



WOOTTON PARK

'Ipsum quod faciendum est diutius'

Title	Communications with Parents Policy
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Committee Responsible	
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Communications with Parents Policy- Wootton Park School

Introduction

Wootton Park School is a new all through school and is a member of the Northampton Free School Trust

Principle:

Central to this policy is the tenet that, at its most effective, the education of young people is a collaborative enterprise involving teachers, parents and learners themselves.

Parents know a great deal about their children; they have particular insights about their strengths, skills, interests, preferences, aspirations, anxieties and difficulties. Accordingly, the importance of meaningful, regular and positive communications between teachers and parents of their students can hardly be overstated – this principle forms the foundation of the school's policy on liaison with parents.

Note: The term 'parents' is employed throughout this policy to refer to parents, carers and other in loco parents.

Teachers

During a normal academic year, teachers communicate with parents directly or indirectly, by means of:

- Information for parents is included in the learners' school diaries. This includes details of school policies and procedures, contact names and important dates. A range of relevant policies are included on the school website and are presented to the parents of all (prospective) learners;
- A range of 'standard' letters either:
 - a) To parents typically regarding parental consultation events, open days, prize giving;
 - b) ceremonies, career forums, changes to the curriculum, educational visits, visiting speakers and school or local exhibitions and workshops or; to parents of individual learners concerning, for instance, achievement and progress, attendance, punctuality, or some commendatory or disciplinary matter;
- 'Personal' letters that address some matter(s) or incidents idiosyncratic to the learner concerned, the style and manner of which often reflect the close relationship that has developed between the school and the parent;
- A comments section and the home/school communication section of the school diary;
- Articles in the school's regular 'Newsletter' to parents et al, in which the work and activities of the school are regularly and substantially represented;
- Formal reports that summarise learners' achievements and progress over a



WOOTTON PARK

'Ipsam quod faciendum est diutius'

specific period. One is a full end of year summative report. Guidelines for the completion of reports are in another section. The others are interim reports demonstrating how the learners are making progress throughout the year with a judgement also included about their effort and attitude to learning.

- That tutors have created opportunities to talk with parents, and to show and explain to them examples of the learners' work and activities;
- Parents' evenings, open evenings and information evenings;
- Discussions with an individual learner's parents, initiated at the request of either parents or the teacher;
- Live reporting of data, attendance etc. via the parent portal;
- Communicating during certain educational visits, school exhibitions, productions or events.

Parents

To help fulfil their important role in their child's education, and to be informed as possible in any communications or discussion with teachers, parents are requested and encouraged:

- To ensure that their child has (at least) the basic equipment necessary for their proper participation in all lessons;
- To show an interest in, and to ask questions about, the work and activities in which their child is currently engaged at school and/or home;
- Periodically to look at, to ask questions about, and to comment meaningfully on, the child's folder/book of work;
- To ensure that the child industriously completes any set home learning, including, for example, such tasks as collecting information from a library, studying advertisements in a magazine, or watching a particular television programme, as well as more obvious tasks concerned with producing written work;
- To check their child's school diary and make comments for staff if necessary;
- To make every effort to attend the school's parents' evenings, open days, and other pertinent events, and when so doing, to make time to discuss their child's work and progress, and to look at some of the work displayed;
- To communicate to the tutor, any concerns or difficulties, interests or aspirations that are either specific to or that are seriously affecting their child's education.

With regard to this latter point, but also in general, in all of their communications with parents, teachers should strive to be as sensitive as possible, to the needs, apprehensions, and background circumstances of the parent(s) and the pupil. This means, among other important considerations, that in their communications with parents, teachers should:

- Pay attention to the form of address, so as not to exclude or embarrass one parent families, or children being fostered or 'in care';



WOOTTON PARK

'Ipsum quod faciendum est diutius'

- Seek to employ a form and tone that is clear, straight forward, appropriately friendly, and not patronising;
- Be sensitive to the known home and family circumstances of a parent and their child(ren), and should exercise caution when those circumstances are not known, e.g. the parents' first language;
- Encourage apprehensive parents to visit the school and to contribute as much as possible to their child's education;
- Gain approval from the Vice Principal for all 'original' letters before they are sent.

All parents, learners and the Principal (on behalf of the school) are asked to sign a 'Home/School Agreement' that sets a co-operative tone for the people concerned. A copy of the agreement is included in the Staff Handbook.

Parents are informed sufficiently in order that they can fully understand the measures the school is taking – this is particularly important during the making of a 'contract' or a review meeting. Parents' and learners' views are invited and highly valued as a contribution to the process. Parents are always asked to give their consent to consultation with relevant health professionals and other agencies.

Parents are encouraged to discuss any problems or concerns with the school and a suitable room will be made available for such meetings. Problems or concerns raised by parents should initially be raised with the learner's tutor. Most problems can be resolved this way. But if this does not happen, parents may raise concerns with the Principal/Vice Principal or senior staff. After following this line of referral parents can, if still dissatisfied, complain to the governors and later, if they are still dissatisfied, may take their complaint to the Secretary of State.

Confidentiality between parents and the school will be paramount and sensitive information will only be shared within the school or on a 'need to know' basis. The school has the legal obligation to act in accordance with national and local authority guidelines in cases of suspected child abuse which must be referred to the Area Officer of Social Services. In the rare cases where such action is necessary the school will offer all possible care and support to the learner and his/her family.

Review

The governing body will review this policy every year.