



École européenne de Bruxelles IV (Laeken)
European School of Brussels IV (Laeken)

COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATION POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to establish the basic principles of exchange – oral and written – between the members of the school community of the European School of Brussels IV (Laeken), hereafter referred to by its acronym "EEB4". Although there is a communication secretary in the administration, all members of its community may have to communicate, according to the various definitions (translated into objectives) given below.

In the area of communication, EEB4 aims to achieve the following objectives¹: To **inform** and pass on practical or educational information; To create and maintain a **relationship** within the school community; To promote **projects and events** created and organised by EEB4 or its partners; To identify, analyse and provide constructive solutions to various **problems**.

OBJECTIVES

INFORMATION

The school strives to provide the school community with **clear, comprehensive and professional** information **within a reasonable timeframe**. The size of the school and the number of events and projects may represent obstacles to comprehensive information. However, the school undertakes to do its utmost to achieve this objective and to be as efficient as possible.

CREATING AND MAINTAINING A RELATIONSHIP

There are many opportunities for interaction at EEB4, whether at meetings and assemblies, working groups, projects or events. The school wishes to nurture and maintain the relationship between the various stakeholders (staff, pupils, parents, partners, other European Schools) by **involving the school community in school life**, in accordance with the rules and procedures in place, but also during more informal events. The **cooperation of the school community**, including the Community Building working group (parent volunteers), is essential to achieve this objective.

PROMOTING THE SCHOOL'S PROJECTS AND EVENTS

Numerous projects are carried out every year at EEB4 and others are launched during each school year. The same applies to events. These activities are made possible thanks to **the work of the staff and the support of the management, but also thanks to the pupils, parent volunteers and the Parents Association of the European Schools (APEEE)**, which regularly provides support for projects, in particular via the [Community Fund](#). The school community is kept informed of some of these projects and events via the school's various communication channels². Publications and tools are regularly designed and put in place to **improve the distribution** of this type of information. For some events³, **parents are invited** to take part *in situ*. Finally, for certain projects, the school works in

¹ Source: [Le Robert. Dico en ligne](#).

² Sometimes several activities are taking place simultaneously (they may involve a handful of pupils, a class or an entire level, or even the whole school). The school is aware of the amount of information sent out to the school community and tries to strike a balance so as not to overload communication channels, in particular mailboxes. In the case of small-scale events (class or option level), parents are generally informed directly by the organising teacher.

³ The capacity of certain rooms does not allow us to invite families to every event.

cooperation with pupils and/or parent volunteers (Discos, Somerfesto, etc.), a valuable aid that helps to improve our school life.

PROBLEM SOLVING

When a problem of any kind arises, the school undertakes to listen to the various stakeholders and to seek reasonable solutions to resolve the problem, where this is within its competence.

In many cases, the problem can be resolved by a simple discussion, dialogue and explanation between the people concerned (see Charter, below).

CHARTER

Communicating is more than simply sending information. Listening and exchanging is equally important, as are the content and shape of the message. In the school context, **cooperation between all members of the school community** – staff, parents and pupils – and its partners is essential to ensure the success of our **common mission** : to provide a multilingual and multicultural education to children in nursery, primary and secondary ; while bearing in mind the **values** of our school : friendship, creativity, respect, tolerance, honesty, commitment, enthusiasm, loyalty, generosity and integrity. This charter establishes basic communication principles for our school community.

Every member of the **school community** is expected to:

- **Communicate with respect, kindness and courtesy, using appropriate language, whichever** the means of communication used (in person, by phone, by e-mail, etc.);
- **Communicate responsibly**, i.e. by respecting the confidentiality of any information at their disposal and avoiding spreading rumours and false information;
- Choose the **communication channel**⁴ and the **means of communication that are most appropriate** and effective for the context, the message and the recipient(s);
- Take a proactive approach to **keep informed**, in particular by regularly checking their mailbox and other official school channels such as the agenda, the SMS-My School portal⁵, SharePoint, etc., especially with regard to homework, documentation, administrative procedures, etc.;
- **Listen to the other person** and be **tolerant** of opinions that differ from their own;
- **Take rules, policies and procedures in place into account**, in particular with regard to the channels via which and the deadlines by which certain information or decisions must be communicated;
- Show **forbearance with regard to response times**, particularly during school periods when there may be an overload of work (e.g. beginning of September), or in the event of unforeseen circumstances;
- Consider the **right to disconnect** of other members of the school community, in particular members of staff, outside working hours and during school holidays;
- **Express any comments and criticism constructively and sympathetically**, in order to help improve communication within the school community.

