



COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS

(Updated June 2024)

This document captures the protocols and intentions that support enhanced communication between Hunter Sports High School and our community. This document has been developed alongside the NSW DOE policy for “Digital devices, services and information” policy and the “Expectations for digital communication” department procedures.

Synopsis

This document outlines the key mediums of communication, their intended audience and purpose.

Objectives

To develop channels and approaches for effective and responsive two - way communication, including:

- A planned and sustainable approach to communication with the school community
- Effective and timely distribution of information that is responsive to the needs of the community
- Positive school promotion
- Improved relationships with community
- Promotion of initiatives across the school that support the achievement of key strategic directions as per School Plan

Audience

- Students
- Staff
- Parents/carers
- Community

Review

To ensure that protocols and procedures are current and to ensure continuous improvements This document is due for review annually.



COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES & PROTOCOL - COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

<p>Email</p> <p>Purpose: Sharing of information, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication for various student groups • Communication for school events and excursions • School Newsletter • Parent / teacher communication <p>Protocol: Staff will endeavour to respond to parent email enquiries within 48 hours (on school days and during business hours)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/carers are requested when emailing outside the hours of 8.30am and 4:00pm, to address the email to the school account rather than the teacher's personal departmental account. These emails will be forwarded to staff each morning. 	<p>School Newsletter</p> <p>Frequency: Published twice a term (week 5 and week 10). Sent to parents/carers via email and School Website.</p> <p>Purpose: To share the following types of information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal's report • Upcoming events • KLA reports • Reports on recent events • Sharing of Department of Education communications • Canteen and Uniform Shop information • Non-profit organisation flyers
<p>Central Parent Portal</p> <p>Purpose: To distribute the following types of information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alerts, reminders and updates • Financial Invoices • Calendar of Events • Activity (excursion) Information • Student Reports • Attendance information • Absences communication 	<p>School Facebook</p> <p>Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate and share positive student and school events and stories • Celebrate and share outstanding student and school achievements • As a platform for community engagement • Promote the public reputation of Hunter Sports High School • Sharing of Department of Education communications • Additional mode to provide alerts if required
<p>CANVAS</p> <p>Purpose: CANVAS is to keep Parents/Carers informed and engaged in their child's education. CANVAS as a communication tool can share information about their child's learning including upcoming assignments, class announcements, and student progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important subject information • Links to educational websites • Student expectations 	<p>School Website</p> <p>https://hunterspt-h.schools.nsw.gov.au/</p> <p>Purpose: The school website is a hub for the following types of information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information from the NSW Department of Education • School procedures and protocols that address departmental policies • Links to other related websites • School Newsletters • Annual School report • School Plan • Information for prospective families



<p>Principal Led Community Forums Frequency: As required or once every term. Purpose: To discuss/deliver specific information, incl:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal report • Parent/Carer consultation • School Planning 	<p>Phone Calls Purpose: School to utilise for matters incl:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accident or injury • Absence • Variations to routines for specific students • Wellbeing
<p>High Performance Website https://schoolsnsw.sharepoint.com/sites/hshssportsacademyhub (Student log in required)</p> <p>Purpose: Provides information to students, parents and carers for elite athletes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strength and conditioning • Nutrition • Sports psychology • Physiotherapy • Sports medicine 	<p>Sports Academy Instagram https://www.instagram.com/hshs_sportsacademy/</p> <p>Purpose: Highlighting student participation in the Sports Academy programs here at Hunter Sports High School.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Games/event/competition updates • Games/event/competition photos • Games/event/competition results
<p>High Performance Information Evenings Purpose: The aim of the evening is to inform the parents/carers of our student athletes the whys' and how's of our athletic development programs. Frequency: Once a term (different focus every term)</p>	

Written Forms of Communication

Email

There are 3 email avenues that the school may communicate via email:

- hunterspt-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au
- teacher personal Departmental email (provided at teacher's discretion)
- Canvas platform notification link to teacher

Frequency: As required

Audience: Parents and carers



Purpose: An avenue of communication between school and parents regarding:

- Communication for various student groups including year/class groups, extracurricular groups, Sports Academy teams, whole school formal letters
- Financial invoices
- Parent / teacher communication

Protocols: Staff will endeavour to respond to parent email enquiries within 48 hours (on school days and during business hours)

Parents are requested when communicating via email outside the hours of 8.00am and 4.30pm, to address the email to the school account rather than the teacher's personal departmental account. These emails will be directed to staff each morning.

School Website

Frequency: As required.

Audience: Broader community and prospective families.

Purpose: The school website is a hub for the following types of information:

- School information that remains unchanged
- Information for prospective families
- Information from the NSW Department of Education
- School procedures and protocols that address departmental policies
- Links to other related websites
- School newsletters
- Annual School report
- School Plan

School Facebook

Frequency: As required.

Audience: Broader community and prospective families.

