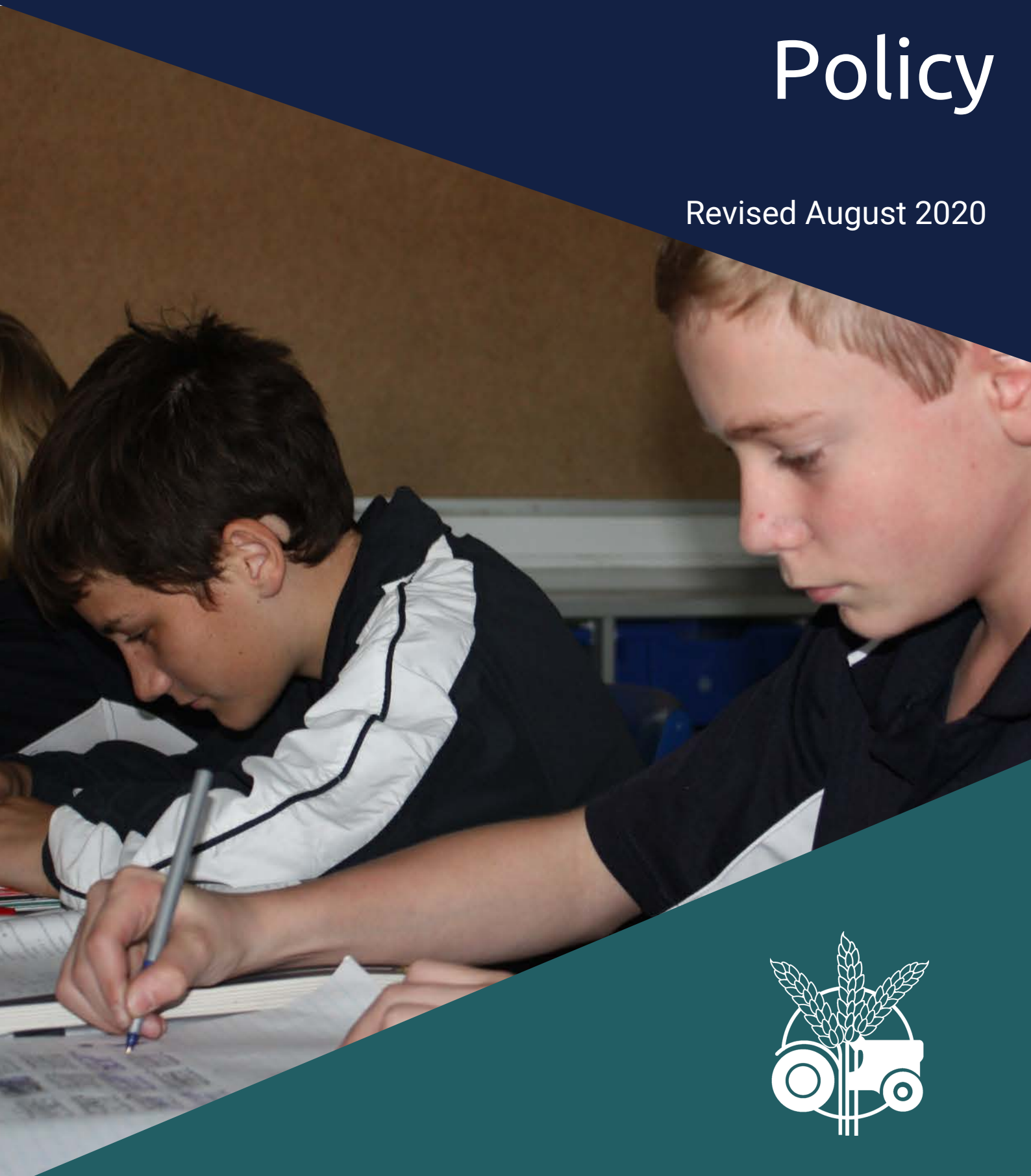


Wongan Hills District High School

Communication Policy

Revised August 2020



Policy Name: Communication Policy

Issue Date: August 2020

COMMUNICATION POLICY

At Wongan Hills District High School, we believe that education is a partnership between our team of professional educators and a child's most important teachers — their parents. When parents and school staff share information, model respect and give consistent messages, children are inspired to grow, learn and achieve their full potential.

This policy outlines the standards that Wongan Hills District High School expects from all staff when communicating with parents. It also outlines the most appropriate and effective methods for parents to communicate with the school.

Respectful, open and timely communication is at the heart of the parent-school relationship. The protocols in this charter will ensure that all community members work together in a positive and respectful manner to ensure the growth and learning of all students.

This policy aims to provide procedures that will result in a harmonious school community with parents, carers, staff and students all working together.

