

PVPA Home/School Communication Guidelines

OVERVIEW

Direct communication between students, teachers, administrators, and parents/guardians is essential to student success at PVPA. **Home-to-school communication is as important as school-to-home communication.** This document outlines the most effective methods, and what to do if communication is not working. Students with specific accommodations stated in IEPs or 504 plans may have different or additional strategies.

The overall goal is for all students to develop effective habits. A successful PVPA student:

- IS RESPONSIBLE by fulfilling obligations to teachers, parents, and him/herself.
- IS AUTONOMOUS by taking care of things him/herself whenever possible.
- PERSEVERES by completing what s/he sets out to do, and shows a willingness to confront challenges.
- MANAGES HIS/HER TIME by setting appropriate start and end times for doing work or meeting obligations.
- SHOWS INITIATIVE through self-motivation and assertiveness in meeting learning goals.
- IS SELF-RELIANT by trusting in his/her ability to manage work and responsibilities.
- IS RESOURCEFUL by finding, inventing, or adapting creative ways to solve problems.

COMMUNICATION METHODS

- E-MAIL is generally the most efficient means to communicate between home and school. We understand that some families (and teachers) do not have Internet access at home, and make every attempt to make accommodations. All PVPA staff members have e-mail addresses that follow this format: firstinitiallastname@pvpa.org (Example: jsmith@pvpa.org). A staff directory is also on the school website at www.pvpa.org.
- TELEPHONE calls are also effective. The main office number is 413.552.1580, and parents may leave a voicemail message. Except for emergencies, it is not possible to speak directly with a teacher during class time.

RESPONSE TIME

Teachers/staff members are expected to respond within two school days after the initial communication. Please inform the director of academic affairs, Laura Davis, if you do not hear within this timeframe (ldavis@pvpa.org).

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COMMUNICATION ABOUT ASSIGNMENTS/HOMEWORK/MISSING WORK

STUDENTS:

- Track assignments in a planner (provided to all students in grades 7-9, and available upon request for students in other grades).
- Share their work with parents/guardians (assignments, handouts, checklists, etc.)
- Contact teachers directly in person or via email to ask specific questions if they have difficulty with an assignment.
- Request extensions following teacher guidelines. *Asking for an extension the day an assignment is due is never appropriate.*

PARENTS/GUARDIANS:

- Check in with students about homework, and ask to see the work.
- Provide appropriate time, space, and resources for students to complete assignments.
- Let the teacher know if they suspect their student is behind, and let the student know that they are contacting the teacher and why.
- Encourage students to communicate directly with teachers.
- May send requests to teachers for an update on a student's missing assignments. *If this information is needed prior to a weekend, please request it no later than Wednesday.* Please keep communication as concise and specific as possible (ex: "Is _____ missing any assignments in your class, and is s/he on track to earn credit?").
- Contact the director of academic affairs, Laura Davis (ldavis@pvpa.org), if they do not hear from a teacher within two school days after a request.

TEACHERS:

- Post homework assignments in the classroom, and review them verbally.
- Spend time (in grades 7-9) in each class specifically directing students to write down assignments.
- May elect to hand out a written overview of upcoming assignments and activities (ex: a "weekly sheet"), and/or post assignments and resources on a class website.
- Are expected to contact parents/guardians if they notice an ongoing pattern of missed due dates.
- Are strongly encouraged to use a checklist or other tracking system for longer-term projects - such as research papers - that the student completes, and that adults can check to see how the student self-reports where s/he is in the process.