: Learners Today.. Leaders Tomorrow :

The Gulf English School

Communication Policy

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This policy applies across all campuses:
GES Gharafa (Infants, Juniors, and Secondary)
GES Bin Omran

Responsible, **R**espectful, **R**esilience

Policy Number: C4.00 **Subject: Guiding Statements**

Our Vision

We aim to develop a responsible, respectful, resilient school community, supporting the highest level of personal achievement in a changing modern intercultural world.

V1	We aim to develop a responsible, respectful, resilient school community,
V2	supporting the highest level of personal achievement
V3	in a changing modern intercultural world.

Mission Statements

M1	We provide a high-quality education, focusing on skills, knowledge and application, enabling our community to strive and achieve excellence
M2	We aim to develop a culture of life-long learning, independence, ambition, which is continuously demonstrated by our community.
M3	Our community promotes diversity and global citizenship where individual differences are understood and celebrated.
M4	To drive the development of creative skills and critical awareness in our students.
M5	Our school community provides a safe, supportive, and stimulating learning environment that focusses on the well-being of all
M6	We aim to integrate the use of technology on a day-to-day basis to enhance our teaching and learning.

Our Core Values: The 3 R's

- ✓ **Responsible:** Driven, Ambitious, Achiever
- ✓ **Respectful:** Empathy, supportive, caring, diversity
- ✓ **Resilient:** Risk takers, empowered, committed

Aim:
To ensure that The Gulf English School remains a thriving school, we must communicate effectively with each other, with our students, with their parents, and with other members of the wider community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

Definition of communication:
Communication is defined as the imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium.

At The Gulf English School:

- Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It is through effective and interactive communication that information is transmitted, understanding is developed and shared, trust is built, confidentiality is respected, and action is coordinated.
- We should also remember the importance of listening.
- Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications and needs to recognise that the quality of their communications reflects on the school's reputation.
- Communication includes not only the message but also how that message is communicated; not only the responsibility for communication but also how effectively that responsibility has been carried out.

Principles:

- All communications at The Gulf English School should:
- Keep staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders well informed.
- Be open, honest, ethical, and professional.
- Use jargon-free, Standard English and be easily understood by all.
- Be carried out within a reasonable time.
- Use the methods of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message, and audience.
- Ensure that staff are fully informed of all relevant school activities to enable them to be as effective as possible in their role.
- Take account of relevant school policies.
- Be compatible with our core values, mission, and School Development Plan.
- Written communication with parents and other external contacts must comply with agreed practice.

Responsibilities:
This section details the responsibilities of the different groups within the school.

Senior Leadership

- To ensure information is made available to staff promptly, via appropriate channels, and where possible, face to face.
- To ensure that staff have the relevant information available to communicate with colleagues effectively.
- To maintain open channels of two-way communication and to listen to feedback and comments

from all staff.
- To keep the Board informed of developments and concerns.

All staff

Communicate regularly, preferably face to face, to ensure information is available and understood within the context of the classroom and working environment.

- To ensure they are informed and have access to information to be as effective as possible in their role and to support their work within the school.
- To use open channels of two-way communication to keep the leadership team and colleagues informed.
- To ensure that all dialogue is professional. Staff are encouraged to consider their choice of words and tone in all communications and to ensure that written, electronic communication is sent only to the intended recipients.
- **Always use Standard English when conducting written communication and carefully consider and check the choice of wording and punctuation. The list below details the expected use of language and highlights some common mistakes. Staff are expected to use this list as a guide when writing e-mails and reports. This list is by no means exhaustive.**

Capitalisation:

- PowerPoint, Word, etc. are to be given capital letters.
- This term/Term 3 - if we are talking about a specific term, we use a capital letter. If just mentioning this term, lowercase.
- This year/Year 3 - if we are talking about a specific year, we use a capital letter. If just mentioning this year, lowercase.
- Commas - use wisely. Use the Oxford comma to aid clarity.
- Maths/maths etc. - When referring to the subject, Maths with a capital letter. When saying his maths work, then lowercase.
- The Gulf English School - 'the' is part of the proper noun.
- Reading Book - no need for capitals here. Same for Homework Diary. If you want to emphasise it, use **bold** or *italics*.
- Level or level - Level 4, his level. Capital when referring to a specific level, lowercase all other times.

Common Confusions.