⁴ The telephone numbers and/or e-mail addresses of staff members are available on our website, under the [Contacts](#) tab. Organisational charts are also available to help members of the school community find the right person: [Nursery and primary cycles](#), [Secondary cycle](#).

⁵ For the sake of brevity, we will use "SMS portal" for "SMS-My School portal" in the remainder of this document.

The school is expected to:

- Communicate **professionally** and effectively through its official channels;
- **Inform** the school community in a **timely manner**;
- Use an appropriate vocabulary – without jargon⁶ specific to the language of writing or the system – and a clear and concise style, with the aim of being **understood by every member of the school community**, in particular by members whose mother tongue is neither French nor English⁷;
- **Listen to the comments and criticism** of the school community and take them into account when improving its communication.

⁶ With the exception of terms specific to the European Schools system or the EEB4. To help you, we have developed a Glossary of the most frequently used terms. The internal version is available on SharePoint. The external version is sent together with this policy.

⁷ Most documents issued by the school are published in French and English. The school makes every effort to translate documents that are not yet available in either language.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

WITH STAFF MEMBERS

E-MAIL

All staff members have a **professional e-mail address**. Only this address should be used for school purposes. Some members of staff also have a **functional address**, in particular members of management. In this case, it should be used in priority.

This mailbox needs to be **consulted regularly** during the working day. E-mail is the most widely used digital means of communication between members of staff. *Announcements* sent from the SMS portal are also sent by e-mail⁸.

Information sent by e-mail may be replicated on other internal channels, but not systematically.

SHAREPOINT

SharePoint is used by staff members to share working documents, teaching and administrative information, as well as the school's events and meetings calendar. When an important document is created or updated, staff members are informed by the management or the department/secretariat concerned.

MEETINGS AND ASSEMBLIES

Formal meetings and staff assemblies are indicated in the calendars for each cycle, as well as in the general calendar⁹. Regular meetings are held between management and cycle, level and section coordinators, as well as with working groups.

A digital invitation is usually sent to the people concerned in advance of the meeting.

Participants are invited to submit any point to be added to the agenda for these meetings. Minutes of formal meetings must be kept and sent to participants once they have been approved.

WEEKLY NOTICE AND WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

The *Weekly Notice* (nursery and primary cycles) and *Weekly Newsletter* (secondary cycle) are internal weekly publications prepared by the management and secretariat of each cycle. They contain information, requests, practical and pedagogical reminders, and an overview of upcoming meetings and events. They are sent by e-mail every Friday afternoon to staff members.

⁸ The option must be selected when sending.

⁹ These calendars are reserved for staff members. They do not include the school calendar (which includes the dates for the start of the school year, school holidays and the end of the school year).

CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATION

Staff members are represented on a number of committees and working groups (Board of Administration, Education Council, SAC, etc.). Before each meeting, staff members can submit their questions, comments or requests to their respective representatives for discussion (orally, by e-mail or via a form, if applicable).

Management and/or representatives regularly consult staff members¹⁰ on various subjects via surveys.

SOCIAL EVENTS

During the school year, the *Amicale* regularly organises meetings and events to which all staff members are invited.

WITH PUPILS¹¹

SCHOOL AGENDA

At the beginning of the year, every pupil from M1 to S4 receives a school agenda. This agenda is an **organisational tool for pupils** (homework, tests and exams) and a means of communication between teachers and parents (messages, reminders, other remarks). All pupils are responsible for keeping their agenda up to date throughout the year.

In primary, pupils are required to consult their agenda to prepare their homework and tests.

In secondary, homework and tests must be indicated in the agenda at least until S3, in addition to being published on the SMS portal.

SMS – MY SCHOOL

Each pupil has a profile on the SMS portal. This is a communication channel within the school community. Like a notice board, it can be used to exchange educational and practical information, to indicate a pupil's absences, to view their timetable, to publish reports, homework (in secondary), newsletters, and so on.

Information is transmitted in the form of Announcements or published directly on the portal and/or in the user's profile. When an Announcement is published, it is visible on the portal and in the form of an e-mail notification¹².

