

# Family Communication Guiding Principles

*In Cambridge Public Schools, we recommend that all communications between families, schools, and the district are:*



## **Actively Anti-Racist & Culturally Responsive**

Always prioritize the needs of our traditionally marginalized families. To disrupt the negative effects of structural racism on families of color, we must constantly create communication practices that innovate beyond what has always been done toward what serves families best.



## **Accessible**

Ensure that communication is accessible to all families by translating communications into families' language of choice and using visuals when and wherever possible.



## **Consistent & Central**

Maintain consistency of information across all communications, platforms, and translated materials. Provide centralized platforms where information is readily available.



## **Authentic & Transparent**

Prioritize two-way communications in all strategies, engage authentically in creative dialogue with families, and practice transparency with families to the fullest extent possible.



## **Personal**

Choose personalized, in-person, or direct communication over general communication whenever possible. Recognize, value, and build on the strengths of individual families to increase the efficacy of communication.



## **Relationship-Focused**

Continuously build upon relationships whenever and wherever possible. All communications should serve to deepen connections and build trust between families and the district.

*When these guidelines are fully functional, CPS communications between families, schools, and the district could include:*

### **Actively Anti-Racist & Culturally Responsive**

- Progressive stacking used in all meetings with families and community members.
- Centering the question: “What is your vision that you have for your child?” as the focus and goal of families’, schools’ and district collaboration.
- Fully resourced engagement teams (liaisons, admin and staff) at each school who are empowered to focus on connecting and partnering with families of color.
- New strategies developed in collaboration with families of color to mitigate traditional communication strategies privileging white families.

### **Accessible**

- District-wide mobile app with interface in multiple languages.
- Language-based communications crafted in the languages in which they will be sent out (not only in English first).
- Definitions and explanations of all technical jargon, educational terms, acronyms, or culturally-specific concepts.

### **Consistent & Central**

- Families, especially traditionally marginalized families, are actively involved throughout the district in decision-making processes.
- Data and metrics provided in easily accessible and detailed formats.

### **Authentic & Transparent**

- Consistent messaging regardless of the language, platform, or person through which it is communicated.
- An updated CPS website that is easily searchable, includes school and district calendars, and provides an opportunity for interaction with school staff.
- Less numerous but more comprehensive communications.
- Allocate space where communications can be easily located and accessed.

### **Personal**

- Regular and individualized communications between families, schools, teachers, and/or Family Liaisons in whatever format values the strengths of each family.
- Consultation with families to discover what modes and frequency of communication they prefer and would serve them best.
- Time invested in learning families’ names, greeting families outside school when possible, and holding events with families where they live and in the community.

### **Relationship-Focused**

- Initial phone calls or visits with families at the start of school to build relationships and establish an open line of communication based on mutual trust.
- Weekly check-ins with each family from a staff member whom they trust.