

# **Communicating with Parents of Students**

**Produced by:** Learner Services Officer

**Policy approved by:** Academic Board 6/5/03 Minute 226  
Strategic Management Team 7/5/03 Minute 768  
Operational Management Team 9/5/03 Minute 23  
Curriculum and Quality Committee 19/5/03 Minute 68

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## **Preamble to the Policy**

### **Equal Opportunities**

The College shall comply with the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and Disability Discrimination Act 2005), the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, the Human Rights Act 1998 (or any enactment modifying or replacing them) and all relevant statutory duties in respect of equal opportunities.

### **Special Educational Needs and Disability Statement**

The College shall have particular regard to the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and Disability Discrimination Act 2005) in respect of this policy.

The Act applies to people who are disabled according to the definition of disability in the DDA 1995. That is, a disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has an effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

That effect must be:

1. Substantial (that is, more than minor or trivial), and
2. Adverse, and
3. Long-term (that is, has lasted or is likely to last for at least 12 months or for the rest of the life of the person affected).

The College is committed to take all reasonable steps to implement or adjust the policy taking in the circumstances of each individual. Reasonable steps may include, for example, alternative format documents, special arrangements for meetings. (Please note the examples are not exhaustive).

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy aims to give clear guidance on how the College will communicate with parents set against a complicated legal background. The College values the contribution parents make to their children's education and also respects each individual's right to privacy, as reinforced by legislation such as the Data Protection Act.

## 2. Definitions

- 2.1 **Student** – A student is anyone who is or was enrolled on a course at Coleg Morgannwg.
- 2.2 **Child** - The College recognizes that a person is a child, in law, until they attain the age of 18 years.
- 2.3 **Parent** – Parents will be the natural parent or those who have been granted the same legal status.

## 3. The Law

- 3.1 **Data Protection Act.** The College is obliged to work within the Data Protection Act. Individuals have a right to expect that their details are kept secure and only revealed to those who have a legitimate right to view them. College students must consent to anyone, including parents, receiving their information.
- 3.2 **Education (Pupil Information) Regulations 2000.** These regulations allow parents to receive information about their children whilst in school. However, these regulations do not state that the same permission extends to colleges.
- 3.3 It is apparent that the law requires the College to seek the permission of students before information is passed to parents or any other person.
- 3.4 The College, in order that it can involve parents in the education of their child, will make it standard that a student who enrolls agrees to a statement allowing release of information to their parents up to the age of 18. However, it will be possible for students to refuse this release of information and still enroll.

## 4. Communication with Parents: Guidelines for school-link pupils and full-time students

- 4.1 Communication with parents of students who are 18 and under varies across the College. Even with young students over 18 years of age, student services and faculty staff have communication with parents.

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- 4.2 With school link pupils all communication with parents must be through channels and procedures agreed with their secondary school.
- 4.3 With students 18 and under the College through its staff should have due regard to keeping parents informed of their children's attendance, progress and behavior in the way that secondary schools do.
- 4.4 With students over the age of 18 the College must heed the requirements of the data protection legislation. It is therefore recommended that faculties, with the advice of the Learner Services, agree a means of explaining to parents the constraints imposed on the college by data protection on communicating information on students' progress. Parents must be made aware that it is for their daughter/son to agree with the College that they will allow direct communication on student affairs. Should agreement be reached it is recommended that *loco parentis* practices be adapted to respect the growing independence of a 19-year-old student.

### **5. Ways of and reasons for communicating with parents**

- 5.1 Involving parents in the admissions process by, for example, attending interviews and open days. This will involve the parent in the process of advising the child on their choice of course.
- 5.2 Invitation to parents to attend a pre-course meeting with their son/daughter. Curriculum areas sometimes hold pre enrolment information sessions. Involving parents ensure they get information first hand which will aid them in supporting the student, especially in the early part of the course.
- 5.3 Copies of progress reports.
- 5.4 Invitation to attend exhibitions and displays of students' work.
- 5.5 Involvement in disciplinary, grievance and complaints cases.

### **6. Monitoring and Review**

- 6.1 This policy will be monitored and updated where necessary in line with experience or changes in law.
- 6.2 A formal review of this policy will be carried out every four years.