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Communication Policy



Al Mawakeb School

A decorative graphic in the bottom left corner consisting of several thin, curved lines in shades of blue and grey, resembling blades of grass or reeds.

1.0 Primary Values:

Family, Trust, Understanding, Respect, Fairness, Objectivity, Responsibility, Care, Wellbeing, Partnership, Support.

2.0 Rationale:

Communication is not only an exchange of information. It is a means to develop a shared understanding, build trust, promote partnership, and create an atmosphere of mutual respect in a happy, caring and supportive environment. Good communication engages people and allows them to be informed and consulted. Al Mawakeb Al Garhoud (AMG) recognizes the need for clear and effective communication with all stakeholders.

3.0 Aims and Objectives:

The aim of this policy is to:

- Ensure that the school keeps all its stakeholders well informed about what happens in the school.
- Clarify the parameters within which the school works to ensure that communication is carried out effectively and clearly.
- Establish strong relationships with parents based on open communication and transparency.
- Encourage the ongoing engagement of parents to support the students' learning and wellbeing.
- Ensure parents are kept fully informed of their child's achievement, progress, and wellbeing.
- Ensure that communication between and among stakeholders is professional, respectful, clear and timely.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities:

4.1 Responsibilities of the Governing Body:

The role of the Governing Body is to:

- Use a variety of methods to communicate and explain its decisions to the school and its community.
- Ensure the use of trusted channels when communicating with the school and its stakeholders.
- Stay informed of stakeholders' views about the school.
- Review and approve this policy on an annual basis.

4.2 Responsibilities of the Principal:

The role of the Principal is to:

- Ensure the availability of relevant information to stakeholders in a timely manner and via appropriate channels.
- Maintain open channels for two-way communication with all staff.
- Be available to discuss with parents any concerns related to student progress and wellbeing.
- Ensure the proper implementation of this policy.
- Ensure that non-compliance is promptly identified and addressed.

4.3 Responsibilities of the Head of Section (HoS):

The role of the Head of Section is to:

- Communicate regularly with their respective staff to ensure information is readily available and understood.
- Communicate with all relevant parties in relation to the students in their section.
- Be available to discuss with parents any concerns related to student progress and wellbeing.
- Monitor and support teachers in their reporting responsibilities to parents.
- Report to the Principal any challenges in the process.

4.4 Responsibilities of Teacher and Other Staff:

The role of the staff members is to:

- Respond to communications in a timely manner.
- Fulfill reporting responsibilities, which include meetings with parents and preparing student progress reports.
- Prepare for formal meetings with parents by:
 - Collecting and analyzing student records.
 - Identifying the students' strengths and areas for development.
 - Creating an action plan to address student areas for improvement.
- Ensure that information used for the purpose of reporting to parents is accurate and complete.
- Ensure that communications with students or their parents are **NOT** from personal e-mail addresses, personal telephones or personal mobile devices.

4.5 Responsibilities of Parents:

The role of parents is to:

- Provide the school with current contact details (telephone number and email address) for receiving communications from school.
- Regularly read communications from the school.
- Attend parents' meetings and information sessions and support other events which directly relate to their child.
- Review their child's report cards and progress reports and contact the school for any inquiries.
- Proactively seek to be involved in their child's education.

5.0 Policy:

- The school is committed to being open and accessible for all its stakeholders.
- The school encourages openness in internal communication and the sharing of relevant and appropriate information through a variety of mechanisms.
- The school shall ensure that effective procedures exist for communication and consultation between the school, parents and students on important school matters.
- The school shall adopt an "open door" policy with parents to encourage open communication, feedback and discussion.
- The school shall be proactive in the use of modern communications tools with the stakeholders of the school.
- The school shall post all key information and updates on its website.
- Parents shall have access to a school portal to view general school information as well as information specific to their child.
- Internet access shall be made available to the widest possible number of staff and students to enhance communication procedures.
- Communication between parents and those working in management/leadership and support roles shall be respectful at all times.
- Feedback on matters of governance, management or administration should be provided in writing to the Principal, who shall then ensure that it is addressed appropriately.
- The school shall ensure that parents' enquiries and concerns are addressed in a timely and efficient manner.

