



Aim High

Never Give Up

Follow Your Dream

Lead By Example

## Communication Policy

Ratified By	FGB
Date	09/10/2023
Minute	10
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<b>Policy Statement</b>	
What is the policy for?	All members of Norwood School Community
Who has devised and contributed to this policy?	Written in conjunction with all staff members and Governors
How will this policy be communicated?	Website, 365
How will this policy be monitored?	By SLT and administration staff
Which other policies are linked to this policy?	GDPR, Acceptable Use, Safeguarding and Child Protection

## **Contents:**

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## Statement of intent

At Norwood School we understand the importance of the relationship between parents/carers, pupils and the school.

We have a strong inclusive ethos where pupils have positive relationships with staff members and with each other. This policy sets out the aims of the school with regards to internal and external communication, and the responsibilities of the school, its staff members and parents/carers.

The school aims to promote effective communication between pupils, members of staff, parents/carers, stakeholders and all members of the school community. The school's objectives are to:

- Have a clear and professional communication strategy in place which helps to keep parents/carers well-informed about their child's educational progress and any other matters related to their child's overall wellbeing.
- Improve the quality of education by making sure there is a robust process in place for consultation between the school, parents/carers, staff members and pupils on key areas.
- Be mindful of the well-being of school staff.
- Monitor and evaluate communication issues through regular meetings with staff, parents/carers and members of the school community.

## Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 2002
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Freedom of Information Act 2000

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Data Protection Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Data and E-Security Breach Prevention and Management Plan
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Adverse Weather Policy
- Invacuation, Lockdown and Evacuation Policy
- Staff Handbook
- Acceptable Use Agreement
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy

## Roles and responsibilities

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Placing key policies, documents and procedures in areas that maximise their accessibility and usefulness to the entire school community.
- Communicating the curriculum clearly to parents/carers.
- Informing parents/carers of all school events within appropriate timelines.
- Regularly keeping parents/carers informed of their child's progress.
- Informing parents/carers about the types of data that the school holds concerning pupils, who controls the data, why that data is held and who it may be shared with. This information will be concise, transparent and easily accessible; written in a clear and plain language; and free of charge.
- Ensuring that parents/carers understand their right to access information about their child that is held by the school.
- Ensuring that parents/carers also understand their rights to rectification, to erasure, to restrict processing, to data portability and to object to processing.
- Ensuring that consent obtained from parents/carers, or pupils, regarding the processing of personal data, is freely given, specific, informed and an unambiguous indication of the individual's wishes. Consent cannot be inferred from silence, pre-ticked boxes or inactivity.
- Ensuring that individuals are informed of their rights to withdraw consent and are provided with easy ways to do so.
- Taking steps to ensure parents/carers who do not have access to the internet can still access the information that is included on the school website.

Staff members are responsible for:

- Ensuring the principles and procedures of this policy are followed.
- Communicating proactively with parents/carers about pupil progress and helping parents/carers to support their child's learning.
- Ensuring that relevant information is passed on to supply teachers.
- Updating classroom planning files with specific pupil information.

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Reading the key communications circulated by the school and responding and/or acting on communications, e.g. by attending meetings.
- Engaging with verbal communications, so that they understand the information being communicated to them.
- Logging on to the school website for detailed information about the school calendar, term dates, exam details, monitoring and assessments, school achievements and other useful downloads.
- Informing the school of medical conditions or allergies their child has, along with medical documentation relating to these conditions.
- Informing the school of child protection matters, legal issues or relevant duties with appropriate documentation.
- Raising any issues or concerns they may have with the class teacher.

## **Internal and external communications**

365 holds all relevant timetables, documents, discussions and diary dates. Written communications to staff members may also be delivered via pigeonholes, Groupcall or by email.

All staff members are aware of the Staff Handbook, which details a variety of school procedures in relation to communication and this is held in the staff documents area of 365.

Staff members' personal details will not be shared with other members of staff or external agencies if the reason for sharing does not fall under a lawful basis for processing as outlined in the UK GDPR. Under no circumstance will staff members' personal details be shared with parents/carers.

Staff members will not communicate with parents/carers or pupils via social networking sites, or accept 'friend' requests, except in the case of blogs or social media pages set up specifically for the purpose of teaching and learning.

