



Methods of Communication

2019-2020

Rolling Hills Prep and Renaissance Schools use a variety of methods to keep parents, students, and other members of our community informed and up to date about the various happenings on our shared campus. To streamline communication with the community, we ask that all constituents understand how these information outlets are used to share specific types of information.

E-mail

E-mail is the primary method of direct communication to current families and consists both of e-mails from the administration and more personalized e-mails from advisors or teachers. The primary forms of e-mail communication directly from the schools include the Friday Letter and Husky Howls (descriptions below) and are distributed by the Communications office. Communications from advisors, teachers, or other individual offices are most likely handled through personal e-mail accounts and cannot be accessed by the Communications office or other members of the administration easily.

If you are not receiving e-mails from the school, especially Friday Letters on a weekly basis, please contact Cameron Rogers, Communications Manager, as quickly as possible to be reinstated. These e-mails are handled through a third-party service that includes an “unsubscribe” feature that can make it difficult to reinstate addresses once that feature has been utilized, so please avoid using that feature if you wish to receive any e-mails from the school. Unsubscribing affects all e-mail communications from the schools, not just individual types of e-mail (such as Friday Letters or Husky Howls).

Friday Letter

Although we encourage parents and community members to read all e-mails they receive, the Friday Letter is one of the most important regular communication tools provided by the schools. The Friday Letter, released weekly via e-mail, is the official weekly communication from the schools and includes an address written by David Maher, Head of Schools, each week. In addition to David’s message, this e-mail includes an “Important Things To Know” section at the top that gives parents a tactical snapshot of upcoming events and action items that may exist (this section is also linked to the “announcements and events” page of the website for a deeper dive into the information provided).

Additionally, this communication includes a snapshot of the calendar for the upcoming week, consolidating the “need to know” information into one document. Below the weekly calendar, information regarding major school events, such as our annual gala, school performances, or other major initiatives may be listed. The bottom of this page includes a link to South Bay Families Connected, a partner organization that provides parenting and wellness resources, as well as links to senior speech transcripts and videos on a weekly basis.

Husky Howls

“Husky Howls” are intermittent communications from the schools that happen outside of regularly scheduled e-mails, such as The Friday Letter. The content of Husky Howls vary depending on the situational need and often include critical information about upcoming events or action items that parents should be aware of. In cases of high importance, the subject line of the e-mail will open with the word “Important,” so please keep an eye out for those critical messages that may impact daily activities or other aspects of scheduling, curriculum, programming, events, etc.

Advisor E-mails

In addition to school issued e-mails, student advisors also send their own e-mails that often include grade-specific or advisory-specific items. These e-mails are formatted and written individually by advisors and may contain various points of overlap with other forms of school communication, however, please do not rely on these e-mails as a substitute for the Friday Letter or Husky Howls. In many cases, advisors also have their own traditions or activities for their advisory, such as advisory breakfast, and they will often use these e-mails to communicate details regarding those activities.

Website

The website is shared between both schools and serves both as a communication outlet for current families and as an information outlet for prospective families that are undergoing the admission process. At the top of the website, there are two major navigation “tabs” that are intended for current families, teachers, and other internal community members: Community and Calendar.

Community Tab

The community tab is by far the most information-focused component of the website for current parents and students. Each page under the community tab either serves a different purpose or constituency within our schools. Additionally, these pages provide quick access links to My BackPack (the system responsible for hosting homework, grades, and family account information) and Naviance (for students undergoing the college counseling process) on several pages.

Current Students

This page serves as a long-term informational tool for students to access key documents provided by the schools throughout the year. This page will change significantly less throughout the year compared to pages that will be identified later. Whenever an important document, form, or other communication from the school is released to students, it will also be placed on this page for continual access throughout the year, trimester, or month that it remains relevant. For example, when the PE Exemption Forms and information are provided to parents and students, it will continually live on this page until it is no longer relevant (typically at the end of each school year).

Current Parents

This page is very similar to “Current Students,” and often includes the same documents and information listed on the Current Students page that may need to be accessed long-term or throughout the school year. This page also hosts information regarding the Parents Association, an organization all parents automatically belong to, as well as information about South Bay Families Connected, a student-parent wellness organization that hosts events and provides parenting resources to interested families.

Other information that differentiates this page from the students page includes items like RSVP forms for school events, gala information, and other items that are tailored to a parent audience.

Service Learning

This page provides service learning explanations, resources, and opportunities throughout the year. This page may be helpful for students who need to fulfill their service requirement prior to graduation.

Senior Speeches

All Rolling Hills Prep and Renaissance Schools students are required to give a speech to the student body in their senior year. This page is an archive of speech transcripts, videos, and a family photo for each student as they give their speeches throughout the year.

Amazon

You can support our schools through the Amazon Associates Program by purchasing your Amazon items using this page. The schools will receive a percentage of most purchases made using this page and we really appreciate it when current families bookmark it in their web browser or phones for quick and easy access.

Faculty and Staff Resources

This page is intended for Faculty and Staff use only and requires a login and password for access.

Announcements and Events (Please make note of this page!)

This page is the most regularly updated communication tool on the website and serves as the web-companion to the weekly Friday Letter. This page hosts a variety of up-to-date and current information regarding upcoming events, announcements, action items, RSVPs, and other crucial aspects of community communication. If you are looking for a recently released form, information about an upcoming event, or want to know what is happening in the immediate future, please check this page first. It is highly recommended that this page is bookmarked in web browsers or mobile devices for easy access.

Calendar Tab

This component of the website is a standard calendar tool that is populated by internal scheduling and event calendars. Several filters exist on this page to help navigate through various topics and event types.

Text Messages

We use a system called OneCall to issue text messages for either emergencies or to warn families who use the bus about delays or issues with their route. Additionally, text messages are sent during emergency drills to simulate the exact steps followed during actual events. If additional action is required of parents or families, such as immediate pickup, directions will be provided in the text message to do so.

If an emergency takes place that affects individual students, parents of those students will be notified as one of the first steps of action and we will not use this system as the first form of contact. **If you receive a text message notifying you about an emergency on campus without additional directions, please do not call the front office and tie up the phone lines during a potentially critical moment. We will always provide you with action items if they are required or contact you personally if your student is affected by an incident or emergency on campus.**

My BackPack

Both parents and students are provided with a My BackPack account that's used to manage school account information and personalized data, such as grades, homework, student schedules, billing information, and other important details.

My BackPack can be accessed from both the “Current Parents” and “Current Students” pages under the “Community” tab of the website. Please make sure you can access My BackPack, if you cannot, please contact the front office at (310)791-1101.