6.0 Systems and Procedures

6.1.1 Joining the School Community:

- Parents of prospective students shall have online access to the Parents' Guide, which includes general information about the school and its programs.
- Parents shall be provided with logon details to the school portal. They are highly encouraged to regularly visit the portal to stay well informed of learning expectations and activities in school.
- Parents are encouraged to download the school's app (I-Campus) which provides them with access to a range of school communications and other useful information.
- Parents shall be invited to information sessions during the first two weeks of school.
- Teachers shall be posting learning tasks on the students' calendar. It is the responsibility of parents to access the portal to remain updated and report any technical issues they are experiencing.
- Heads of Sections and the Principal shall contact parents by phone, letter, or email regarding academic concerns whenever such contact is warranted.
- Parents may also be contacted via text concerning attendance, punctuality, behavior issues and general information.
- Urgent messages for parents shall be sent by phone or email as early as possible.
- Parents are welcome to contact the school to make an appointment to meet any teacher or administrator about matters related to their child.
- Staff and parents shall not communicate with each other via personal mobile phones, personal devices, or through personal social media accounts.
- No direct contact between the teacher and parents shall be established except if a prior appointment has been set.
- Appointments can be taken through the Head of Section in person at drop off/pick up time, by phone or email, or through the administration.
- All parents and visitors should check in at the reception upon arrival to the school.
- Any change in the school calendar shall be notified by letter or email.
- The school shall post school updates over social media platforms at various intervals throughout the school year.

- Students are not permitted to use the school phone except in case of illness or other emergencies.

6.1.2 Communication Tools:

School Portal:

- The school website is a good source of general information about the school. It provides an opportunity to share information about the school with our parents and our community. The website includes:
 - Parent-School Contract
 - School policies
 - Curriculum resources
 - Circulars to parents
 - Information about lessons and curriculum
 - Information about Extra Curricular Activities
 - Special announcements and messages from school
 - Other media and learning resources
 - Agenda of daily instruction and homework¹
 - School calendar of events and activities
 - Family statement of account
 - Online report cards
 - KG webcams
 - Bus locator GPS system
 - News and highlights about campus life
- Information about learning expectations is also accessible to parents through the website.
- The Learning Platform (Learn-Online) is a powerful tool for motivating students as it gives them more choice and flexibility about when and where they complete their learning. It also encourages parental involvement in learning, especially where homework tasks are concerned.
- Each student’s online portfolio shall become an important record of progress and achievement, which will give a more holistic view of progress for parents, allowing them to have more meaningful discussions about their child with school staff.

¹ AMSI has adopted and is starting to use the term “home learning” as an alternative for the term “homework”.

I-Campus:

- I-Campus provides parents with access to a range of school communication and documents such as weekly work and assessment reports.
- I-Campus is used to send circulars, send meeting requests, or information about the progress and attainment of a child.
- At a whole school level, I-Campus provides weekly updates and reminders on the newsfeed and school calendars. At a personal level I-Campus communicates information about specific students, sharing individual student information such as homework, behavior, rewards, attendance data and school report cards.

E-mail/Text:

- The school communicates with parents via an e-mail/text system. Any general communication with parents using this system must be approved by the Principal.
- Parents who wish to contact the school via e-mail as an alternative to telephone or letter may use the school's e-mail address gparent@almawakeb.sch.ae. Alternatively, they can email the HoS directly at their school email address, which shall be shared with parents through the school portal.
- If a parent communicates with the school using email with a concern or a matter that requires an action, a copy shall be stored in a digital file or printed and filed.
- Staff shall forward relevant emails from parents to the Principal especially if the content is a concern.
- All e-mails requiring an answer shall receive a response within 48 hours (2 school days).
- E-mail communications concerning a child are kept in a digital folder.

Telephone calls:

- Parents can communicate with the school via telephone calls.
- Parents can communicate with a specific staff member if they know their extension. Alternatively, they can call the school receptionist who shall direct them to the concerned person or department.

Social Media Platforms:

- Details about events at the school shall be published on the school's social media platforms.
- Staff are not allowed to communicate with parents via social networking sites or accept them as "friends".
- Staff are not allowed to accept students as "friends".
- This does not apply to the school-approved platforms that are intended to facilitate communication with all stakeholders of the school and which will be monitored appropriately.

Written Reports:

- These reports identify areas of strength and areas for improvement. Students are also given an opportunity to comment on their progress. These reports are provided upon request by parents or when the HoS sees a need to do so.

Letters:

- The school shall respond to a parent's letter within 48 hours (2 school days).
- Any letter of concern shall be referred to the Principal immediately.
- Letters to parents must be approved by the Principal before they are sent.
- Copies of all letters to individual parents shall be placed in the respective student's file.

