



AMERICAN ACADEMY
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Parent Communication Policy

This policy was approved by the American Academy Board of Directors on July 15, 2010

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the communication process at American Academy. This policy defines how parents of American Academy can communicate a suggestion or a concern to the school and ultimately participate in the solution. The process is designed so that the school will respond to parent input in a timely and efficient manner.

Timeliness Expectations

If you contact a staff member per this policy and you do not hear back within two business days, please try again. If you still do not receive a response, proceed to the next step as laid out in this policy.

American Academy Parent Advisory Board (PAB)

The purpose of the Parent Advisory Board (PAB) is to uphold the mission and vision of the school, as it relates to the parent population. The PAB will respond to parent feedback and concerns pertaining to school policy, operations, or programs and make recommendations to the Head of School (HOS) and the Board of Directors (BOD) on behalf of the parent population. The PAB is not an outlet for personal conflict resolution or complaints about a student, staff member, parent or any individual member of the American Academy community.

PAB responsibilities include:

- (1) Collect parent feedback on policies
- (2) Answer parent questions on policies and communication
- (3) Providing policy feedback per the BOD's policy calendar
- (4) Attending monthly BOD meetings
- (5) Conduct the annual Parent Survey

Through the PAB, the HOS and the BOD will be able to remain informed of parent suggestions, ideas, and concerns.

American Academy Communication Process

American Academy is a cooperative enterprise: families, teachers, administrators, directors and staff share the responsibilities and rewards of operating the school. Parents play essential roles as advocates for their children and partners in enriching our school community with their ideas, interests, talents, resources and concerns. Parent input is valued and encouraged.

This policy defines different communication processes to be used, depending on the nature of the communication from the parent community.

I. General Questions

- 1) Contact the school (info@americanacademyk8.org).
- 2) You will receive a response within one business day.

II. Specific Questions or Concerns Pertaining to your Student

- 1) Your child must first contact his or her teacher to discuss any questions or concerns (applies to fifth grade and up).
- 2) If there is still a concern, contact the teacher.
- 3) If you still have a concern, contact the Dean of Students.
- 4) If necessary, contact the HOS.

III. Questions or Concerns Pertaining to Classroom Practices or Academic Program

- 1) Contact the appropriate teacher for that classroom or academic area. If you are unsure who to contact, contact your child's homeroom teacher.
- 2) If the issue is not resolved, contact the Dean of Students.
- 3) If the issue is still not resolved, contact the HOS.
- 4) If the issue is still not resolved, contact the Board of Directors (board@americanacademyk8.org).

IV. Policy Questions

- 1) Submit your question to the PAB (pab@americanacademyk8.org).
- 2) You will be contacted within 48 hours by a PAB member with the answer to your question or a referral on where to find the answer.
- 3) The PAB will file your question with the applicable policy so that they can recommend policy clarifications as needed when that policy is up for review.

V. Existing Policy Suggested Changes, Additions or Complaints

- 1) Submit your input to the PAB (pab@americanacademyk8.org).
- 2) You will be contacted within 48 hours by a PAB member for issue clarification and to give you an idea of the next steps including the next scheduled review of the policy by the BOD.
- 3) If needed, the PAB will facilitate a discussion of the issue with the HOS.
- 4) On recommendation of the HOS and/or the parent, the issue will be added to the next PAB meeting agenda, where the issue will be discussed with the parent population as needed. Parent input will be collected for the next scheduled review of the policy by the BOD.
- 5) The PAB may decide to draft a policy change proposal for the HOS and the BOD. If the resolution or policy change will impact the school's operating budget, the recommendation must detail specific proposed changes to the school's

operating budget to accommodate the recommendation. Any financial impact in excess of \$1,000 requires approval by the BOD, should the proposal be funded by the school.

- 6) The PAB will then present the recommendation at the BOD meeting when the policy is scheduled for review or the next meeting if the proposal is urgent. The PAB will present the proposal, complete with a summary of the positions for and against the recommendation, as determined by the parent population and the PAB, and financial impact, if any.
- 7) Prior to consideration, the BOD may request more information, refer the recommendation to the HOS, or refer to another advisory committee for further development and analysis. If so, the committee will investigate the feasibility and advisability of the recommendation and provide a report to the BOD in a timely manner.
- 8) The BOD will then vote on the recommendation.

