



COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Statement of Purpose

Oxford International Study Centre (OISC) is committed to establishing and maintaining a safe, respectful, and supportive professional environment for all staff, students, and external agencies engaging with the college. We believe that strong relationships between college staff and parents, agents, and consultants are crucial to creating and maintaining a safe, supportive, and productive learning environment for all students. Our staff are committed to supporting pupils as effectively as possible, and we believe that respectful communication in all interactions, whether by email, phone, or in-person, is integral to this support.

Integral to this policy is that parents have the right to clear communication from the college, and the opportunity to provide constructive feedback, and to make inquiries, and formal grievances, provided they are submitted and processed in accordance with professional conduct standards. In turn, employees have the right to work free from intimidation, harassment, or abuse. Disagreements or dissatisfaction with college decisions do not constitute acceptable grounds for unacceptable conduct towards staff.

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

- How the college communicates with parents, agents, and consultants to keep them informed about a student's progress and overall well-being in college
- How parents, agents, and consultants can contact the college and its staff so they can get an informed response as quickly as possible.
- Setting out clear and supportive expectations for communication between parents, agents, and consultants and the college.
- Explaining how unacceptable communication/conduct will be managed

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All enrolled students (Academic and EFL) of all ages, including adult learners.
- Parents, legal guardians, educational consultants, agents, group leaders, Local Authority staff, and other agencies that have been involved in the enrollment of a student.
- All members of OISC staff, both academic and administrative
- All communications, whether by email/online messaging, phone, or in-person.



Modes of Communication

OISC uses a variety of methods to ensure effective communication with parents, agents, consultants and other agencies, as follows:

- Phone calls - for **urgent communications** and to discuss specific and immediate concerns or issues regarding a student. Calls will be answered immediately, and a call back - if necessary - will be made on the same day, assuming the issue raised is deemed sufficiently urgent.
- Email - for **routine, non-urgent queries, updates, and information sharing**. Staff will always use college email addresses and will adhere to data protection policies.
- Meetings - scheduled to discuss student progress, address concerns, or adjust scheduling/other academic or pastoral arrangements. These may be in-person or online, and must be **pre-arranged by appointment only**.
- Online apps (eg. Microsoft Teams) - used to **share day-to-day updates**, homework assignments, and direct communication between student/parent/agent etc. and OISC staff/teachers.

Expectations for Parents, Guardians, Consultants, Visitors, and other agencies

- Uphold mutual respect, professional courtesy, and personal dignity across all interactions.
- Refrain from profanity, insults, intimidation, threats, or discriminatory language.
- Work constructively with the college to resolve concerns.
- Follow established formal grievance procedures when challenging administrative or academic determinations, allowing reasonable time for investigation and response.
- Schedule formal meetings (either in-person or online) in advance, and respect staff time, complying with access and visitor management protocols.
- The college will select the staff member deemed most suitable to address a specific matter/concern, and this selection is not open to negotiation.
- Understand the college's capacity limits, and avoid excessive communication or unreasonable demands.
- Respect staff working hours, scheduled duties, and professional boundaries.
- Allow sufficient time for OISC staff to respond to communications, in line with the timelines outlined in this policy.

OISC employees are required to adhere to professional communication standards, active listening protocols, and transparent decision-making, escalating matters to proper management levels where necessary.

Critical safeguarding, health, and welfare emergencies must be escalated immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL),

Good-faith expression of disagreement or formal submission of a complaint does not constitute unacceptable behavior and will not be penalized under this policy.



Inappropriate Behaviour: Abusive language, physical threats, intimidation or aggressive behaviour towards OISC staff, pupils, or others will not be tolerated. Any such behaviour may result in restricted communication, including through an Agreed Communications Plan, as detailed below, and potential legal or police action.

Unreasonable, Excessive, or Vexatious Contact

We recognise that discussions regarding young people, particularly those with language access barriers, or additional needs, and those who are far from home, can sometimes evoke strong emotions. OISC is committed to providing a supportive forum within which such discussions can be had in a constructive and appropriate manner. College staff reserve the right not to respond to communications that are aggressive or disrespectful.

If parents, agents, consultants, or guardians/other family members find it difficult to communicate in a respectful and appropriate way due to the emotional nature of their concerns, we encourage them to seek external support from a colleague, relative, or professional in doing so, to ensure that communication can continue.

High-frequency contact is acceptable when required by complex welfare needs or active administrative processes. However, contact will be classed as unreasonable, excessive, or vexatious when its volume, tone, or repetitive nature prevents staff from working effectively, or obstructs normal working practices. Considerations include:

- Coercive tactics, including threats of reputational damage, to manipulate institutional outcomes.
- Targeted bullying, persistent hostile contact, or harassment aimed at specific employees.
- Once a concern has been addressed, further communication may be limited or stopped.
- Teachers cannot be interrupted during class time for parent/guardian discussion. Please note: Emergency situations will be handled separately

Misconduct Protocol

- Unacceptable behaviour, such as rude or abusive language, may lead to calls being ended, or meetings terminated. If a request has already been addressed, the school may limit or cease further responses.
- Agreed Communications Plans. In accordance with the DfE guidance, when communication with parents, agents, consultants, or other agencies becomes



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unnecessarily complex, repetitive, or otherwise obstructive of usual college working practices, including in issues of staff distress or unwillingness to continue discussions, the college may implement an agreed communications plan. This plan will clearly outline how and when contact will occur, ensuring that both parties understand and manage expectations. This approach is designed to streamline communication and prevent unnecessary or excessive contact.

Incidents will be evaluated contextually. High emotional distress, communication barriers, or formal notices of intent to submit a grievance do not inherently constitute misconduct. Prior to implementing restrictions, college staff will review potential underlying factors, including accessibility barriers, health conditions, or unmet statutory obligations.

Restrictions will be proportionate, documented in writing, and subjected to defined review dates. Dedicated channels for emergency safeguarding reporting will remain open.

Where student enrollment is facilitated via partners such as educational agencies, schools/universities/colleges, corporate sponsors, or Local Authorities, OISC may formally engage these partners regarding persistent misconduct.

If misconduct irrecoverably compromises operational delivery despite reasonable adjustments, OISC may issue a formal placement breakdown notification to the partner in question. For students under Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, emergency Annual Reviews may be requested via the responsible Local Authority.

This policy operates in conjunction with all college policies, including Safeguarding, Grievance and Disciplinary, Health & Safety, and Data Protection policies.

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