liberty aims to prepare young people for entry into work when they finish their course, so we encourage learners to be independent and to take responsibility for their learning. That means that most of our communication is direct with the learner (unless this is assessed as inappropriate due to the individual learners needs).

We believe that clear, open communication between the college and parents/carers has a positive impact on learners because it:

- Gives parents/carers the information they need to support their young person's education.
- Helps the college improve, through feedback and consultation with parents/carers.
- Builds trust between home and college, which helps the college better support each young person's educational and pastoral needs.

We believe this policy should be a working document that is fit for purpose, represents the college ethos, enables consistency and quality across the college.

We believe it is essential that this policy clearly identifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the procedures and arrangements that is connected with this policy.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to promote clear and open communication by:

- Explaining how the college communicates with parents/carers,
- Setting clear standards and expectations for initiating and responding to communication from parents/carers,
- Helping parents/carers reach the member of college staff who is best placed to address their specific query or concern so they can get a response as quickly as possible.

Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure

Role of the Head of College

The Head of College is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with learners and parents/carers are effective, timely and appropriate
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy
- Regularly reviewing this policy

- Responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy.

Role of College Personnel

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents/carers in line with this policy and the college's ICT and internet acceptable use policy
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents/carers get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)
- Staff will **aim** to respond to communication during core college hours, or their working hours (if they work part-time). In line with promoting staff wellbeing and helping our staff find a suitable work-life balance, staff may work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond outside of these hours, but they are **not expected** to do so.

Staff should refer to the Acceptable Internet Use Policy in conjunction with this policy.

Role of Learners and Parents/Carers

Learners and parents/carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the college is respectful at all times
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance
- Respond to communications from the college (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the college
- Any communication from parents/carers that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be terminated immediately and if necessary, reported to the police.

Any communication from learners that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be dealt with in line with our Learner Behaviour Policy.

Parents/carers should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication during college holidays. If the matter is urgent, learners and parents/carers should call the office on 01843 446906 as the office is open during the holidays (apart from the Christmas shutdown period).

Learners and parents/carers should refer to the Learner Behaviour Policy in conjunction with this policy.

Why We Communicate with Parents/Carers

Staff may call parents/carers to discuss support or matters where they may need to intervene. We ask learners and parents/carers to provide accurate contact information, such as a mobile telephone number and email address. We endeavour to collect this information at enrolment, but it is the learner and parent/carer's responsibility to inform the college of any changes.

We may need to contact parents/carers because:

- Their young person is not attending college and we have not been advised of the absence in accordance with our absence procedure. This will usually be by telephone. For persistent absence, when we have not been able to contact learners or parents/carers by telephone, we will write to them via email or letter. We may also carry out a welfare check by visiting their home.
- Tutors may contact parents/carers with concerns about engagement with the course, persistent low level behaviour issues and unexplained absences. They may also contact parents/carers to let them know if their young person is entered into or won an award or competition and to recognise areas of praise that should be celebrated with the young person.
- Senior leaders may contact parents/carers over serious academic achievement concerns, behavioural issues, attendance patterns that will affect or impact on achievement, and as part of the disciplinary process. They may also contact parents/carers to recognise areas of praise that should be celebrated with the young person.
- The Safeguarding team may contact parents/carers in cases where concerns for the welfare or safety of the young person have come to light. They will only do this when it is deemed in the best interests of the young person and others. There may be occasions where the team is not allowed to do this because safeguarding legislation directs them to take other actions.

Please be aware that we will only contact the next of kin as listed on the admissions form. Learners and parents/carers should ensure where possible that two contact names are recorded on our college system and that the contact details are up to date. If a learner is 18 years or older (without an EHCP) we will need the learner's permission to contact parents/carers.

How We Communicate with Learners and Parents/Carers

Liberty College will always address matters with learners directly in the first instance before involving parents/carers. As a 16+ provider, we are passionate about involving our learners in our communication to empower them and promote independence (unless this is assessed as inappropriate due to the learners needs).

Information about a learner's education (such as attendance and behaviour) will be shared with parents/carers for learners through phone calls, emails/messaging, Parents' Days and other meetings as appropriate.

All general written communication (emails, letters, texts) will be sent to both learners and parents/carers. This written communication should start with "Dear Learners, Parents and Carers".

The sections below explain how we keep parents/carers up-to-date with their young person's education and what is happening in college.

Parents/carers should monitor all of the following regularly to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their young person.

Email

We use email to keep learners and parents/carers informed about the following things:

- Upcoming college events

- Scheduled college closures (for example, for staff training days)
- College surveys or consultations
- Class activities or tutor requests

Text messages

We will text parents/carers about:

- Short-notice changes to the college day
- Emergency college closures (for instance, due to bad weather)

College calendar

Our website www.libertygrouppltd.co.uk includes a full college calendar for the year as well as visual timetables for learners.

Phone calls

Liberty College encourages staff to call parents/carers regularly to discuss learners' progress, performance, behaviour and attendance. They will also call to give praise and recognition.

If a staff member calls and is redirected to a voicemail account, they will leave a message giving their name, contact number and the name of the college and will ask for their call to be returned. They will not leave the learner's name or any confidential information due to GDPR. If they do not receive a response, staff will continue to try to call again and then attempt contact by email, text or social media message.

Letters

We send the following letters home regularly:

- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms
- Our termly newsletter

Reports

Parents/carers receive reports from the college about their young person's learning, including:

- An end-of-year report covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, and their attendance
- Termly progress reports
- Information about vocational qualifications gained (or credits gained towards these)

Meetings

We hold 3 Parents' Days per year. During these meetings, parents/carers can talk with tutors about their young person's achievement and progress, the curriculum or schemes of work, their young person's wellbeing, or any other area of concern.

