



# Beaufort College Communication with Partners Policy

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## *Mission Statement*

*Beaufort College is committed to Quality Education. It seeks to enrich students' lives and empower them for life's challenges. This is done in a caring atmosphere of good order and discipline and in partnership with parents.*

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## Rationale

A communication policy is necessary for schools to establish clear and consistent guidelines on how communication should occur between staff, students, parents<sup>1</sup>, and the wider community. This policy outlines expectations, procedures, appropriate channels, frequency, tone, and style of messages, among other important aspects. It seeks to ensure consistency, clarity, timeliness, privacy, and accountability in communication while respecting individuals' privacy and helping to avoid confusion, misunderstandings. A communication policy is crucial for effective communication in schools and for promoting a positive and collaborative school culture.

## Ethos

The school ethos as represented by the mission statement and the communication policy are closely related as they both contribute to building a positive and respectful school community. The school ethos represents the shared values, beliefs, and attitudes of the school community, which can influence how communication is conducted within the school and with its stakeholders. This communication policy promotes and reinforces the school ethos by setting clear expectations for how communication should be conducted and providing opportunities for feedback and engagement. Overall, aligning the communication policy with the school ethos ensures that all communication is consistent with the school's values and principles.

## Scope of this Policy

The policy covers all types of communication within the school and with stakeholders, including emails, phone calls, newsletters, social media, websites, and face-to-face interactions. It outlines the responsibilities of various stakeholders and how the school will communicate during emergencies or unexpected events. The primary aim

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<sup>1</sup> The term Parent(s) is used throughout the remainder of this policy to mean both Parent(s) and Guardian(s).

of the policy is to ensure that all communication is conducted in a professional, respectful, and fair manner, and that stakeholders are kept informed and engaged.

The Board of Management of Beaufort College affirms that students who are over the age of eighteen years must comply with this policy and that they shall have the same rights and responsibilities as are given to other students and their parents/guardians in this policy.

## Aims and Objectives of Policy

A school communication policy has several aims and objectives that ensure communication within the school and with its stakeholders is efficient, effective, and consistent. These objectives include establishing clear communication channels, promoting transparency, building trust, fostering a positive school culture, enhancing engagement, and ensuring compliance with legal and ethical standards. The overall purpose of the policy is to promote communication that is respectful, honest, timely, and inclusive, while adhering to legal and ethical requirements.

## Relationship to other policies

This policy operates in conjunction with all Beaufort College and LMETB policies<sup>2</sup>.

- Admissions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy\*
- Assessment Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Code of Behaviour\*
- Code of Dress\*
- Communication Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Data Protection
- DEIS Plan 2022-25
- Dignity at Work
- Educational Tours & Field Trips
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Health & Safety Statement
- Homework Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- LMETB Suspension & Expulsion Policy & Procedures
- Long-Term Absence Protocol
- Critical Incident Management Plan
- Mobile Devices Policy\*
- Statement of Strategy for Attendance\*
- Substance Misuse Policy
- Teaching, Learning & Assessment Policy

## Relevant Legislation

This policy ensures that all communication is compliant with legal and ethical standards, such as data protection and confidentiality.

## Roles & Responsibilities

The principal plays a lead role in establishing a positive and collaborative school culture that values effective communication among staff, students, parents, and the community. They encourage open communication and feedback from all stakeholders and address conflicts impartially to achieve equitable solutions.

Stakeholders, such as staff, students, parents, and the community, have a vital role in promoting effective communication within the school. Their responsibilities include giving feedback on the communication system,

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<sup>2</sup>List is not exhaustive and may be added to as necessary. All school policies are published on the school website and are available from the school office on request. Policies marked with an asterisk \* are published partially/wholly in the student learning journal.

attending meetings, staying up to date with school activities and policies, supporting the school's communication efforts, and resolving conflicts fairly and respectfully.

## Communication between staff

- Regular Staff meetings are used to share information, discuss important topics, and collaborate on projects.
- One-on-One meetings provide an opportunity to discuss individual concerns, feedback, or performance evaluations in a more private setting.
- Team meetings are an essential aspect of an effective school culture that encourages collaboration, communication, and problem-solving among staff members, resulting in better student outcomes.
- Professional development sessions offer an opportunity to discuss new ideas, ask questions, and share best practices.
- Social events such as staff parties, outings, or team-building activities can provide a more relaxed environment for staff to socialize, build relationships, and communicate with each other.
- Communication tools such as email, text message, or collaboration software are used to facilitate communication among staff members outside of in-person meetings. In general, there is no expectation to respond to communication received after working hours on the same day.

## Communication with parents

Regular communication opportunities are essential to keep parents informed, engaged, and involved in their child's education. Methods used include:

- Parent-teacher meetings provide a formal opportunity for parents to meet with their child's teacher(s) to discuss academic progress, social-emotional development, and any concerns or questions.
- Information Evenings are designed to give specific year, course, or programme information to parents ahead of deciding to enrol their child.
- School Newsletters are used to keep parents informed about school events, important dates, and news related to the school community.
- School websites and social media platforms are used to share updates, events, and news about the school community with parents.
- School events such as Graduation and Awards.
- The Parents' Association serve as a valuable communication tool by fostering parent involvement, providing feedback, promoting partnership, advocating for parents and students, and building a sense of community within the school.
- Student Learning Journal allow for progress monitoring, personalised feedback, parent-teacher collaboration, and enhanced communication.
- Bi-annual assessment report published on student ePortal page
- School policies are published on the school website and are available from the school office on request.
- Board of Management report to parents promotes transparency, partnership, involvement, and feedback, which can lead to better outcomes for students and a more vibrant and supportive school community.
- Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) teacher and School Completion Programme (SCP) key worker play a crucial role in promoting effective communication between parents and the school by building relationships, providing support, encouraging parental involvement, advocating for parents, and facilitating two-way communication.
- Year Heads recognise that email and phone call can be an efficient and convenient way to communicate with parents and will endeavour to respond within 48 hours either addressing the content of the email or in a holding capacity if further information/consultation is required. School staff may only use their

designated email address when communicating and parents are asked to use their personal email addresses rather than a work address.