Surveys/Questionnaires:

- Throughout the year, questionnaires and surveys shall be sent out to parents and the results shall be analyzed and used for school improvement.
- Questionnaires are issued to parents on a range of issues and through a variety of means (hard copy, electronic surveys, email, etc.)
- Questionnaires may be distributed at specific school events or via email or school portal.

6.1.3 Home-School Communication:**6.1.3.1 Parent information sessions**

- The school shall hold these sessions within the first two weeks of the school to present information about the school and allow parents to

meet teachers and discuss effective techniques for parental involvement in their child's education.

- During these sessions, teachers and administrators provide information related to:
 - National Agenda parameter requirements
 - teaching and learning methodologies
 - assessment, grading and reporting procedures
 - avenues for parental involvement in the learning process
 - relevance of international benchmark tests
 - other school related issues

6.1.3.2 Parents-Teacher (PT) meetings:

- Parents are invited to attend a PT meeting at least once each year to review the academic and overall progress of their child.
- PT meetings are organized by the HoS and details regarding time and location are communicated to the parents. Parents shall be given the opportunity to select preferred times through I-Campus.
- The purpose of the PT meeting is to:
 - establish and maintain good communication between the school and parents.
 - inform parents of how their child is progressing in school.
 - inform parents of diagnostic or other assessment results.
 - share with the parent issues and challenges that their child may have.
 - learn more about the child from the parent's perspective.
 - identify ways in which both school and parents can help the child.
 - identify areas of concern, if any.
- PT meetings can be different types:

Formal Meetings:

- Formal meetings to address concerns, serious incidents, individual learning programs, student progress, attendance or any other matter that may be requested by the respective HoS, teacher or parents.
- If parents are unable to attend a meeting, the school shall offer alternative timings that suit the parents.
- Following the distribution of report cards, formal meetings with parents shall be arranged by the school to allow parents to discuss their child's performance and next steps. These meetings shall occur

once every semester based on clear timetables that are set by the LT. The expected conversation shall revolve around the following:

- Students’ personal and social development
 - Attainment and progress to date
 - Strengths and areas for improvement
 - Next steps based on current progress
 - Suggestions for ways the parents and the school can work together to support the child’s learning.
- The teacher keeps minutes of such meetings including dates, venue and areas of discussion for future reference.
 - In the case of unsatisfactory progress, further meetings shall be held to devise and agree on an action plan.

Informal Parent-Teacher Meetings:

- There are certain instances where a parent needs to meet with a staff member urgently and without prior notice. The LT shall facilitate such meetings during break time or after school.

Other Consultation Meetings:

- Consultation periods shall be offered to parents through appointments agreed upon by both parties with proof of confirmation through letters, text message or email.
- Appointment dates shall fall within school hours or after school hours (provided that they are approved by the school).

Difficult Meetings:

- The school appreciates constructive feedback and welcomes the opportunity to discuss matters of concern with parents in a respectful and meaningful manner.
- Parents should expect staff to terminate and reschedule meetings that become aggressive, or when a tone becomes disrespectful.

6.1.3.3 Reporting to Parents:

- Reporting to parents about their child’s academic and behavioral progress shall be comprehensive and ongoing.
- The school shall report meaningful feedback to parents about the progress of their child in the school. This feedback uses different sources of information such as assessment data and documented progress on objectives and targets, skills assessment, Individual

Education Plan (IEP), documented observations of the learner's engagement with tasks, outcomes of other assessment tasks and tests, and examples of student's work.

- Reporting periods and dates shall be established by the LT and published on the school website at the beginning of each year.
- The letter grade or percentage mark on the report cards shall be determined in a manner consistent with the School's Assessment Policy.
- Skills Assessment results can be viewed through the school portal.
- Progress reports for students of determination shall clearly state the student's level of achievement in meeting the IEP outcomes.
- Information on all the above shall be made available to parents via the school website.

Report Cards:

- The academic year is divided into two semesters. Semester 1 ends toward the end of January while the second semester ends in June.
- Students in Gr. 3-12 shall receive a report card at the end of each semester. This report card includes the cumulative results of all evaluations done during the semester.
- The breakdown of the grades for each semester for Gr. 3-12 shall be as follows:
 - Semester 1 Evaluation (overall student performance in class during semester 1): 25%
 - Semester 1 Exam: 25%
 - Semester 2 Evaluation (overall student performance in class during semester 2): 25%
 - Final Exam: 25%
- Students in Gr. 1 and 2 shall receive a report card every quarter. Each report card includes evaluation of different aspects of students' work.
- Students in Gr. 1 and 2 shall not sit for Semester or Final Exams.
- KG students shall receive two report cards, one in each semester. These report cards shall include evaluation of different aspects of students' work and personal development (physical, emotional and social).
- The same format shall be maintained throughout the academic year in order to allow parents to see and easily track their child's progress.