Parents/Carers will be contacted through the following methods:

- Letters home issued via Groupcall
- Xpressions messages
- Phone calls
- The school website
- School newsletters
- SEND newsletters
- Reading newsletters
- Parent/carer meetings
- Class assemblies
- Parent/carer engagement events

Any communication that relates to an event or request for parents/carers to action should give as much notice as possible and be at least 1 week in advance. Where the time frame is out of our control, we will communicate this to parents/carers.

For general enquiries, parents/carers are required to ring the school office, which is open from Monday to Friday between 8:00am and 4.00pm, on school number 01733 574717. For non-urgent enquiries, parents/carers are required to email the school using [admin@norwoodschool.co.uk](mailto:admin@norwoodschool.co.uk).

If contact is being made for absence – parents/carers should email [absence@norwoodschool.co.uk](mailto:absence@norwoodschool.co.uk).

For SEND issues – parents/carers should email [SENadmin@norwoodschool.co.uk](mailto:SENadmin@norwoodschool.co.uk).

All emails to the school will specify the member of staff that the query is addressed to. All emails to the school will be treated as confidential, unless there is a specific reason not to do so.

Individual school emails will not be shared with parents/carers and all communication will be through generic emails such as [admin@norwoodschool.co.uk](mailto:admin@norwoodschool.co.uk).

## **Continuous home-school communication**

Each half term and before breaking up for the holidays, class teachers will update their class website page to share with parent/carers the learning that will take place in the forthcoming half term. This supports the Home Learning policy, giving parents/carers a 'pre-view' of what learning is being delivered the following half term.

The school regularly updates parents/carers of ways in which they can support pupils' development and progress through activities to be completed at home.

The school subscribes to an electronic communication system, Groupcall, which is utilised to achieve effective and consistent communication with parents. The school will ensure that:

- Only the admin staff and senior leadership team is able to access and use the messaging system.
- Parents/carer consent and details are gained prior to the use of the system.
- If any changes are made to the service, or manner in which data is processed on the system, parents/carers are informed and consent is renewed.
- Any parents/carers who cannot be contacted via the messaging system are contacted via another method set out in this policy.

Class teachers will be available to discuss pupils' progress and any concerns with parents/carers before the start and end of each school day.

A meeting will be held for new parents prior to their child's entry to the school.

If a pupil is absent from school, and the school has no indication of the reason for the absence, the school will contact a parents/carers via telephone on the first day of absence, in order to find out the reason for the absence. If no contact can be made with any named parent, the school will carry out a wellbeing and safety visit to the family home.

## **Online Learning Platforms**

Norwood School uses Tapestry for EYFS and Class Dojo for Year 1 – 6.

These platforms are used to share with parents/carers children's learning both at home and school – see the Home Learning Policy for further information.

### **Tapestry**

*'An easy to use and secure online learning journal helping staff and families celebrate their children's learning and development.*

*Tapestry builds a very special record of a child's experiences, development and learning journey through their early years and primary education. Using photos, videos, and diary entries, a teacher or early years educator, along with the child's parents or carers, and the child themselves if they're ready, 'weaves' the story of the child and how they are growing and developing.*

*All information held in the platform is stored securely and can be downloaded and shared as required. Parents or carers are able to view their child's progress, the activities provided for them, and how much fun they're having, whilst also uploading their own comments and media.'*

### **Class Dojo**

*Class Dojo makes it easy to keep all families engaged with their children's learning. It provides a window into their child's day at school, with parents/carers able to see Class Story and School Story, including all classroom and school photographs and announcements.*

*Class teachers are expected to use the features of Class Dojo in the following ways:*

- *Class story: Used for parent/carer & child announcements, sharing celebrations, certificates,*

*children's learning, events i.e. parent/carer events (Only Year 1 should upload home learning to class story).*

- *Messages: Not to be used by teachers or parents/carers. Parents/carers have been made aware that this should not be used and teachers are to report any use of this to SLT.*
- *Portfolio: Used for sharing home learning activities to pupil's accounts. So that home learning is not missed due to parents/carers being logged into their own account, teachers are to share the following announcement via class story: "Your child's home learning has been set on their portfolio and you will need to use the child's log in to access this. If you require your child's login, please contact the school office"*

*SLT will regularly monitor the use of these features on each year groups page.*

To ensure Norwood School is supportive of teacher work life balance, parents/carers do not have the facility to private message the teacher.

