

## **Home School Communication Policy 2018/19**

**North  
Walsham**  
*High School*

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## 1. Amendment History

Author	Version	Reason	Date

## 2. Linked Documents

Title	File Name	Location

## 3. Rationale

North Walsham High School (NWHS) recognises the importance of clear and effective communications with all stakeholders (pupils and parents/carers, governors, Local Authority, outside agencies, national bodies, etc), and is committed to being open and accessible for all who have an interest in the school. The key stakeholders for a school are parents and pupils and this policy addresses the main ways in which the school ensures effective two-way communication between home and school.

Communications can take a variety of forms: verbal (through meetings or by telephone), written (through letters, notices on our VLE or email). Occasionally a communication may be received second hand or through an intermediary.

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school, where teachers may be teaching full time and running clubs or otherwise working with pupils at lunchtime or after school. Parents may be exasperated if they feel that a message elicits no immediate reply, when in fact there has been no available opportunity for the member of staff to reach a telephone to return a call.

For this reason the school has been particularly proactive in encouraging use of modern communications methods, with staff email contacts being publicised regularly in newsletters and all parents/carers being encouraged to give an email address for prompt and effective communication. Surveys indicate that the majority of parents are satisfied or very satisfied with the two-way communications they have with school. However, this does not mean that the school always gets things right and this policy aims to clarify the parameters within which we operate to ensure that communication is carried out with all stakeholders and interested parties effectively and clearly. Parents will have a VLE login to view general school information as well as to view information specific to their child.

## 4. Aims of the policy:

1. To improve the quality of service given to students at NWHS by ensuring that effective communication and consultation takes place between the school, parents, pupils and other stakeholders.

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2. To improve the quality of service by ensuring robust processes for consultation between the school, parents and pupils on key service areas.

## 5. Communication

Communication between the school and parents operates in the following ways:-

- Prospective parents are invited to an Open Evening in the September/October preceding the year of entry to the school. All prospective parents receive a school prospectus with details of examination results. The school also holds regular year 5 Parents Evenings for long term future prospective parents.
- Prospective parents are invited, along with students, to an induction evening in July where the main channels of communication are outlined and information about the school is presented.
- Parents are invited to a 'Year 7 Settling In Evening' in the November of Year 7 to meet the student's form tutor and review how the student has settled into the school.
- Parents are invited to attend a Progress Day each year to review the academic progress of the student.
- Parents of each year group are invited into school to an appropriately themed Parents Meeting to cover issues relating to the relevant year group of their child (e.g. Study Skills for Year 11, Core Subjects for Year 10, Options for Years 8, Teaching and learning methodology for Year 9).
- Year 11 Parents will have access to school leaders once every half term to discuss issues with their child's progress as they move towards exams.
- Parents forums are held by the Head Teacher and a member of the senior leadership team every half term. To ensure that everyone has the chance to attend these are also held during the day and at different evenings in a week.
- Our VLE will provide parents with access to a range of school communication and documents. At a whole school level the VLE provides weekly updates, and reminders, on the newsfeed and school calendars. It will also give parents access to a whole range of school documents, such as newsletters and policy documents. At a personal level it will communicate information about specific pupils; sharing individual pupil information such as homework, attendance data and school reports.
- Communication about pupil progress takes place formally for each student – through a Report sheet (which reflects a snapshot progress against targets, effort, behaviour etc or a full report three times a year).
- Details about events at the school are published in the schools newsletter to parents, which is emailed and sent out in hard copy as requested, and through other electronic communication which will be posted on our VLE (e.g. on the website, selective emails to specific groups of parents, etc)
- The schools newsletter and VLE are key vehicles for communicating in a variety of ways: alerting parents and pupils to forthcoming issues; celebrating the life of the school; petitioning for parental views; publishing the results of consultations, etc
- The school has all key information on an up to date web site.
- The School regularly updates its social media presence through Twitter and Facebook.
- Queries about events at the school may be made by phone to the school or by e mail.
- Parents are regularly reminded of all teacher email addresses for reference.
- Where time permits all staff will make 5 positive phone calls home per week to support their students.