- All report cards shall include all basic data about the student, his/her grade level and respective subjects offered at their level in addition to:
 - Attainment in all subjects taught
 - Attendance record
 - Applicable honors and awards

Students of determination and/or Gifted and Talented

- Students of determination and Gifted and Talented students shall receive the results obtained from the intervention and assessment process and benchmark assessments through the IEP/ALP.
- Parents shall be provided with a progress report at least three times a year when their child is under tier 1: Main Level; twice a month when their child is under tier 2: Target Level; and weekly when their child is under tier 3: Intense Level.
- The school shall maintain a regular monthly schedule of IEP/ALP meetings – to be indicated in the timetable – regarding the progress of students in meeting their individual targets.
- During the meeting, the child’s progress with their individual targets is discussed and further targets set. The teachers and parents also agree on a course of action to help students in meeting the new targets.
- The Inclusion Department shall work closely together with subject teachers and shall share information with one another whenever this is in the best interest of the student. The student portfolio shall be current and subject teachers shall be made aware of any changes throughout the year.
- For students of determination, formal timetabled parent/staff meetings to discuss the IEP shall take place in October/November. A review meeting shall take place during May/June or as needed.

6.1.3.4 Responding to parents

- Any requests for information, concerns, or any inquiries about student progress shall be addressed within 3 working days.
- The school differentiates between “enquiries” and “complaints” and accordingly handles them differently.

Responding to parents’ questions:

- If a parent has a question about their child and/or their child’s education, or what is happening in the school, the first step is to speak

directly with their child's HoS. The process for establishing this communication is as follows:

- i. Request through the receptionist to arrange an individual meeting or phone conversation at a mutually convenient time.
 - ii. Indicate the issue to be discussed to provide an opportunity for the HoS or teacher to prepare for the discussion.
 - iii. Unless deemed necessary, it is generally not appropriate for children to be present when discussing questions with a HoS or a teacher.
 - iv. Communication between a parent and a HoS or teacher shall be in a respectful and nonaggressive manner.
- If a parent is dissatisfied with a previous communication surrounding any question, the parent can convey their concerns to the Principal, stating the issue and requesting that a facilitated meeting be established in the presence of the Principal.
 - The Principal is responsible to ensure that this meeting occurs within one week from receiving the request.
 - The purpose of a facilitated meeting is to ensure that the parent has the opportunity to accurately convey their concern and that a clearly articulated action plan for taking any next steps is made, if needed.

Responding to parents' complaints:

- "Complaints" relate to matters where one wishes to register dissatisfaction and/or concern. Complaints can vary in their level of seriousness. The way to handle complaints can therefore vary.
- The school takes complaints seriously and is committed to ensure that they are dealt with fairly and quickly and are comprehensively followed up.
- When registering a complaint, the parent/guardian should firstly approach the HoS.
- Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the HoS, he/she should approach the Principal.
- Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the Principal, he/she may be able to escalate the complaint to the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) at AMSI. The decision to accept or reject such escalation and the decision on any subsequent action rest with the CAO.

Assessment and evaluation conflict resolution:

- Assessment and evaluation conflict resolution is done using all measures that ensure the fairness and integrity of the process while protecting the interests of all parties involved.

- a) A student has the right to appeal for a review of his grade.
- b) The first step shall be a review of the paper by the subject teacher.
- c) If the student still feels the grade is unfair, the HoS and/or Subject Coordinator shall review the paper and discuss the grade with the subject teacher.
- d) Where a conflict or difference arises regarding the evaluation of the student, the parent shall proceed through the following steps to resolve the problem:
 - Step one:** The parent shall contact the child's HoS for an explanation of criteria used in arriving at the decision.
 - Step Two:** If the matter remains unresolved, the parent may request the HoS to arrange a meeting with the subject teacher.
- e) Students shall have the opportunity to appeal the grade received on a final examination. The following guidelines shall be adhered to:
 - The school specifies a time for parents to appeal or request a review.
 - Final exams are not returned to students. However, parents or students may take notes of anything written on the exam paper.
 - To resolve a conflict, parents follow the same procedure in part d.
- f) A grade given by a teacher shall be final and cannot be changed by others unless it was given fraudulently, in bad faith, incompetently, or because of clerical or mechanical mistake. A grade cannot be changed unless the teacher who determined the grade is, to the extent practicable, given an opportunity to state orally, in writing, or both, the reasons for which such a grade was given and is, to the extent practicable, included in all discussions relating to changing of such grade.
- g) Any changes to the student's grade shall be reported to the student, his/her parents or guardians, subject teacher, and the Principal.
- h) Appeals must be registered with the school within 3 to 5 days of the date the student receives the grade.

