

Background

In the spring of 2009, in response to parent feedback, the All-School Administrative Team met to discuss home-school communication issues. A **Communications Advisory Team** (see front panel) was formed to address parent concerns and propose new directions. One of the work products of this team is this set of guidelines for improved communication within our school community.

During the summer and fall of 2009, the Advisory Team led communication workshops for our entire K-12 faculty, analyzing scenarios from the most common to the most challenging. The Advisory Team also created and published a comprehensive handbook for the use of our faculty to promote more effective communication with our parents.

The Goal

Our primary goal is to foster productive, healthy dialogue between our teachers and parents in order to maximize student growth and learning.

Expectations

Parents and teachers have appropriately high expectations for Maimonides, which are often met or surpassed. Discussing and clarifying reasonable expectations becomes crucial in light of technological changes, time constraints, and an ever-increasing volume of information. *Clear* and *useful* communication between home and school, not necessarily *more* communication, is the goal. The challenge for both parents and teachers is to balance respectful communication with realistic expectations.

Implementation

We hope you will find these guidelines useful. We ask that you direct any feedback or suggestions for future editions of these guidelines to Erica Schultz, Communications Officer (x417; eschultz@maimonides.org).

Guidelines for Effective Communication

Parents and teachers, working together, can maximize effective communication when:

1. The school welcomes parents as partners in the educational process.
2. The school shares general information so that parents are informed on a regular basis and know whom to contact with questions or concerns. See inside for our 2009-10 "Who to Call for What" list.
3. Parents become familiar with the school's various information channels (email, website, newsletters) and read them regularly.
4. Teachers convey their preferred mode of personal communication (phone, email, etc.).
5. Parents who seek information about their child's progress contact the student's teacher first. This usually leads to more satisfactory outcomes.
6. Teachers and principals are open to parent concerns and offer opportunity for respectful discussions.
7. Parents and school staff act respectfully at meetings and forums and are considerate of speakers in asking questions and making comments. These gatherings are important vehicles for sharing information and creating conversation between home and school.
8. Parents and school staff acknowledge the volume of information that circulates each day and are respectful of time demands. For example, it may not be possible for a parent or a staff member to respond immediately to a phone call. Teachers will always strive to respond to a parent communication by the end of the **next** school day.

Home/School Communications

An Overview for Parents

revised January 2010

Communications Advisory Team

Parents

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