Purpose:

- Celebrate and share positive student and school events and stories
- Celebrate and share outstanding student and school achievements
- As a platform for community engagement
- Promote the public reputation of Hunter Sports High School
- Sharing of Department of Education communications
- Additional mode to provide alerts if required



School Newsletter

Frequency: The newsletter is published twice a term (week 5 and week 10) on a Friday afternoon. It is sent to parents via email and School Website for archive reference.

Audience: Parents and carers.

Purpose: To communicate the following types of information:

- Principal's report
- Details around upcoming events
- KLA learning reports
- Report on recent events that have been held
- Sharing of Department of Education communications
- Canteen and Uniform information
- Community advertising for non-profit organisations

Procedure: Newsletter items to be put into CENTRAL issue tracker before the end of week 4 for the mid-term newsletter and week 9 for the end of term newsletter.

CANVAS – Learner Management System

Audience: Parents and Carers

Purpose: CANVAS for communication with parents/carers is for keeping them informed and engaged in their child's education. It facilitates a strong home-school connection, allows for timely updates on student progress, and enables collaborative support for student learning and success.

Procedure: Access to CANVAS for parents and carers can be found on the school's website. The school is slowly transitioning all KLA classes. All classes will be in Canvas by 2026.

Sentral Parent Portal

Audience: Parents and carers

Purpose: To distribute the following types of information:

- Alerts, reminders, and updates
- Calendar of events
- Activity (excursion) Information
- Weekly newsletter
- Attendance information
- Absences communication
- Publish student progress reports



Oral Forms of Communication

Principal Led Community Forums

Frequency: Every term or as required

Audience: Parents and carers

Purpose: To share information and seek feedback on items including:

- School strategic directions and plans
- Teacher professional learning
- School events
- School procedures
- Departmental communications (health protocols, etc)
- General Business

Parent/Carer and Teacher meetings

Frequency: Twice a year

- Term 1, Week 9 – Years 7,11,12
- Term 2, Week 3 – Years 8,9,10
- Term 3, Week 4 – Years 7 – 12

Audience: Parents and carers with class teacher/specialist teacher/school executive

Purpose: To discuss/deliver specific information formally or informally:

Specialised Meetings, e.g. Learning Support Team, PLP (Personalised Learning Pathway plans for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students), IEP (Individualised Educational Plan sharing for specific students), OOH (Out of Home Care students), Attendance support meetings

Additional meetings on request with specialist teachers and/or deputy principals as required via appointment

Phone Calls

Frequency: As required.

Audience: Parents and carers

Purpose: School to utilise phone communication if this is considered the most appropriate method of managing an emerging matter, including:

- Accident or injury
- Absences
- Exemptions
- Variations to routines affecting specific students
- Student wellbeing
- Response to written communication



APPENDIX A: RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION

Hunter Sports High School is committed to effective and respectful partnerships with parents/caregivers, families and the wider school community in the education and wellbeing of our students and children.

The objective of communication between parents/carers and the school is always to arrive at an outcome which enhances the learning opportunities of our students. At Hunter Sports High School, we expect and understand that everyone will, in any form of communication, always adhere to a respectful and dignified manner. In adhering to these principles, we aim to strengthen the positive partnership between parents/carers and the school, to enhance the wellbeing of students and to provide quality educational outcomes.

The Hunter Sports High School **Respectful Communication** policy reflects the principles of the Code of Conduct for Department of Education employees, and students. It clarifies the standards of behaviour that are expected of parents/carers/families, students, community members and employees of the Department of Education. It outlines that stakeholders should behave respectfully to all members of the school community and show courtesy to students, teachers, and families. At Hunter Sports HS, the wellbeing of students and their education is paramount. Therefore, interested parties should treat one another with dignity, communicate and behave courteously and cooperate with others with the view that actions can have a long-term effect on relationships

Teachers' Responsibilities in Communicating with Parents/carers/Caregivers

- Teachers will respond to parental enquiries by phone or email. This should be prompt – usually within forty-eight hours (school days) when possible.
- Teachers will contact parents/carers if they have concerns for a student's wellbeing.
- Teachers will distribute notices and information to parents/carers as required
- When a concern arises, teachers will seek advice from the appropriate supervisor and contact parents/carers as appropriate.
- If the matter needs further discussion or resolution the assistance of a member of the Senior Executive or Principal will be sought.

Parents and Caregivers Responsibilities in Communicating with the School

- Parents should engage with their email to remain informed.
- Register with the Sentral Parent Portal to receive relevant notifications for their child/children
- Support their child/children to establish routines around daily procedures for their communication between home and school.
- Sign in at the office when they attend the school for meetings
- Inform the school of the reason for their child's absence via email, SMS, Sentral Parent Portal or send an explanation note to the front office with their child.