In secondary, pupils must consult the SMS portal to prepare their homework and exams.

N.B.: The SMS portal should be considered as a public "notice board" where only generic information can be published, not containing personal, sensitive or confidential data.

¹⁰ All or some staff members, depending on the subject concerned.

¹¹ Students are included in the chapter on internal communication for two reasons: they have a system account (@student.eursc.eu) and are generally located within the school. They are also involved in numerous communications, both internal and external.

¹² Provided the option is selected on the portal.

E-MAIL

Each pupil from P3 to S7 has an e-mail address (mainly used in secondary) which ends with @student.eursc.eu. Secondary pupils are encouraged to check their e-mail boxes several times a week and to communicate exclusively from their school e-mail address for all school-related matters¹³.

MEETINGS AND ASSEMBLIES

Pupils are regularly invited to assemblies at which they receive practical and educational information. They are invited to these assemblies by the secretariat. The information provided is also sent out by *announcement* (to students and parents).

CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATION

In primary, every class elects a representative at the beginning of the school year. They form the **Pupils' Council**, which meets regularly under the supervision of a member of the pedagogical staff. Among other things, they discuss well-being in the classroom and playground, and share ideas and projects to strengthen integration and the sense school community.

In secondary, every class elects a representative at the beginning of the school year. They form the **Pupils' Committee** (*Comité des Élèves – CdE*), which meets regularly and independently. They discuss matters relating to school life and design projects that contribute to the integration and well-being of the pupils. In its role as pupils' representative, the *CdE* also meets regularly with the school management. It is an important intermediary between teachers and pupils, and generally passes on information about events and projects organised by the school through its own communication channels or via communication campaigns.

Pupils are also represented on a number of committees and working groups, including the Board of Administration and the CoSup.

¹³ Please read the [ICT Charter](#) carefully.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

WITH PARENTS AND LEGAL REPRESENTATIVES

SCHOOL AGENDA

The agenda (M1-S4) is an organisational tool for pupils (homework, tests and exams) and a means of **communication between teachers and parents** (messages, reminders, other remarks). Teachers ensure that pupils keep it up to date and note down homework and tests. Parents consult it on a daily basis and acknowledge receipt of any messages sent by adding their signature.

SMS – MY SCHOOL

Every staff member has access to the SMS portal. Teachers and members of the pedagogical team enter homework, tests and other information about pupils on a daily basis. Every parent has access to the SMS portal, where they can consult their child's profile: Announcements, timetable, reports, homework (in secondary), absences, consent for photos to be taken and published, etc. Parents consult the SMS portal several times a week.

N.B.: The SMS portal should be considered as a public "notice board" where only generic information can be published, not containing personal, sensitive or confidential data.

E-MAIL

Some communications between staff members and parents occur by e-mail, particularly if these communications concern a specific subject and/or individual. Within the school, teachers and other staff members should use their professional address when communicating with parents. They are encouraged to reply to e-mails received from parents within a reasonable time. Parents are encouraged to check their mailbox regularly.

As teachers are unable to consult their mailboxes at all times, particularly during school hours, no urgent information should be communicated via this channel, especially if it concerns health or safety (e.g. a change in the arrangements for a pupil's departure at the end of the day which could not be communicated earlier by e-mail or in the school agenda). In this case, please notify the secretariat by phone.

In the event of a formal complaint, the teacher must always forward the e-mail to the management.

MEETINGS AND ASSEMBLIES

Parents have the opportunity to meet the teaching staff on a number of occasions: parent-teacher meetings at certain key moments in the year, including at the start of the school year; the school report oral day (in nursery and primary); transition assemblies, presentation of school trips or subject choices. Parents can also ask to meet a teacher by contacting them directly. Lists are available on our website: [nursery and primary](#), [secondary](#).

If a parent is invited to take part in a meeting on **Teams** (online), they must log in with their own account. They cannot use their child's account.

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

The *Newsletter* is a weekly publication prepared by the school management and the Communication Secretary. It contains a selection of the latest school news (events, information, reminders, etc.) It is sent via the SMS portal every Monday (or the next working day if Monday is a public holiday or in the event of unforeseen circumstances).

LETTERS

Staff will endeavour to respond to letters (paper or digital) received from a parent within a reasonable timeframe.