VI. Proposals for Improvements or New Programs

- 1) Submit your input to the PAB (pab@americanacademyk8.org).
- 2) You will be contacted within 48 hours by a PAB member for clarification and to give you an idea of the next steps.
- 3) If needed, the PAB will facilitate a discussion of the issue with the HOS.
- 4) On recommendation of the HOS and/or the parent, the issue will be added to the next PAB meeting agenda, where the idea will be discussed with the parent population as needed. The PAB may form a committee to study the idea and form a proposal. You may be asked to participate in the study.
- 5) The PAB may decide to present a proposal to HOS and/or the BOD, depending on who has approval authority. If the proposal will impact the school's operating budget, the recommendation must detail specific proposed changes to the school's operating budget to accommodate the recommendation. Any financial impact in excess of \$1,000 requires approval by the BOD, should the proposal be funded by the school. The PAB may ask the PTO to fund the proposal.
- 6) The PAB will then present the proposal at a BOD meeting. The BOD may vote on the proposal.
- 7) If the BOD adopts the improvement and/or program, the proposal may be turned over to the Parent Teacher Organization for implementation.

VII. Conflict Resolution Process

If any student, parent, staff member, or community member is involved in a conflict with another member of the American Academy community, he or she must follow the appropriate communication process:

- 1) Discuss the conflict with the other party.
- 2) Bring the issue to the appropriate teacher or staff member if applicable.
- 3) If the issue cannot be resolved at the staff level, discuss the issue with the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students will either resolve the issue or direct the issue to appropriate Academic Director.
- 4) If the issue cannot be resolved discuss the issue with the HOS.
- 5) If the issue cannot be resolved at the school level, bring the issue to the BOD (board@americanacademyk8.org).

VIII. Exit Procedures

Should an American Academy family choose to leave the school for any reason, the following process must be followed in order for the school to strive for continual improvement and to learn from that family’s experience:

- 1) Upon notification of disenrollment, the front office will schedule an exit interview with the parent(s), the HOS and at least on member of the Board of Directors. The parent will be given and Exit Interview form to complete.
- 2) The HOS and Board of Directors member will complete, sign, and file an Exit Interview form.

IX. General Communication Policies

American Academy strives to keep the lines of communication open in several ways, including board of director meetings, advisory board meetings, school committee meetings, electronic mail, newsletters, weekly folders and the website.

One of the goals of American Academy is to use technology to the maximum extent possible to enhance the educational opportunities and experience for its students, while reducing operational costs to the school. Electronic mail is one application of technology that provides enhanced convenience and timeliness in communication. Accordingly, members of the American Academy community are encouraged to use electronic mail whenever appropriate to communicate with one another. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide accurate and updated electronic mail addresses to the school’s Administrative Assistant.

Appropriate etiquette should be observed, however, when sending electronic mail. Parent email addresses should be used only for official school communication. All members of the American Academy community should be mindful that electronic mail is a poor medium for resolving conflict—an electronic message cannot convey non-verbal communications, and the intended “tone” of electronic messages can be misinterpreted by the recipient.

Teachers and administration will use email to maintain frequent contact with students and parents. The school will also distribute a regular newsletter by electronic mail to update the American Academy community on school events, opportunities, policies, and news. The school’s web site, www.americanacademyk8.org, is frequently updated and will be the primary place to update the American Academy community on current events and issues involving the school.

POLICY HISTORY

- Original:* approved by the BOD on October 3, 2005
- Revision 1:* approved by the BOD on March 6, 2006
- Revision 2:* approved by the BOD on November 15, 2007
- Revision 3:* approved by the BOD on May 20, 2009
- Revision 4:* approved by the BOD on January 21, 2010
- Revision 5:* approved by the BOD on July 15, 2010

SUMMARY OF REVISION 1

- 1) Addition of Questions or Concerns Pertaining to Classroom Practices or Academic Program
- 2) Addition of Exit Procedures
- 3) Clarification that the PAB is not an outlet for personal conflicts

SUMMARY OF REVISION 2: Clarification on weekly folders

SUMMARY OF REVISION 3: Clarification of the role of the PAB

SUMMARY OF REVISION 4: Insertion of the Dean of Students

SUMMARY OF REVISION 5: Clarify the role of the student