

## Pragmatic Communication

I believe the most important aspect in a safe and positive learning environment is the rapport between a teacher and his or her students. When the students understand that their teacher cares about them and wants them to do well, students feel comfortable asking questions, making mistakes and taking risks in order to learn something new.

Strong classroom communities can form in a variety of ways. Throughout daily activities the students should be part of a collaborative learning effort, sharing their strengths and encouraging each other. The teacher also may introduce a number of jobs or responsibilities students need to complete in order to maintain the physical classroom. This shows students that they need to count on one another, and it keeps students accountable for their own learning environment as well. Classroom jokes, mimics, fun activities are other ways to build a strong community. When students enjoy each other's company, they are more likely to be accepting and feel safe in the environment.

It is important for teachers to put an emphasis on intrinsic motivation in the classroom to keep students interested and invested in their own learning goals. In addition, extrinsic motivators help students understand the expectations of the classroom and aid in their intrinsic motivation. These kinds of motivators include praise, positive reinforcement and rewards for their exceptional behavior.

For any student, school teacher is as good as his parents. Years ago, pupils were *never* allowed to object to their teachers or parents. No parent or teacher would countenance it. No schools were open to feedback or suggestions about the operations of school. All complaints were rejected out of hand. But now it's swung too far the other way.

Beyond that, it's a question of governance and safeguarding, for which school managers are responsible. When you engage the services of any other professional person, such as a doctor or a lawyer, you wouldn't normally set about sniping at them behind their back.

Complaints should be pursued through the proper channels, with evidence presented in a careful, objective fashion.

We all know, anecdotally, that the pupils who encounter difficulties at school are frequently backed up by parents who insistently try to blame others, namely the teachers.

There are group chats initiated by parents which are meant to share important information regarding their child's day in school, receiving updates and reminders about school events as well as sharing parents' advice. And most of the time these group chats can be a great resource of knowledge and an enjoyable place to be in. It is indeed a place where solutions could be brainstormed and shared amongst each other. But as there are positive outcomes, we must account the negative end of such platforms too. Teachers can feel "Under Surveillance". This may be a further source of stress for staff, who according to teachers' unions, are already overwhelmed by late-night emails from anxious parents, on top of their normal workload.

Dominic Floyd wrote about the problem in *Attain*, the independent school magazine. The head teacher at Mount Kelly, a private school in Devon, underlines the virtues of such groups and says that more vocal parents can "create a distorted picture of what is happening at school"

Instead, what if these communication platforms are used for:

- 1) **Discussing modes of setting goals for the children's education:** Parents can plan a meeting to partner with teachers in their children's education and should work together to achieve mutually agreed-upon goals.
- 2) **Volunteering:** Parent's involvement may include helping in the classroom, volunteering, etc. whenever and wherever possible.
- 3) **Expressing ideas assertively:** When its about the parent's communication platforms, it always good to communicate any topic assertively and effectively. So, use assertive communication or active listening. Those are key elements in creating a positive environment.

4) Use these groups as complementing to PTMs/Meetings and not an option to PTMs/Meetings held in the school:

Though communicating via these social media groups is more convenient than having to visit the schools due to busy lives, these chat groups can never substitute the Parent teacher Meetings scheduled in the school.

- a) Parent teacher meetings address all those parents who do not use these chats groups
- b) PTMs ensure that same information is passed on to every parent at the same go.
- c) PTMs ensure direct communication with the concerned teacher which influences the child's progress to a greater extent.

5) Always RESPECT Teachers and Subject experts:

It happens at times that teachers make mistakes and we may disagree with their teaching techniques too. However, parents chat groups should never fulfill the need to complain about teachers otherwise some destructive consequences may arise:

- a) If your kid finds out what you think of their teacher, they'll lose respect for them. This will make it that much more difficult for the teacher to educate them.
- b) The teachers could find out what you think, making communication with them more difficult.

Let's be a constructive parent, let's develop a constructive child.

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