Parents/carers should be aware that many staff have access to posts written by parents/carers 'approved or not' on the class story, not just the class teacher.

Any inappropriate use of the platform should be reported to the head teacher with full details and this will be dealt with accordingly, potentially resulting in the offending user being blocked from the platform.

## **Microsoft 365**

All staff have access to a 365 account and it is the responsibility of every staff member to keep up to date with information on this platform, including

- Diary dates and events
- Discussion board
- Documents
- Safeguarding and wellbeing posts

## **Email communication**

Email and internet access will be used in line with the school's Data and E-Security Breach Prevention and Management Plan and Acceptable Use Agreement. All members of staff will have their own email account.

Emails will not be used as a substitute for face-to-face communication. Staff members will consider the best way to communicate according to each individual situation.

Staff members will not engage in personal correspondence with pupils. Communication between pupils and parents/carers with staff members will be carried out via the school email address, and not via staff members' personal school email addresses.

Staff should not be engaging with administrative tasks, including sending emails or reading received emails during their assigned teaching and learning times. This should be kept to time outside of lessons to ensure that class-based staff are focussed on the education of their children. However, should a safeguarding incident arise, staff should prioritise completing a MyConcern after ensuring that all children are still fully supervised.

Staff emails should not be given to parents/carers and if a staff member is copied into an email sent to a parent/carer, staff members should be BCC (blind copied) into the email.

Chain emails will not be allowed. Staff will ensure that the sending of attachments is limited to only work-related emails. Under no circumstances will adverts be embedded into emails.

One or more of the following processes will be implemented to assist with managing the influx of email communications:

### **Using a centralised email address**

- Parents/Carers will be provided with relevant email address to use as a main point of contact for general home-school communication
  - Absence – [absence@norwoodschool.co.uk](mailto:absence@norwoodschool.co.uk)
  - General communication – [admin@norwoodschool.co.uk](mailto:admin@norwoodschool.co.uk)
  - SEND – [SENadmin@norwoodschool.co.uk](mailto:SENadmin@norwoodschool.co.uk)
- Office staff will track communication sent to these email addresses and ensure emails are dealt with consistently and in a timely manner.
- Where the information is required immediately by a particular staff member, the office staff will deliver this in person and verbally, followed up by forwarding the relevant email.
- Office staff will first seek to deal with the enquiry themselves (e.g. if the email is in relation to dates of upcoming trips, uniform queries, sickness).
- If the message requires more specific support, it will be sent to appropriate member of staff.
- Parents/Carers will not have access to individual staff member emails.

### **Implementing set emails times**

- Parents/Carers will be made aware that administration staff are not in a position to check emails consistently throughout the day.
- The school will aim to respond to all email enquiries within **three** working days. Staff and parents will be made aware that part-time staff may take longer to reply due to the nature of their work schedule.

### **Providing support to staff**

- Guidance, through staff induction will be provided to staff regarding email best practice, including in relation to prioritising emails, and carrying out regular inbox housekeeping.
- Staff members will be advised not to subscribe to any junk type email chains, in order to reduce emails received.

## **Staff Meetings**

A programme of all staff meetings will be set out in the school calendar.

Time will be set aside for structured opportunities for staff to engage in team working and to contribute to the school's reflection on priorities, activities and future plans.

All formal meetings will be minuted and members invited to contribute to the agenda. For all formal meetings, minutes will be taken, action points progressed, and feedback given to staff members. Minutes of meetings will be posted to the documents area of 365.



Staff are expected to fully comply with the code conduct in all meetings and behave in a professional manner to ensure that time is used effectively.

Staff delivering meeting content should adhere to the agenda agreed with SLT.

SLT reserve the right to adapt accordingly to emerging needs regarding the content of scheduled meeting and may call adhoc meeting if required.

