NORTHGATE
High School

Community Communication Policy

Respect | Determination | Teamwork

Section	Changes
Cover	Date reviewed early to reflect changes:
3 pg 2	Removal of schoolcomms replaced with email and text messages
6 pg 3	Change of staff in safeguarding and learning support roles

Review period: Triennial

Review by: Miss R Mackie

Date Reviewed: June 2026

Next Review: June 2029

Community Communication Policy

1. Introduction

The school recognises that engaging and working with parents, carers and guardians is key in providing their child with an excellent education. Our wish is to involve as many parents and carers in their child's education as possible.

We strive to ensure that communications between all members of the school community (governors, staff, parents, carers, guardians and students) are clear, professional, timely, polite and kind.

This communications policy embodies the Northgate values of **respect**, **determination** and **teamwork**.

2. Managing expectations

2.1 We understand that the education and welfare of their child is of paramount importance for parents, carers and guardians. We recognise that parents, carers and guardians may be frustrated if they feel that a message elicits no immediate reply. This is not because the school does not care, it is because there are competing demands on staff time. In order to provide some clarity please be aware that:

- Colleagues are not expected to be available during evenings, weekends and school holidays, other than for pre-arranged events such as parents' evenings and trips.
- A very high proportion of Northgate's staff work part-time so are not in school every working day.
- Teaching and learning and other commitments that staff have will not normally be interrupted.
- When the summer exam results are published, colleagues are available to provide support on the results day and the following day.
- Colleagues are available with regards to sixth form places on GCSE results day and the following day.
- Governors can be contacted via the school office.

2.2 Staff have a responsibility to support effective communications and to recognise that the quality and timeliness of their communications can allay concerns and worries and reflects on the school's reputation. Importantly, parents, carers and guardians are contacted:

- for positive reasons as well as negative reasons
- to provide information about the school and the education of their child
- to canvass their views

2.3 Northgate High School uses several different methods to maintain effective communication with parents, carers and guardians. Depending on the nature of the communication, the school will use the most practicable means to contact the recipient.

2.4 Communication on issues that affect the safety and wellbeing of a student will be treated as a priority. The school holds emergency contact details for all students and families are asked to alert the school immediately if contact information needs to be revised.

2.5 This Communications Policy embraces the principles of the school's Equalities Policy.

3. Communication from the school

3.1 The school website

The school website provides a range of information about the school including key policies and term dates.

3.2 Social media

Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn are used to communicate news and successes to Northgate families and the wider community. These are maintained, professional and monitored.

3.3 Emails and text messages

E-mails and text mesages will be sent to parents as appropriate.

3.4 Bromcom

We use Bromcom, a web-based system, to share information with parents, carers and guardians about student attendance, behaviour, homework and progress.

3.5 Parents' evenings and events

The school is keen to ensure that parents, carers and guardians have up-to-date information about how their child is progressing, including opportunities to discuss this progress with their child's teachers as necessary. Each year group will have one formal parents' evening scheduled on the calendar per year for subject-specific feedback. These run as online events, in order to facilitate the tight turnaround of appointments and to make the evenings more manageable for busy parents, carers and guardians. Where a specific teacher has multiple classes within the same year group, this does mean that their schedule for the evening can become full.

Parents, carers and guardians are able to contact their child's teachers for subject-specific matters and for feedback by emailing the school at **info@northgate.suffolk.sch.uk**, making it clear which teacher the message should be passed on to.

The school also operates face-to-face parent-tutor evenings in the autumn term of Year 7 and Year 12, to help establish good contact and to allow any issues to be raised. We hold further in-school events for parents, carers and guardians in each year group, with a view to maintaining good two-way communication and ensuring that they are fully informed of relevant developments as their children move through the school.

4. Estranged/separated parents

4.1 Unless there is a court order to the contrary, the school will provide the same student information to both parents, if both sets of contact details have been provided to the school.

