

E-ACT POLICY

PARKWOOD ACADEMY

Staff Communication & Consultation

Date agreed by Governors	
Date of review	
Responsible officer	Principal / Business Director

Vision

The Academy will communicate clearly, openly and regularly with the public, with our partners and with each other to promote a high level of mutual understanding and facilitate a better service to the students of the Academy.

Rationale: why communicate and consult?

Communication, consultation and staff involvement are at the heart of good decision making and strengthen the relationships within the Academy. The Academy is committed to improving communication and consultation with the staff and trade unions as part of its transparent and open way of working.

Principles

All our communications and consultations must be:

Clear	Easy to read and understand in plain English
Timely	Commence as early as possible in the planning process and adhere to an agreed timetable
Cost effective	Represent good use of money and reflects best value
Honest and open	Avoid misleading information, false promises and assume a right to know
Respectful	Respect individuals' feelings and beliefs

Communication

It is a legal requirement to inform and communicate to all staff any major changes to the working environment which may affect them in the course of their duties. Any significant changes would be the subject to consultation with trade unions and affected individuals.

Consultation – at times there may be a legal requirement to consult with affected staff, which should be differentiated from communication as defined above. This should be done where changes to the employee's terms and conditions of employment are concerned. This includes, for example, any contractual changes or a potential redundancy situation.

Consultation is the process by which management and employees or their representatives jointly examine and discuss issues of mutual concern. It involves seeking acceptable solutions to problems through a genuine exchange of views and information. Consultation does not remove the right of managers to manage – they must still make the final decision – but it does impose an obligation that the views of employees will be sought and considered before decisions are taken. Indeed, in certain circumstances consultation is a legal requirement. Consultation involves managers actively seeking and then taking account of the views of employees before making decision. EACT has a union recognition agreement with the different teaching and non-teaching unions.

Method (s) of Communication:

Staff can be informed of any issues by a range of acceptable and reasonable means. This will include:

- Verbally – either directly or be management or representative cascading
- By email
- By letter
- Any other method which is practical and suitable e.g. staff briefing

Employee Rights

For consultation purpose :- all affected staff, or potentially affected staff, must be informed of any changes which affect their terms and conditions of employment. They will be given the opportunity to respond to the proposed changes, having been informed of a clearly identified designated point of contact who they should respond to and to have their responses and suggestions meaningfully considered before any decision is made.

Staff can respond:

- Individually, either face to face meeting, conversation, or in writing e.g. by email, or
- Through elected representatives, which may not include official union representatives (this is sometimes referred to as a Works Council).

Where a Works Council does not exist, it is the employers responsibility to ensure that all staff, both teaching and support and regardless of whether they belong to a union, have been informed and have the opportunity to respond to and have their opinions considered, by a method as outlined above.

Following the outlined period of consultation, formal notice will be given that any changes will become official with effect from the designated date. The period between giving formal notice and the effective date of any changes should be in line with the Academy's managing change procedure.

During the consultation process, all staff have the right to be accompanied to any meetings with either their union representative or a colleague who is an employee of the Academy.

Consultation regarding potential redundancy situations is not specifically dealt with under this policy (see managing change procedure).

For communication purposes, whilst all employees have the right to respond to any proposals, the employer does not have the same legal requirement to agree to, or consider any such suggestion, it is purely good practice to inform.