## **Parent/Carer Meetings**

Parents/Carers will be expected to behave in meetings in line with the Code of Conduct. When parents/carers wish to organise meetings with members of staff, they will first contact their child's class teacher (if the query is relevant to a specific subject). If parents/carers urgently need to have a meeting with a member of staff, they will phone the **school office** and the office staff will do their best to find a member of staff to see parents/carers.

Lessons will not be interrupted to accommodate parents/carers needing to speak to a teacher.

For non-urgent meetings between parents and members of staff, the school will aim to meet parents within **five** working days.

The school will determine the level of urgency in requests for meetings, which will aid in managing multiple demands.

## **Audio Recording meetings**

If parents/carers and/or other individuals wish to record a virtual and/or face-to-face meeting, they will discuss their intentions beforehand with the school no less than **24 hours** before the meeting commences. The school will decide if recording requests are appropriate, in consideration of the meeting's subject matter and the school's Confidentiality Policy.

The school will accept all recording requests in exceptional circumstances, e.g. if parents/carers are hard of hearing and/or have a memory-related disability.

For virtual meetings and/or face-to-face meetings to be recorded, consent will need to be obtained from all participants. The final decision to permit any individual and/or parental recording of meetings will reside with the school.

If parents/carers and/or other individuals fail to obtain the school's permission to record before the meeting begins, and insist on recording without permission, the school will be permitted **to suspend the meeting**.

Consent from all parties will need to be documented on the agreed format. The owner of the recording is the party taking recording. School staff will need to adhere to the Retention Policy and non-school staff (such as parents/carers) will be encouraged to follow these rules.

Recordings should not be taken without consent as it is against privacy rules and Human Rights Act 1998.

Any complaints surrounding the school's rejection of a request to record a meeting, or the school's suspension of a meeting due to permission not being granted, will be dealt in line with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy/Code of Conduct and or other HR policies.

### **Format for Consent – must be signed by all parties present**

Date of meeting :

Time of meeting :

Purpose of meeting :

Those present :

I agree to an audio recording of this meeting being taken and understand that the owner of the recording is the person who is physically records to meeting.

Where school is the owner of the recording, they will adhere to the Retention Policy and all other parties are actively encouraged to follow this too.

Signed -

## School Website

The school website – [www.norwood-school.co.uk](http://www.norwood-school.co.uk) - will be utilised to communicate information regarding the following:

- Clubs and activities
- School hours
- School uniform
- Term dates
- Pupil safety
- The school calendar
- Ofsted reports
- Exam information
- Correspondence home

Each half term and before breaking up for the holidays, class teachers will update their class website page to share with parent/carers the learning that will take place in the forthcoming half term.

The website will be updated in an ongoing approach and when required.

## Emergency communication

All parents/carers will ensure that the school has their latest contact details, including their address, telephone number and email address, so that they can be contacted in the event of an emergency.

If a pupil is seriously ill or injured, the school will attempt to contact the pupil's emergency contact(s) via **telephone**.

Where an incident affects the whole-school community or a class, such as power failure, health and safety issues or snow, the school will send parents/carers an **email** and/or Xpressions **message** sharing the required information and arrangements.

If the school is closed for more than one day due to adverse weather or similar problem, an update will be issued at least **once** a day. Peterborough City Council will update their website to reflect this accordingly.

In the event of a serious incident, the school will follow its Invacuation, Lockdown and Evacuation Policy.

## Accessing information

In accordance with an individual's right of access under the UK GDPR, personal information (such as educational records), confirmation of data processing, and other supplementary information will be shared with individuals who request access.

- Please see the school's GDPR policy for information on Subject Access Requests.

Under the UK GDPR, remote access to a secure self-service system will be given to provide individuals with direct access to their personal information.

In line with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, private data and public records can potentially be accessed through lodging a Freedom of Information (FOI) request. The procedure below will be followed in terms of FOI requests:

- The requests will be made in writing to the school, stating the name and address of the requester, as well as a description of the information requested.
- Successful FOI requests will be responded to within 20 working days from receipt of the request, unless the request does not comply with the procedure set out in the school's Freedom of Information Policy.
- The school holds the right to charge the requester a fee, if complying with the request would cost the school an excess of £450.
- Certain information will not be shared, such as that explained in Part 2 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.