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- The school has published the following service standards to ensure a prompt response for communication requests by parents. These standards are reviewed on an annual basis by the school's leadership team.

### **Service Standards at North Walsham High School**

The following response times are **usually** adhered to:

Responding to parents – any requests for information, any concerns, requests for references or progress are dealt with within 5 working days (term time only)

Concerns or queries may be raised either by letter, e-mail or phone call.

- Letters will receive either a verbal (usually by phone) response within 3 days or a written response within 5 working days. Verbal responses will generate a brief written note of the discussion and its outcome, to be held in the child's file for future reference.
- Concerns raised by phone will be addressed within 2 working days (48 hours by the member of staff concerned)
- Request for a formal meeting with a member of staff will be actioned within 5 working days (96 hours).
- Where necessary and appropriate telephone calls with the Head Teacher will take place within 24 hours and a request for a meeting with the Head Teacher will take place within 72 hours. All contact should be made in the first instance with the Heads PA and should have exhausted all appropriate lower level meetings and communication first.
- On rare occasions there will be times when a meeting with the Head teacher only is appropriate and these will happen within 72 hours and calls within 24 hours.
- Email communication will be the exception rather than the rule. E mails will receive an email response within 5 working days but most e-mails to staff will be dealt with by way of a verbal communication (i.e. staff will call you back on the phone). E mails sent at weekends may not be dealt with until the following working week, and emails sent in holidays will probably elicit no reply until term-time.

If we have not met these standards at any time please inform the Heads PA immediately.

### **Complaints Procedure**

Initially, concerns should be addressed to the appropriate Form Tutor, Teacher, or Senior leader. Please see separate Complaints Policy if your concern is more serious and requires formal action.

As per the Complaints Policy meetings and communication with the Head Teacher will normally only be after all appropriate lower level meetings and communication have been exhausted first. The Head Teacher should only be the first point of contact where the concern is sufficiently serious to by-pass the relevant staff member.

There is a system in place for monitoring the nature of complaints at the school in order to identify trends and address any recurring issues.

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## 6. Consultation

Consultation between the school, parents and pupils operates in the following ways:

- Questionnaires are issued to parents on a range of issues and through a variety of means (hard copy, through electronic surveys, email). They may be distributed at specific parental events or via “pupil post”.
- The consultation process via questionnaires addresses key service areas such as the school curriculum, changes to the timing of the school day, uniform, the framework for parental consultation evenings, homework, the school’s reporting system, primary school transition, the quality and accessibility of the school’s materials etc.
- Comment slips are available in the school’s reception area along with a confidential comment box so that parents and visitors to the school may make suggestions for improving the service
- The Governors’ Board meets once a term and is consulted on a wide range of issues
- School reports are issued with a reply slip inviting parents to comment on the report they have received
- The Student Cabinet is consulted on a range of key issues relating to the school. Meetings take place at least every half term, with additional meetings for specific issues.
- Members of the Leadership Team undertake “Developmental Drop Ins” regularly and discuss learning with pupils as part of this exercise.
- As part of the school’s system of Departmental Self Review, pupils are involved in Student Voice feedback to review the teaching and learning within the department and contribute their own thoughts on departmental strengths and areas for development.
- Pupils are encouraged to be constructive about how the school can improve provision and may be selected as subject ambassadors to promote, improve and celebrate the work of departments.
- The Teaching and Learning Group meets periodically to share best practice in improving standards of Teaching and Learning
- Consultation between external agencies takes place with a view to improving the service provided by the school, for example, there is a multi-agency meeting each term hosted by the school.
- The Special Educational Needs Department works closely with individual pupils, parents/carers and external experts and meetings are held frequently to discuss best practice and provision for individuals and groups.

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