

Northam Primary School

Communication Policy and Guidelines

The Northam Primary School Communication Policy and Guidelines are formed using the Department of Education Communication protocols.

(except from the Department of Education Communication Protocols full version available from the school office on request).

In Western Australia, parents/carers, school staff and students share responsibility for public schools providing safe, supportive and productive learning environments. We achieve this through our relationships, good communication and working together.

Creating positive environments

Our public schools provide positive environments for students to learn and for staff to work. This is achieved by school staff, parent/carers and students:

- *valuing and supporting every member of the school community and appreciating their contributions*
- *celebrating diversity and individuality; cooperation and acceptance are welcomed and encouraged*
- *forming positive connections*
- *creating friendly, supportive and cohesive communities.*

Promoting respectful relationships

Every student, staff member and parent/carer has the right to feel safe and be safe at school.

This is achieved by:

- *teaching students about respect and appropriate relationships as part of the Western Australian Curriculum and students are expected to maintain positive behaviour in their school community*
- *principals working with their school community to create positive behaviour models and deal appropriately with students who violate the rights of other students and staff*
- *parents/carers encouraging, promoting and modelling good behaviour and respect for others at home, school and in their communities*

Communication Guidelines

At Northam Primary School we believe that parents form a crucial component of the three-way partnership that maximises student learning and enhances the school experience. Building a positive relationship between home and school plays an integral role in the education of your child.

We are committed to responding promptly to your enquiries, concerns, suggestions and positive feedback.

Our school uses various forms of electronic communications to parents. Please take the time to familiarise yourself with the different forms and their uses.

These guidelines outline the appropriate and effective methods available for parents to communicate with the school and school staff.

Communicating Well

There is an expectation that communication and all interaction between school staff and parents/carers is mutually respectful. Verbal and/or physical aggression or threats, offensive language and derogatory comments, whether face to face, over the phone, via email or on social media is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. School staff are not expected to respond to communication that is unacceptable and these will be directed to the principal or regional office.

What parents **can** expect

- Regular communication from the school via; Connect, Text Messaging service, Newsletter twice per term, Facebook for good news stories and for canteen updates.
- Update notes/permission slips and information sent home on Wednesdays.
- Class information sessions in Term 1.
- Student formal reports sent at the end of each semester via Connect.
- Opportunities to meet with the classroom teacher by appointment.
- Notifications of any serious single issue or ongoing issues concerning their child.
- Opportunities to provide feedback via surveys (every second year).
- Parent communications responded to within 5 working days.
- Assemblies as scheduled at the commencement of each year.

Teachers at Northam Primary School may at times, communicate more frequently through classroom CONNECT messages.

What parents **cannot** expect

- School staff returning calls after work hours (i.e. after 4:00pm) or during school vacation periods.
- Emails to be answered after work hours or during school vacation periods.
- Access to teacher's private phone numbers or email addresses.
- Academic discussion with teachers about your child during class learning time; i.e. after 8:45am and before 3:00pm, unless an interview has been prearranged.
- Daily or weekly updates regarding their child's ongoing progress at school.

When should you contact your child's teacher?

- When you have child related good news to share.
- Safety issues or changes in behaviours at home.
- If you have concerns with academic or social progress.
- When you can't keep a scheduled appointment.
- When homework has taken more time than expected.
- Positive feedback to the teacher.

What must be communicated to the school office

- Changes in family circumstances.
- Medical issues that change or arise.
- If your child has a communicable disease (head lice, chicken pox, etc.).
- When your child is home sick or any planned absences.
- Any issues relating to custody or access.
- Change of address or contact details.

Any immediate information for the teacher, parents must;

- Speak to the teacher between 8:30am and 8:45am (for messages less than one minute).
- Send a note.
- Call the office and leave a message for the teacher.

Communication that interferes with teaching and learning

- Visiting the classroom during the teacher's preparation time before school or during the school day without an appointment.
- Speaking to the teacher disrespectfully or angrily, especially in front of your child, or in front of other students and parents.
- Talking to other parents rather than discussing issues directly with staff members. Remember parents are the models of how you want your child to communicate.

When is a face-face meeting appropriate

Electronic communication, such as an email, is highly convenient and can be used for short, non-urgent and positive forms of communication.

However, electronic communication is not appropriate for more complex or emotional situations. In these cases, parents should request a face-to-face interview so that your issues can be given the time and attention that they deserve. If in doubt, schedule a meeting.

When should parents contact the Principal or Associate Principal?

For most discussions, the classroom teacher will be parents' first point of contact. However, where conversations involve conflict, other families, or dissatisfaction with any aspect of the school, members of the school leadership team must be involved. Either a staff member or a parent may request the involvement of the school leadership team at any time.

To increase mutual respect

Negative or aggressive communication does not lead to a positive working relationship with your child's teacher and/or school, remember;

- Teachers will make mistakes; they're human too.
- Teachers have their own families and lives; please respect their privacy.
- We're all on the same team – your child's support team!
- Take your parent chats off-site after drop off so teachers and students can begin learning.
- Use age-appropriate and respectful language around drop off and pick up times.

- Recognise that we won't always agree, although we promise to listen.
- Speak positively in front of your child and other children.

Details on Forms of Communication used by Northam Primary School

Website

Northam Primary School has a website that is kept current with information.

www.northamps.wa.edu.au

CONNECT

Connect is a learning, support and communications platform developed by the Department of Education WA for staff, students and parents in public schools.

Northam Primary uses CONNECT extensively to communicate to parents. Please see the school office for information how to access CONNECT.

Check out the short video clip on Connect at <https://vimeo.com/connectwa/welcome>

Newsletters

Northam Primary publishes a newsletter twice per term. This newsletter is sent home with the oldest child in the family on a Wednesday.

The newsletter highlights the work that is happening in each classroom and other events held at the school.

Notes Home Wednesday

Northam Primary sends all hard copy notes or permission slips home on a Wednesday. By setting this practice it allows for parents to become accustomed to checking school bags on Wednesdays.

Text messaging

The MessageU system is used to follow up on absent students as well as urgent messaging. The messaging system allows for return text messages, these return messages are only read once per day, therefore should not be used as an urgent communication from parents.

On occasion a text message may be used when the school has been unable to contact a parent by phone.

FaceBook

FaceBook is becoming a common form of communication across the world. Northam Primary is embracing the technology by using the school FaceBook page to highlight what our school is doing and our achievements.

The P&C FaceBook page is used to give updates from the P&C and events coming up.

The School FaceBook page is an "open page" and any member of the public may access. The P&C FaceBook page is a closed page and parents must apply to join the page.

The school office can give further information about FaceBook.

Please note: FaceBook messaging should never be used as a parent communication to the school as the messages are not regularly checked.