- Communication must remain respectful and carefully considered in terms of the recipient and purpose so that it is directed to the correct person for the correct reason. If communicating via email outside the hours of 8.30am and 4.00pm, parents are requested to address the email to the school account rather than the teacher's personal account. These emails will be directed to staff each morning.
- When a concern or query arises, parents/carers should communicate with the classroom teacher if it is related to a specific subject in the first instance by phone or email.
- Interviews can be arranged with relevant year group Deputy Principal by requesting a mutually convenient meeting time by emailing or phoning the school.
- If the concern is regarding another parent and or student within the school community, parents are to discuss matters with the Deputy Principal. Parents should not address concerns regarding the actions of other students directly with that student.
- If the matter needs further resolution the assistance of a member of the Executive (Deputy Principal or Principal) will be so or sought.
- Parents are urged to regularly seek information from the established channels of communication

Students' Responsibilities in Communication

- Speak with teachers and parent/carer if experiencing any problems at home or school.
- Hand in or give notices promptly to either their parent/carer or teacher.
- Speak to a playground duty teacher if experiencing difficulties in the playground or if they witness somebody having problems.
- Inform a teacher if they notice damage around the school or any hazards.



APPENDIX B: DIGITAL COMMUNICATION EXPECTATIONS – ‘Time to Switch Off’

Supporting employees to maintain a healthy balance between professional engagement and personal renewal is essential for long-term career satisfaction, continued creativity, effectiveness and ongoing health of individual and the profession. Empowering and facilitating employees to disconnect from digital technologies in rest periods is important to help maintain health and wellbeing and protect against burnout and other psychosocial hazards of always being connected to work.

The families and carers of students also face similar challenges in managing work, caring responsibilities and engaging with their children’s education. The department recognises that communicating and engaging with parents is critical to effective partnerships and that this necessitates clear parameters in the current world we live and work in. Parents and carers often have no alternative but to contact the school outside of school operating hours.

As professionals, teachers can choose to work outside of school hours if they wish to do so. This policy requires that communications with colleagues outside of school hours be by agreement and that teachers not be compelled to answer non-urgent queries during that time, including from parents.

1. Safeguard employee wellbeing

Individuals, leaders and teams must:

- take active steps to ensure their personal, team and community communication practices support employee wellbeing and follow the digital communication principles
- ensure teachers know that it’s time to ‘switch off’ from work-related communications outside of school operating hours to help maintain a healthy work-life balance and protect against the psychosocial hazards of always being connected to work.

2. Demonstrate leadership in promoting expectations for digital communication

- The principal, and other executive and school leaders should not send non-urgent emails or other messages outside of school operating hours.

Principals and executive must:

- lead the way, show what is possible and visibly demonstrate how they disconnect from working
- enable, encourage and support a guilt-free disconnection for their employees outside of school operating hours
- work with their teams to consult with their teachers when making decisions related to setting clear communication expectations and embedding supportive ways of working.

Principals must promote, communicate and provide clear boundaries for school communities around respectful and considerate communication. This includes promoting to parents, carers and communities the department’s commitment to protecting employees from digital communication interruptions outside of school operating hours, acknowledging parents’ needs to communicate with their child’s schools, principals and teachers at appropriate times for them. Schools will indicate a preferred channel of communication for school communities so that important messages aren’t overlooked and the volume of messages can be streamlined.



3. Context matters

- Employees may need to be contacted outside of regular working hours to assist with critical situations or emergencies.

What's an emergency?

- Examples of 'emergency' Include notifications of misadventure, natural disasters, utility emergencies impacting school operations, and serious student or employee wellbeing issues. Emergency communications also extends to urgent issues impacting an employee's salary payment or conditions., including urgent leave and staffing matters.

'School operating hours'

For Staff

- An understanding that non-urgent digital communication with staff is appropriate between the hours of 8.00am and 4.30pm
- Communication from staff to staff using digital platforms, where a non-urgent response is required, will be responded to within 48hrs.
- Communication that requires a faster response must include in the subject header:
 - URGENT: Immediate response required (emergencies only)
 - IMPORTANT: 24hr response required
 - FYI: No response required

For Parents:

- The preferred channel of communication is directly with the school front office between the hours of 8.30am and 3.15pm.
- An understanding that non-urgent digital communication with staff is appropriate between the hours of 8am and 4pm
- Communication from parents to staff using digital platforms, where a non-urgent response is required, will be responded to within 48hrs.

For Students:

- An understanding that non-urgent digital communication with staff is appropriate between the hours of 8am and 4pm
- Communication from students to staff using digital platforms, where a non-urgent response is required, will be responded to within 48hrs.

4. Promote respectful workplaces and communities

Employees must:

- contribute to a culture of considerate communication and understand the importance of respecting their own and their colleagues' time to switch off
- where they choose to work outside of school operating hours, they must respect their colleagues' rest time, and alter their communication to limit communication intrusions on their colleagues unless there is an emergency or a prior agreement
- where colleagues, parents and members of the community send non-emergency communication to employees outside of their school operating hours, employees are encouraged and supported to not respond until they resume their school working hours.