

Communication Guide

It has been my experience during many years of teaching that most problems that arise in the classroom can be easily resolved when everyone involved is aware of the avenues of communication available to them. This is true of the teacher, parents, and students alike. Problems and frustrations can become exaggerated when these avenues of communication are not used properly or on a timely basis. This is a list of the various opportunities you have to contact me and vice versa.

Student: It is important that our students learn to speak up and communicate with the adults at Fontbonne Academy to solve problems that they may be having in the classroom. The very first method of solving a problem should be that the student speaks directly to her teacher. This does not mean asking a question in the middle of a class lesson. Rather, the student should speak to her teacher before or after class or during a free period to make an appointment to meet with her teacher. If this discussion with her teacher does not solve the problem, then the student and parent should speak to the teacher. Only when these efforts fail to resolve an issue should the parent contact the department chairperson, guidance counselor, or the appropriate administrator.

Parents: If you have a question or concern that needs to be directed to me, you can reach me in the following ways.

- **By Phone.** My school phone number is 617.615.3075. You will be directed to leave a message in my voice mailbox. I try to check my voice mail once a day. I will return your call no later than the following school day. Please include in your message the best time of day to contact you.
- **By Email.** You can contact me by email at rwbirch@fontbonneacademy.org . I check my email at least once a day and will respond to your message by the following school day.
- **Appointments for Meeting.** If you would like to sit down with me and discuss your daughter's work, you must call ahead and make an appointment. My daily schedule is too unpredictable, even during my "free" periods, to guarantee that I will be available to meet with you without an appointment.
- **Parent/Teacher Meetings.** There are two Parent/Teacher meetings scheduled during the year. Please take advantage of these opportunities to meet with me and discuss your daughter's work in my class. The dates for these meetings are in the school calendar/handbook.
- **Returning Signed Forms.** Throughout the year I will be sending home a variety of forms for your inspection and signature. By having your daughter return these to me with your signature, I then know that you have been kept informed of this material. These are explained in more detail below.

Teacher: There are a variety of ways that I will be communicating with you during the year. Please keep these in mind and remind your daughter of her responsibility to bring this material home to you.

- **Beginning of the Year Information Packet.** This document is part of a more extensive set of online information that you find on my class pages. You will probably find the answers to most of your basic questions somewhere in this material. Please sign the cover letter that was sent home with your daughter and send it back to me.
- **My Class Pages.** I have a class page located at http://redslime.typepad.com/class_pages/. Here you will find my class expectations and policies, course syllabi, homework assignments, announcements, and much more. Visit frequently to keep informed of the current work we are doing in class.

- **Online Grade Reports.** You can access your daughter's grades by following the links on my class pages or the Fontbonne Academy homepage at <http://www.fontbonneacademy.org> . I usually update these reports every 7 to 10 days. Your daughter's password needed to access this information was sent home to you at the beginning of the year.
- **Progress Reports (or Interim Reports).** It is school policy that every student will receive a progress report from every one of her teachers regardless of her grades. These reports are posted online mid-quarter on dates scheduled in the school calendar. Please make a note of these dates at home. Also, you should be aware that students are not required to return these progress reports to her teachers. It is expected that you will be responsible for being informed of the dates progress reports are issued.
- **Signed Tests.** In some of my classes each test your daughter takes in my class will be returned to her within a week. A returned test will have not only her test grade, but also her current quarter average. There is a place for you to sign this test. Your daughter will receive a small amount of homework credit if she returns her signed test to me within three school days. You can expect to see approximately three unit tests each quarter.

I want to emphasize that when you consider that a progress report, a report card, and approximately three unit tests with your daughter's current average will be sent home each quarter as well as the two parent/teacher meetings, that in effect **22** regular updates of your daughter's work in my class will be available to you during the year. This is in addition to the online reports that you and your daughter can access at the Fontbonne Academy home page or my class pages. It is very important that your daughter fully participates in this communication effort by bringing home the report cards, progress reports, and graded tests when they are issued. Parents and guardians are encouraged to participate in this process by checking the online grades and progress reports, signing the returned tests, accessing information on my class pages, and attending the parent/teacher meetings.