6.1.3.5 Keeping in Touch- KIT

- The HoS shall communicate with parents weekly and randomly to report on any positive behavior or significant development that they observe in a student.

- These communications shall be about issues that are not necessarily academic, and shall generate a positive feel with the child and the parents.
- By using “KIT” and sharing stories mostly about non-academic positive issues, the Leadership Team establishes a relationship with parents that fits into the ethos of family that the school fosters.
- The Leadership Team members shall document all such communication and share it with the Principal weekly.

6.1.3.6 School Calendar

- The school calendar outlines the important dates of the school year. These include first and last day of school, exam dates, school breaks, public holidays, PD days, celebration days, etc. A summary of important dates is shared with parents through a circular and shall be available on the school website.

6.1.4 Communication between Staff Members

- All staff are responsible to uphold the principle of respectful communication and confidentiality.
- Teachers are required to attend departmental and section meetings and PD days to ensure they have up-to-date information/communication regarding school events, to provide feedback on educational matters, to exchange student news and to participate in pedagogical activities.

6.3 Communication between Staff Members and Students

- Teachers shall ensure that all instructions to students are clear and informative.
- The Student Council shall serve as an important two-way channel of communication for students to voice their concerns.
- Members from the Leadership Team will occasionally attend Student Council meetings in order to facilitate this two-way communication.
- There shall be no communication between staff and students via personal mobile phones, personal e-mails or any personal social media applications.
- Communication between the teacher and the student whether in the classroom or during school activities, shall be clear, respectful, sensitive to student needs and with definite and well-understood boundaries.

- Students are also expected to behave respectfully and to communicate clearly with all adults at the school.

6.4 Communication with the Local Community

- The school will occasionally invite people from the local community to participate in various school events.
- The school shall make use of every opportunity to present a positive image to the local community via the school website and social media platforms
- All media and printed material such as brochures, posters, clothing items, invitations, event notifications including logos, colors and general presentations must be approved by AMSI.
- The SLT is responsible to proofread and keep a record of all external communications that are distributed and sent throughout the year.

6.5 Communications with Registration and Administration Office

- Parents have a responsibility to read communications from the school (school news, class notes, website messages, school policies, etc.). All information regarding the daily operations of the school, dates for upcoming school or class events can be obtained from the Registration and Administration Office.
- Parents can communicate with the Registration and Administration Office staff via phone, email or with a note, which their children can drop off to the office.
- The reception team does not have an active role to receive or deal with complaints of any kind, other than to direct the individual to the appropriate channel to appropriately respond to the concern.

6.6 Emergency Communications

- In situations where the school is under emergency conditions or is closing due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g. inclement weather, facilities failure) parents shall be informed via email and/or SMS text messaging.
- If an emergency arises and parents need to contact the school regarding their child, the receptionist will need to be given sufficient information to quickly alert the most appropriate person.

7.0 Confidentiality of Information

- Information regarding both staff and students need to be kept confidential. All staff are requested to take care with the handling and transmission of confidential information, with regard to how and to whom the information is transmitted.
- Under no circumstances are student files shared outside the school, unless written consent is given by the parent.
- Any disclosure of student information needs the Principal's approval.
- In order to release student files to other schools, the school must receive the appropriate, signed request from another school. If parents request documents from a student's file, they must contact the Registration and Administration Office detailing their needs. The Head of Section shall then file a copy of the request with the student's file.

8.0 Keeping Student Records

Student records shall be kept by the school for the duration of time that the student attends the school. Upon written request, records may be transferred to the student's new school.

9.0 Other Related Policies

This policy has to be read in conjunction with the following policies: Electronic Communication and Social Media Policy, Assessment Policy, Student Behavior Policy and Attendance Policy.

10.0 Policy Review

The Principal along with the school leadership team shall conduct an annual review of the Communication Policy and share suggestions for improvement with the Governing Board.

Revision History:

Revision	Date	Description of changes	Requested By
0	10/01/2020	Initial Release	CAO