- Your, you're: You're the contraction of you are. Your shows that something belongs to you or is related to you (e.g., your car, your father).
- Yours, not yours: The word yours is known as an absolute possessive (others are ours, his, and hers). There are no apostrophes in any absolute possessives.
- Effect/affect. The effect is a noun. Effect means outcome, consequence, or appearance. To affect is a verb. To affect means to transform or to change.
- Check your writing carefully. Autocorrect is a wonderful thing but it can, and has, caused some embarrassing mistakes.
- Overall or overall. Overall is an adverb that means generally or as a whole.
- Practise/practice - Practice is the verb. He needs to practice his spelling (verb). He attends football practice (noun).

- Avoid American spellings - organise, not organize, recognise, not recognize, colour, not colour, etc. Ensure that the ICT team have adjusted your personal desktop/laptop settings to UK English.

Word Choices:

- **Students**, not kids, pupils, or children.
- **Learnt**, not learned.
- Word choice - think of the parents. For example, 'Abdulla becomes discombobulated when…' could be rephrased to support those reading English as an additional language.
- Avoid the use of jargon and overly complicated language. The parents are usually EAL as well.

Professionalisms:

- Spell check. English UK, before sharing with anyone.
- Yours sincerely – used when you have addressed the recipient of a letter or e-mail by name.
- Yours faithfully – used when you have not addressed the recipient of a letter or e-mail by name. For example, if you write 'Dear parents,'.
- Use of professional salutations when writing a professional e-mail to parents or others from your school e- mail account. Dear Parents, not, hi! Or hey all, etc.

Punctuation:

- Ellipsis – 3 dots, not 2 or 4. It looks like this: …
- SATS vs SATs or SAT's - It is SATs. This is the same for CATs.
- CDs not CD's
- 'Our Topic on Brazil' not "Our Topic on Brazil"
- 9 a.m. (not 9am or 9 A.M.)
- It's vs its. Its, without an apostrophe, is the possessive of the pronoun it. It's, with an apostrophe, is a contraction of it is or it has.
- Using hyphens. Does the word need a hyphen? If the hyphen adds clarity, use it.
- Well done, Abdulla. (Make sure the comma is there if addressing the child.)
- Exclamation marks – use sparingly if at all. Just one exclamation mark is to be used.
- Punctuate for meaning.
- Write e-mail, not Email or email.
- Use the full stop after Mr., Mrs. and Ms. in all writing.

Internal methods of communication

- All staff receive a **staff handbook**, updated annually, providing them with important information about organisation and procedures within the school. There are also a Teaching and Learning Framework that all staff are expected to read.
- All formal meetings should be structured and minuted, and members invited to contribute to the agenda.
- Time is assigned (such as Tuesday afternoons and other CPD time) for structured opportunities for staff to engage in teamwork and to contribute to subject leaders' reflection on priorities, activities and plans.
- For all other meetings notes should be taken, action points progressed, and feedback given to staff.
- Information and notification of initiatives are communicated through the use of e-mail, where appropriate. E-mail is a quick, effective way of communicating information; however, it should

not replace face-to-face meetings where discussion is required. Staff must consider the tone and clarity of their e-mails. Abusive e-mails will not be tolerated, and appropriate action will be taken.

- Written communication may be handed to staff personally or e-mailed.
- Staff briefings take place every week. The main points are recorded and are e-mailed to staff and shared via the briefing sheet on the intranet or through e-mail.
- Within each individual class, class teachers organise their own methods of communicating information to the children. This may be a news board or other type of notice board. Every class must have a system for distributing letters and other materials to go home with the children.
- Reminders or letters to individual parents are sent to classes to be given out by the class teachers and must be given to children the same day.
- Some communication of important information may take place during assemblies. All staff must be informed of messages given to children.

Rubicon: Rubicon is a curriculum planning tool which is used by all class and subject teachers. It is the main method of communication and tracking of planning.

External methods of communication

Schools have many lines of communication to maintain with parents and carers, other schools, the community and with outside agencies. At GES, we aim to have clear and effective communication with all parents and the wider community. Effective communication enables us to share our aims and values by keeping parents well-informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents play in supporting school. Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional. To this end, parents should always be addressed in an appropriate manner. We endeavour to make written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping, or any form of racial discrimination. We wish to recognise and celebrate the contributions to our community by all cultural groups represented in our school.