5. Communication between students and staff

5.1 Two-way communication between students and staff is an important aspect of school life. The school welcomes and encourages students to engage in conversation with all members of staff within the school.

When communicating with a member of staff, students should:

- Use appropriate language
- Be respectful, not talk over staff, raise their voice or walk away before the conversation has ended

5.2 Students can also email staff on their school accounts in relation to their learning. All students should follow email protocol:

- Complete the subject line
- Use Ms/Mrs/Mr/Dr and surname as salutation
- Avoid abbreviations
- Sign off with Thank you or Kind regards

5.3 Emails sent by students will be responded to in the normal working hours. Please note that many of our staff work part-time and will respond during the pattern of their normal working days.

6. Communication from parents, carers and guardians

6.1 The first point of contact if using the phone is outlined below.

- For all student absence – call the attendance phone line (details below)
- For concerns related to your child – your child's form tutor
- For admissions, sick bay, accidents, financial matters, school lunches or any other general enquiry – the school office
- For safeguarding – Mr Tunaley and Mr Monteiro
- For Learning Support – Mr Bluck and Mrs Allsop

6.2 Unexpected student absence

If a student is unwell or will be absent from school, parents, carers and guardians need to telephone 01473 210123 and leave a message on the appropriate attendance option as soon as possible, and before 8.40am on each morning of absence. For full details please refer to the Attendance Policy.

If a child has not registered during the school day when expected to do so, the school will alert parents, carers and guardians, usually by text.

6.3 Written communication

Email is a quick, effective way of communicating necessary information and is the school's preferred method of communication. Office staff do not give out colleagues' personal email addresses. Emails should be sent to **info@northgate.suffolk.sch.uk** making clear who the intended recipient is.

Staff will always reply to an email/letter from parents, carers and guardians as quickly as possible. A response to acknowledge receipt of an email/letter will be made by telephone, email or letter within two working days and normally responded to within five working days, unless a different timeframe is appropriate because of subsequent processes required (for example, bursary applications, school trip applications, data protection).

Any letters of concern or complaint should be dealt with in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy.

6.4 Verbal communication – telephone calls and meetings

If the member of staff that you are trying to speak to by phone is unavailable, a message should be left. In the case of an emergency, the office team will endeavour to find another colleague to deal with the matter. A response about the follow-up action from the request/query/problem should be sent to the parent, carer or guardian within five working days.

Please do not turn up at the school unannounced. Parents, carers and guardians wishing to meet a member of staff must contact the school first to make an appointment. That appointment would normally be within five working days unless a different timeframe is agreed. Access to the school site is controlled. Visitors must report to Reception in the Arts Centre to sign in prior to meeting with the member of staff.

6.5 Conduct

Communication from parents, carers and guardians should be always polite and civil. Rudeness and inappropriate language, shouting, verbal abuse or threatening behaviour is unacceptable.

Staff will try and ascertain why you are contacting the school and what the best course of action is. Staff will listen to you, but if you become rude, use inappropriate language or shout, staff will tell you that they want to help you but they will end the conversation if you continue to communicate in this manner. Should this behaviour continue, or you threaten or verbally abuse staff, they will end the conversation, and hang up the phone if necessary.

The same standard of conduct is expected in written communications. Rudeness, inappropriate language, abuse or threatening commentary is unacceptable.

Should the Headteacher deem it necessary, for example for safeguarding and security reasons, action will be taken, and restrictions may be put in place around future communication with the school.

Depending on the severity of the situation the following actions may be put into place:

- A verbal or written warning to the parent, carer or guardian about their behaviour/language
- Any future meetings or discussions to be conducted with more than one member of the school staff present
- A single point of contact within school through whom all communication should be directed

The school has the right to refuse access to the school site to anyone if they are deemed to be a threat to the safeguarding of any members of the school community, including students and staff (DfE Guidance 2018 – Controlling access to school premises). In this case a formal letter will be issued giving full details of when the ban begins and might end. The decision to refuse access would be agreed and reviewed by a representative of the Governing Body.