



Redwood Day School

PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

Parents working together for our children

RDSPGA Communications at a Glance

General Guidelines

- The Parents' and Guardians' Association (PGA) and committees communicate with the parent body primarily through the Friday Folder e-newsletter and the PGA pages on the website (www.rdschool.org).
- To avoid "spamming" the community (and undermining the effectiveness of messages), email broadcast to the entire PGA membership is used sparingly and must be coordinated through the communications secretary.
- All PGA and committee communications to the community must be approved by the communications secretary.
- Please do not promote or communicate non-PGA activities, events, or causes; also, avoid brand names.
- All names need to be spell-checked before material is submitted; check the directory or call to verify the name.
- RDSPGA communications typically carry the logo; contact the communications secretary for more information.
- Stationery (letterhead and envelopes) is also available from the communications secretary.

Communications Planning

Committees are urged to develop a communications plan, particularly for large or important events, and to send it to the communications secretary well in advance of any planned communications. See *Communications Planning Guidelines*.

Channels of Communication

Friday Folder (e-newsletter)

This is the primary method used by RDSPGA and committees to send communications out to the school community. Items in the Friday Folder will be linked to pages on the website that provide more details, unless the item is extremely brief ("Please check Lost & Found before X date."). Please follow these guidelines for preparing information:

- Send information to the communications secretary in an email or Word document (no PDFs or other formats).
 - Make sure any dates, times, and locations are included and correct.
 - Indicate whether the information is to be repeated. If so, how often and until what date?
 - Include links to appropriate pages on the RDS website if they already exist.
 - Forms can be posted on the website and linked from the Friday Folder.
 - Always offer the name and email address of a person to contact in case of questions (no phone numbers).
- Discuss any image or media you want to use with the communications secretary before sending it. Make sure you have permission from the image's creator and from the people in the image or media.
- Send submissions to the communications secretary by 5PM Monday for the following Friday's e-newsletter.
- Your submission will be reviewed, edited, and formatted for the e-newsletter and the website as appropriate.

Email

Please use email only for urgent situations (such as lice alerts) and brief, scheduled messages about special events. To ensure they get attention, emails go out on Monday or Tuesday (or sometimes Wednesday). To request that an email be sent, contact the communications secretary. If possible, let the communications secretary know well in advance what emails you plan to send and when, so prioritizing can occur if needed. Use these guidelines to prepare your message:

- Clearly say in the subject line what the message is about ("Lice alert" rather than "Important news")
- In the email message, make your main point first, and keep the message to less than 3 very short paragraphs.
- Feel free to include links. Don't underline text unless it's a link.
- Don't include attachments, which most people won't open and some email programs won't accept.
- Keep the formatting simple: Use a generic font (Arial or Times New Roman); to indent, use five spaces instead of "tabbing"; use hyphens instead of bullets; and left-justify your text.
- Don't use art, graphics, background colors, or colorful text, which won't appear in some people's email programs and will appear as undecipherable code in other email programs.

The communications secretary reviews email messages before they are distributed, edits and reformats them as needed, and routes them for appropriate reviews and approvals before sending them out.

Website

The RDS website (<http://www.rdschool.org>) provides the community with information relevant to the school community and includes the PGA's pages. Please send updates to the communications secretary, following these guidelines:

- Submit information electronically in an email or as a Word document (no PDFs).
- Indicate the date on which you'd like the information posted, and the date it should be removed.
- Discuss with the communications secretary any images or media you might want to use before sending them. Make sure you have permission from the image or media's creator and the people shown in the image or media.
- Include any forms you'd like to post (Word DOC or Excel XLS files only; no PDFs).
- Include the name and email (no phone numbers) of a person to contact in case of questions.
- Allow two weeks if a new page needs to be developed.

The general layout of RDSPGA areas of the website is the responsibility of the communications secretary and the RDS technology team and may be reviewed by the RDSPGA board.

Calendar

To list items on the school calendar that appears on the website and in the Friday Folder e-newsletter:

- Verify that there are no conflicts with school events by sending email to Ryan Helton in the Advancement office.
- Submit events in writing (email preferred) to Ryan 4 to 5 weeks before the date of the event

For the first calendar of the school year, the past and current PA presidents, along with communications secretary, send information to Ryan and Derek Clark during the first week of July. This includes, at a minimum, RDSPGA meetings and dates for Fall Festival, Book Fair, Generations Day, and the Auction.

Backpack Stuffers, Flyers, and Posters

Backpack stuffers are flyers that can be distributed via lower-school students' backpacks. These and other flyers may be used *on a very limited basis* to communicate about specific events. Posters may be put up only with the school's permission. Please follow these guidelines:

- Check in with the communications secretary about timing and the message before planning a flyer or poster.
- Send your flyer or poster to the communications secretary early for routing through reviews and approvals.
- Clear any copying expenses with the PGA board ahead of time.
- Send finalized backpack stuffers (after reviews and approvals) electronically to the communications secretary, who will route distribution through the school.
- Stop by the front office to ask where you can put up posters and what type of tape to use to affix them to surfaces.

Note: Flyers that are handed to parents as they come in the driveway or drop off on Sheffield are very direct and "in your face." Get approval from the communications secretary before planning to hand out flyers.

Announcements

Clear any announcements you'd like through the communications secretary and the appropriate school administrator:

- Faculty meeting or staff meetings: Derek Clark
- All-school assembly: Derek Clark
- Middle school gathering or Middle School Director's weekly email: Jeanne Coyne Song

RDSPA Phone Line

The RDSPGA extension in the phone system is for use by the board and committees. To change the outgoing message or use the line, contact the communications secretary.

Articles, Media, ListSers, Discussion Groups, Etc.

Any time an article, video, radio spot, or podcast is planned about your event, please check in with the Advancement office – you can refer the journalist to Advancement to make sure that any school facts are correct. If you'd like to place an ad about an event, or announce it on a listserv or online discussion group, make sure the ad or announcement is reviewed by Advancement and the communications secretary, and be sure to clear any expense with the PGA board.