The college may also contact parents/carers to arrange meetings between Parents' Days if there are concerns about a learner's achievement, progress, or wellbeing, or to address their additional needs.

College website

Key information about the college is posted on our website, including:

- College times and term dates
- Important events and announcements
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information
- Information about before and after-college provision

Parents/carers should check the website before contacting the college.

Staff Procedure For College Communication With Parents/Carers

Liberty staff will contact parents/carers as follows:

Reason for contact	Frequency & Type of Contact	Staff member Responsible
Positive behaviour	Daily phone calls as necessary. Send a positive postcard for positive behaviour as appropriate.	Tutor
Negative behaviour	Daily phone calls as necessary- discuss strategies for improvement	Tutor
Changes in behaviour/friendship issues	Daily phone calls as necessary- discuss strategies for improvement	Tutor
Learning concerns	Daily phone calls as necessary- discuss strategies for improvement	Tutor
General feedback	Calls or emails as necessary	Tutor
Unauthorised absence	If no attended by close of registration and no absence has been reported	Admin Team
Not attended for the week	End of week	Tutor
On absence plan	Follow instructions on absence plan	Tutor
Disciplinary action	As required	Senior Leadership

Where contact is a Tutor's responsibility, the TA may assist where it is appropriate to do so, but the Tutor should remain the main point of contact.

If a staff member is unable to contact a learner or parent/carer by phone, they must then attempt to establish contact via email, text message and social media message (using the College's social media accounts). Where a learner or parent/carer is uncontactable for a period of 3 weeks, the staff member will alert the safeguarding team and a home visit will be carried out.

How Parents/Carers Can Communicate With The College

The sections below explain how parents/carers can communicate with the college:

Email

Email addresses for the college can be found on the 'Contact' page of the college website [Contact \(libertygrouppltd.co.uk\)](http://libertygrouppltd.co.uk)

Email addresses for individual staff members can be found on the 'Meet the Team' page of the website [Staff Team \(libertygrouppltd.co.uk\)](http://libertygrouppltd.co.uk).

Advisors can be contacted at advisors@libertygrouppltd.co.uk

Parents/carers should always email the college, or the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within 2 working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 5 working days.

If a query or concern is urgent, and parents/carers need a response sooner than this, they should call the college.

Phone calls

If parents/carers need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should email the relevant member of staff will contact them within 2 working days.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will respond to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure parents/carers have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within 5 days of request.

If the issue is urgent, parents/carers should call the college office. Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

For more general enquiries, please call the college office on 01843 446906.

Parents/carers can also ask questions or raise concerns directly with the tutor during regular calls or Parent's Days.

Meetings

If parents/carers would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the appropriate email address or call the college to book an appointment.

We try to schedule all meetings within 5 working days of the request.

While tutors are available at the beginning or end of the college day if parents/carers need to speak to them urgently, we recommend they book appointments to discuss:

- Any concerns they have about their young person's learning,
- Updates related to pastoral support, their young person's home environment, or their wellbeing.

Who Should Parents/Carers Contact?

If a parent/carer has questions about any of the topics in the table below, or would like to speak to a member of staff:

- Email the most appropriate address,
- Include the young person's full name in the subject line.

We try to respond to all emails within 2 working days.

Remember: check our website first, much of the information you need is posted there.

I have a question about...	Who you need to talk to...
My young person's learning	The young person's tutor
My young person's wellbeing/pastoral support	Wellbeing Team wellbeing@libertygrouppltd.co.uk
Bursaries and Grants	Finance Team financeteam@libertygrouppltd.co.uk
Trips and activities	Admin Team adminteam@libertygrouppltd.co.uk
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report an absence or to request approval for term-time absence, call 01843 446906 <i>Please note that we expect learners to report their own absence where possible to prepare them for the workplace & independent living.</i>
Bullying and behaviour	Senior Leadership Team (SLT) slt@libertygrouppltd.co.uk
Safeguarding	Safeguarding Team safeguarding@libertygrouppltd.co.uk
College events/the college calendar	Admin Team adminteam@libertygrouppltd.co.uk
Special educational needs (SEN)	Wellbeing Team wellbeing@libertygrouppltd.co.uk
Advisory board	Advisors advisors@libertygrouppltd.co.uk
Catering/meals	Admin Team adminteam@libertygrouppltd.co.uk

Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy, which is available on our website [Policies \(libertygrouppltd.co.uk\)](https://www.libertygrouppltd.co.uk/policies).

Inclusion

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the college.

We currently make whole-college announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) available in English.

Parents/carers who need help communicating with the college can request the following support:

- College announcements and communications translated into additional languages.
- Interpreters for meetings or phone calls.

We can make additional arrangements if necessary. Please contact the college office to discuss these.

Parent & Carer Participation Group

At Liberty, we value parents and carers input and ideas. We aim to achieve this through our Parent and Carer Participation Group (PCPG) where parents/carers will have the opportunity to engage with staff, give feedback and attend workshops each term.

We believe building parent and carer relationships will help us to ensure we are providing a high standard of education and support to meet each learner's needs.

Each meeting will be one hour long and will cover topics such as:

- Anxiety
- Mental health
- Cost of living crisis
- Sign posting services
- Transition anxiety
- Exam stress

This list is not exhaustive, and we welcome any recommendations of workshops. Dates for upcoming meetings and workshops on our Facebook page or under the PCPG page on our website [PCPG \(libertygrouppltd.co.uk\)](https://www.libertygrouppltd.co.uk/pcpg).

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any learner and it helps to promote equality at this college.

Monitoring the Implementation and Effectiveness of the Policy

The practical application of this policy will be reviewed annually or when the need arises by the Head of College.