WEBSITE

The website contains documentation for the school community, in particular (future) parents and pupils: rules, policies, school calendar, timetables, contacts, information on how to get to the school, etc. Some of the school's news¹⁴ is published on the website, as are some upcoming events¹⁵. The school also publishes job offers and calls to tender for public procurement.

A [Frequently Asked Questions](#) section is available and regularly updated. Some information can also be found using the search tool. Before contacting a secretariat, we invite you to browse the website and carefully read any documentation relating to your question or problem. We have published two cascade communication charts to **help you find "Who to contact in case of..."**, one for the [nursery and primary cycles](#) and one for the [secondary cycle](#).

A lot of information is also available on the [website of the Office of the Secretary-General of the European Schools](#) (OSGES), including rules and policies concerning the entire European Schools system.

CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATION

At the beginning of the school year, every class elects several representatives who are invited to participate in certain committees and working groups. The elections are organised by the [APEEE](#).

Representatives are also encouraged to inform other parents in their class or section of communications from the school, reminding them of important dates in the calendar, events, etc. This information is sent to all parents via the SMS portal, but some may get lost in the multitude of information sent out, which is why distribution via informal channels can be useful.

¹⁴ In general, we publish news that concerns the whole school community, a particular achievement or project, or an article written by a pupil or teacher. Given the large number of events taking place at the school, we cannot be exhaustive.

¹⁵ For security reasons, some events are not included in the calendar. Others contain very general information, intentionally left vague (for example: time and place of a meeting, this information is sent directly to the people concerned).

WITH PARTNERS

The same principles of communication apply to partners as within the school community. They should be kept informed of any decisions that might affect them. Here are a few examples:

- The school informs the **APEEE** and the **After-School Childcare** (ECASC) of major events and ongoing projects so that they can, if necessary, adapt their services and, if they wish, promote them via their own channels;
- Staff members organising an event with external guests, including parents, must always **inform the security guards** and provide a list of guests, whom they will have informed in advance of the arrangements for access to the school¹⁶ ;
- Where necessary, the administration will notify the **cleaning company** in advance of events requiring their intervention, outside the usual cleaning areas and periods.

WITH THE PRESS

Only the management is authorised to speak on behalf of the school.

Any staff member contacted by a local, national or international media is required to **forward the request to the management**, either directly or via the Communication Secretary (justine.dauchot@eursc.eu).

Any staff member wishing to **invite the press** to an event organised at school must make a **written request, by e-mail, to the management** (copy to justine.dauchot@eursc.eu) at **least 15 working days** before the date of the activity. They must specify whether photos and/or videos will be taken of pupils and/or staff members, carry out research on the media and provide this information when making their request. The management reserves the right to accept or refuse the request.

If the management agrees, and if **photos and/or videos are to be taken of pupils** and staff, the event organiser will ensure that all necessary **consents** are obtained. For more information, please contact the school [Data Protection Officer \(DPO\)](#).

COMMERCIAL OR ADVERTISING INFORMATION

Apart from exceptions analysed by the management, the school does not relay information of a commercial or advertising nature, political, private or not linked to the European Union (e.g. house renting advertisements, petitions, election campaigns, participation in competition external to the school or the system).

The school reserves the right to decide on a case-by-case basis whether or not to publish promotional or solidarity content with a link to the European Union (e.g. collection of clothing or hygiene products after a tragic event).

¹⁶ See the Procedure for organising an event (SharePoint, internal document).

BEST PRACTICE

Here are a few tips for efficient communication.

- When writing **an e-mail to a staff member or a pupil** (@eursc.eu, @teacher.eursc.eu, @student.eursc.eu, etc.), make sure you **always include a subject**. Otherwise, the e-mail will not reach its recipient.
- If you contact a **member of the management by e-mail**, preferably use **the functional address**. The same applies to the Data Protection Officer and ICT support addresses.
- To make it easier to find the documentation, tools and software used by the school, in particular **the SMS portal, the website and Microsoft 365** (if you have access), remember to **save them as bookmarks** on your computer.
- To find out "**whom to contact in the event of...**", **consult the organisation charts** available on our website ([nursery and primary cycles](#), [secondary cycle](#)).
- If your **personal or contact details have changed** (e-mail address, telephone number, postal address, marital status, etc.), please **inform the school as soon as possible** at LAE-SMS-UPDATING@eursc.eu.
- If you **notice or suspect an error** in any content issued by the school, do not hesitate to **report it** to the person or department concerned.