Communication with Parents/Carers

- **Letters:** Staff will respond to parents' letters within 48 hours (2 school days).
- **E-mail:** The school has electronic systems that (Outlook, Teams and ClassDojo) can be used to communicate with parents. Staff will respond to parents' e-mails within 48 hours (2 school days). Staff are required to check their e-mail at least twice daily – upon arrival at school and before leaving for the day.
- **Telephone calls**: Office staff should not interrupt teaching staff to answer a telephone call. An e-mail detailing the nature of the call, the name of the student, the name of the parent and any other relevant information will be sent to the members of staff concerned. A member of staff will respond to the telephone call within that working day provided a secretary or receptionist is present to assist. Staff should follow the guidelines below.
  - Be polite and courteous.
  - Before you make the call, write down everything you need to communicate with that parent. Be organised with your thoughts.
  - Be direct and mindful of the parent's time.
  - If the parent is unable to talk to you at that time, politely ask when a good time would be to call them again.

  - If you get through to voice mail, identify who you are, what you are calling about, and leave information for them to return your phone call.
- **Social Networking Sites**: Staff will not communicate with parents or students via social networking sites or invite or accept them as 'friends. Staff will not post or discuss any school-related information or opinions on any social media platform.
- **MIS (SchoolBase)** is a platform for communication between staff and parents. It is accessed through parent, student, and staff portals. It also provides a recording of electronic registers.
- **Microsoft Teams**: Teams and MS OneNote are the GES VLE.
- **Al Sedra:** Al Sedra is a newsletter that is developed by staff and communicates to the school community on a weekly basis.
- **ClassDojo:** is a platform for communication for staff and parents sharing their child's work etc.

Fonts to be used in all communications with parents:
If writing in English staff should use:

1. Calibri 11 for the main text
2. Calibri 12 **bold** for subtitles.
3. Calibri 14 **bold,** underlined for the title.

If writing in Arabic staff should use:

1. Use Sakkal Majalla 14 for the main text
2. Use Sakkal Majalla 14 **bold** for subtitles.
3. Use Sakkal Majalla 16 **bold**, underlined for the title

Use of the GES logo
Staff must obtain permission from LT to use the GES logo, and it must be sent to them from the IT department.

Mobile Phones
For staff:

- ELT are required to keep their mobile phones on them during the school day so they can be reached easily. However, they will endeavour not to be overt in their use when students are present. Teaching staff and TAs are welcome to bring their phones to school but must have them on 'silent' during contact time with students. Unless in a crisis or emergency, it is never acceptable to use a mobile phone while with or in front of students.
- Teachers should not share their personal numbers with parents, students, and tutors.
- Staff who do late duty will be given a code for the phone so that parents can be contacted using the correct channels.
- If contacted on their personal number by parents, staff should politely advise the parent to contact the school through the correct channels.

For Students
Mobile phones and other communication devices are banned from school. Staff are required to confiscate any such devices and take them to the ELT for safekeeping.
Students should not contact members of staff on their personal numbers and should use the correct channels of communication.

For Parents
Parents should use the correct channels of communication to contact members of staff and are requested not to contact staff on their personal numbers. There are various channels of communication open to parents – including the ClassDojo, GES email, and the school's telephone system.

Communication with Students

- E-mail communication from a student to a teacher should not occur unless the teacher has instructed students to do so relating to schoolwork.
- Students are welcomed to parent-teacher meetings.
- Marked work and communication of achievements and areas for development in-class work is completed through written and verbal feedback.
- MS TEAMS communication from a student to a teacher should only occur in relation to homework that has been set online.

Written Reports
At GES, we provide half-term reports to each child's parents on their progress in each area of learning. This report identifies areas of strengths and areas for future development. Students are also given an opportunity to comment on their progress. In addition, parents meet their child's teacher twice during the year for consultation during a parent–teacher conference day.
Parents who have signed up for EAL or Learning Support also have the opportunity to meet with the specialist teacher at any point during the year, in addition to parents' evenings. This gives them the opportunity to celebrate their child's successes and to support their child in areas where there is a particular need for improvement, ensuring that everyone achieves their personal best.
At GES we welcome honest, open and frequent communication with all parents.

We encourage parents to contact the school if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being. When children have educational needs, or if they are making less than expected progress, parents will be invited to meet with their child's teacher more regularly. We will also make reasonable adjustments to our arrangements if this will enable a parent with a disability to participate fully in a meeting at our school, or to receive and understand communication.