- Parents may contact school staff by calling or emailing the school office and requesting an appointment or a call back. School staff endeavour to be meet requests within 72 hours.
- Staff may contact parents by calling the number listed on ePortal. If the contact attempt is unsuccessful the staff member will leave their name and a brief message suggesting an alternative time as due to teaching constraints it may not be possible for teachers to receive a call-back from parents.
- Email<sup>3</sup> communication between parent and teacher is not appropriate because it may not be the most effective way to address complex or sensitive issues related to a student's education. Moreover, teachers may have multiple responsibilities and limited time to respond to emails. Face-to-face or over the phone communication allows for a more comprehensive and nuanced conversation that may lead to better outcomes for the student.

### Arrangements for Emergency Communications

Beaufort College uses a range of methods such as text messages, phone calls, email, social media, and the school website to convey emergency communications. Parents are asked to ensure that their contact information is always up to date and to inform the school office of any changes without delay.

### Complaints Procedures

Beaufort College ensures parents are listened to and treated with empathy such a difficult situation arise. It is the policy of the school to resolve difficulties at an early stage in the interests of the students and of all concerned. The school's complaints procedures<sup>4</sup>, which are in accordance with nationally agreed procedures are available on the school website, from the school office and at the link below.

Parents are asked, in the first instance, to arrange to meet the student's class teacher at a mutually convenient time to discuss concerns regarding the student. Teachers are available to speak to parents and to help solve problems relating to students and their progress in school. Mutual respect and empathetic and positive communication are the expectations for all such meetings.

### Communication with students

- Effective communication with students is an important aspect of promoting a positive and supportive school environment. Some of the opportunities for communication with students include:
- Classroom discussion provides an opportunity for students to express their ideas, opinions, and concerns. Teachers can encourage student participation and engage students in conversations that promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Student-teacher meeting provides an opportunity for one-on-one communication between students and teachers. These conferences can be used to discuss academic progress, set goals, and address any concerns or issues that students may have.
- The student council provides a forum for student voice and leadership. Students can participate in decision-making processes, plan school events, and express their ideas and concerns.
- School clubs and activities provide an opportunity for students to interact with peers who share common interests. These activities can promote social skills and help students develop positive relationships with their peers.
- The counselling service provides an opportunity for students to communicate with trained professionals about personal and academic issues. This service helps students develop coping skills and provides support during times of stress or crisis.

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<sup>3</sup> Email communication between staff and parents is permissible with cross party consent.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.beaufortcollege.ie/images/20192020/LMETBComplaintProcedureApprovedbyBoardofLMETB.pdf>

## Communication with students who are over 18 Years

Beaufort College seeks to create a positive and supportive environment that helps students over 18 years achieve academic success and well-being. This is achieved by respecting their privacy and providing clear and accurate information, encouraging them to advocate for themselves, and providing opportunities for feedback and involvement in school decision-making processes.

In recognition of their independence and legal status as adults' students on reaching 18 years of age must indicate whether they would like to receive updates on their progress directly or if they want their parents to continue receiving updates for the duration of their enrolment at the school. The relevant form is available on request from the school office.

## Communication with the wider community

Beaufort College recognises the importance of communicating effectively with the wider community to build positive relationships, showcase our values and accomplishments, and involve community members in the education of students. Various strategies such as social media, newsletters, community events, partnerships with local organisations, and participating in community activities are strategies used to achieve this goal.

Any media or external agency requests must be directed to the principal, who is the only school authority designated by the Board of Management to handle such requests.

Beaufort College is committed to providing an educational environment where respectful communication between education partners is a core value. All members of the school community are expected to uphold this commitment.

Practical security steps, including the requirements for all visitors to report to reception, security doors and the use of CCTV are designed to ensure the school campus is a safe and secure place for all.



Unauthorised entry onto school property is a serious matter. Visitors to Beaufort College who engage in inappropriate/unacceptable behaviour, including but not limited to threatening, aggressive, intimidating and/or violent behaviour will be asked to leave the school campus; refusal may result in Gardai intervention.



**lmetb**

*Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Lú agus na Mí*  
Louth and Meath Education and Training Board

## Policy for Resolution/Ratification by LMETB Board

<b>School</b>	Beaufort College
<b>Policy Title</b>	Communication with Partners Policy
<b>Date of School Board of Management Meeting</b>	17/08/2023
<b>Please confirm if a quorum was present at the meeting (4)</b>	Yes
<b>Please confirm if the completed Policy Consultation Record was presented at the meeting</b>	Yes
<b>Policy Proposed By</b>	Fr Robert Mc Cabe
<b>Policy Seconded By</b>	Suzanne Markey
<b>Signed</b>	 Chairperson of Board of Management
<b>Date</b>	17/08/2023
<b>Signed</b>	 Principal
<b>Date</b>	17/08/2023