Parent/Teacher conference and other parent meetings

- Dress professionally (as per the GES staff handbook requirements).
- Create a comfortable atmosphere. Don't place a desk between yourself and the parents. Use the same type of chair.
- Be prepared. Have your agenda points ready. Have materials available that show the developments and areas of concern.
- Always start the conference with something positive.
- Be attentive and listen carefully.
- Never talk about other students or teachers.
- Avoid the use of jargon.
- End the conference with something positive.
- Let them know that you care about their child.
- If the situation becomes difficult, call a member of the ELT for assistance immediately. Keep a conference record on GES conference sheets.

- Parents are welcome to bring a fluent translator to meetings. GES cannot guarantee that a school translator will be available.

Guidance for Parent Meetings

Do's:

- Be friendly and welcoming.
- Be prepared for the meeting.
- Refer to assessment data to focus your meeting.
- Be clear about the progress the student has made.
- Be clear if the student is working below, at, or above the expected level.
- Give a list of bullet-pointed strengths and areas for development for the parent to take home for Reading, Writing and Maths (and Science and Topic for some students) in Primary, and for each subject in Secondary.
- Be direct and clear with all comments.
- Mention behaviour, attendance and punctuality, in line with GES expectations. Student's attitude to learning.
- Be aware that many parents are not mother-tongue English speakers, as such speak, at a reasonable pace, and avoid technical language and jargon where possible.
- Ensure you balance your comments about the student – include positives and areas for development.
- Keep minutes of the meeting for future reference (this is except parent's evenings/days). Stick to the time allocated.
- Ask for support should the meeting become challenging.

Don'ts's

- Be vague or use comments such as 'they are doing well'.
- Compare the students to other students in the class.
- Use the names of, or comment on, any other students.
- Discuss GES finances/fees.
- Discuss Leadership decisions.
- Discuss anything which contradicts the objectives/expectations of the school.
- Discuss other members of staff and what they do (even if the parents bring it up first). Mention religion.
- Discuss the student's siblings or make comparisons.
- Mention or discuss the student's relative rank in the class/subject.
- Criticise GES systems, staff or policies.

School Website:

The school website provides information about the school and is an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience. It is maintained and updated regularly.

School Intranet:

GES has an intranet page where useful information and documents are shared. The cover is also posted on the intranet page.

Electronic security:

Staff are required to log off of any of the school's electronic platforms when away from their computers or, at minimum, lock their computers for security.

Online Social Media Platforms- Instagram
What is Instagram?

Instagram is a photo and video-sharing social networking service owned by Meta Platforms. It allows users to upload media that can be edited with filters, be organised by hashtags, and be associated with a location via geographical tagging. Posts can be shared publicly or with preapproved followers. Users can browse other users' content by tags and locations, view trending content, like photos, and follow other users to add their content to a personal feed.

Why will The Gulf English School staff be using Instagram?
The reason The Gulf English School (GES) and staff will be using Instagram is twofold.

1. To share and showcase the wonderful things happening at GES.
2. For staff to engage in educational discussions that can enrich their practice.

Instagram will not be used to engage with individual parents directly; however, important announcements and notices could be sent as part of general communication to parents.
The Instagram accounts associated with the school are all property of GES and should only be used to post content that is relevant to teaching and learning.

Safeguarding students:
The Gulf English School seeks the photographic consent of all students. Messages sent by The Gulf English School will adhere to this rule. If posts are sent inviting people to view a blog post by an individual student, only their first name will be used.

What is inappropriate content and referencing and how will it be dealt with?
The Gulf English School welcomes referencing, interaction or mentions. The Gulf English School deems all of the following as inappropriate:

- Offensive language.
- Offensive language or remarks aimed at the school, its staff, parents, board members or others affiliated with the school.
- Unsuitable images or content posted into its feed.
- Unsuitable images or content finding its way from another's account into the Gulf English School feed.
- Images or text that infringe upon copyright.
- Comments that aim to undermine the school, its staff, parents, board members or others affiliated with the school.

Any inappropriate content will be reported, and its users will be blocked. Furthermore, incidents of a more serious nature may be reported to the appropriate authority.

This policy should be read alongside:

- The Staff Handbook.
- Acceptable Use Policy.
- Behaviour policies for each section of the school.
- The GES Vision, Mission, and Internationalism definition.