The goals of this policy are to;

- provide a guide to ensure that issues are dealt with in a fair, consistent and open manner.
- ensure that the rights of students, teachers and parents are respected and upheld.
- assist parents, carers and school staff in organising a time to communicate in a safe and confidential atmosphere.
- establish guidelines for parents to follow to help resolve concerns regarding social, emotional and educational matters

What parents can expect

- Regular communication from the school across a variety of platforms
- Scheduled opportunities to meet with the classroom teacher (e.g. Term 1 and 3 Parent Interviews, classroom meetings, three-way student conferences);
- Other opportunities to meet with the teacher by appointment;
- Updates about important developments in the child's class (e.g. excursions, practicum teachers, large class project, assembly item etc);
- Notification of any serious single issue or ongoing issues concerning your child;
- Access to a Staff/Parent Liaison Representative**;
- Opportunities to provide feedback (e.g. through confidential surveys, P&C, School Council); and
- Parent communications acknowledged within one business day and responded to within an appropriate and timely manner.

Many of the teachers at Wongan Hills District High School will exceed these expectations. However, these are the minimum expectations for all staff members.

What parents cannot expect (although it may occur)

- School staff returning calls after work hours (including weekends);
- Emails to be answered in the evenings or weekends;
- Access to teachers' private phone numbers or emails;
- Unscheduled interviews to be able to occur;
- Information about other students at the school to be disclosed;
- School issues to be responded to via social media

** Currently Jai Pollard and Val Bungey. An SPLR is a staff member who parents can approach to assist with facilitating partnerships with the school regarding their child's schooling. They may help on home visits and be present during meetings where requested.

When should parents contact their child's teacher? (Classroom, TAG, Specialist)

- When there are changes in family circumstances;
- Medical issues that change or arise;
- Safety issues or changes in behaviour at home;
- If you have concerns about your child's academic or social progress;
- If you have concerns about your child's mental health;
- When you can't keep a scheduled appointment;
- If there is a sudden change in your child not wanting to attend school or being overly anxious about school attendance;
- When homework takes much more time than expected, or your child is unable to do most of the homework independently; or
- If your child has head lice or any communicable disease. Please see https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Communicable-disease-guidelines

What information should be communicated to the school office?

- Absence due to sickness; Planned absences (e.g. medical appointments). Please note that there is an approval process through the Principal for holidays planned during term time;
- Any issues related to custody or access;
- Changes in address or contact details;
- Changes to medical action plans;
- Other changes to original enrolment paperwork (e.g. address, phone numbers)

When parents have last minute information for the teacher:

- Place a note in your child's homework diary;
- Send a note with your child;
- Call the office and leave a message for the teacher;
- You can email but please be aware teachers may not check emails until later in the day so may not be received.

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;
- Using social media platforms inappropriately;
- Speaking to the teacher disrespectfully or angrily, especially in front of your child, other students or parents; and
- Talking to other parents rather than discussing issues directly with staff members. Remember that *you, the parent*, are the model of how you want your child to communicate.

When is a face-to-face meeting appropriate?

Electronic communication, such as 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. Similarly, if you have concerns for your child's academic progress. 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 I 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 (Principal and Deputy Principals) must be involved. Either a staff member or a parent may request the involvement of a member from the school leadership team at any time.

To increase mutual respect, remember:

- Teachers will make mistakes; they're human, too.
- Teachers have their own families and lives; respect their privacy.
- We're all on the same team - your child's support team!
- Take chats off site after drop-off so teachers and students can begin learning.
- Use age-appropriate language around children during drop-off and pick-up times;
- Recognise that we won't always agree, but we promise to listen.
- Speak positively in front of your child.

Pathways of Communication:

Staff to Staff communication

- Grapevine - whole staff
- Emails- specific staff and staff groups, avoid ALL STAFF emails
- BMIS forms
- Communication to Office Forms (sick bay, late notes, out of class pass, absentee forms)
- Collaborative meetings (common DOTT planned and Wednesday sessions)
- Staff meetings
- Committee meetings

Teachers to Parents/guardians and Families

- Diary
- Emails
- Skoolbag
- Face-to-Face Interviews, by appointment
- Notes and Permission Slips as required
- Assessment outlines
- SeeSaw (Kindy and PP only)
- Reporting to parents
- Facebook
- Wongarette
- Schools Online

Parents/guardians to the School

Diary, emails, informal and formal scheduled face-to-face meetings

Absenteeism notification via:

- Email office (wonganhillsdhs@education.wa.edu.au)
- Diaries
- Written Notes
- Verbal – Face-to-Face
- Phone call to front office

Teacher to Students

- Assessment outlines
- Connect
- Student Emails (Year 5 and upwards)
- Homework diaries

School to Local Community

- Website
- SMS - high level alerts and major whole school events
- Local Paper
- Letters/Emails to local businesses
- Formal and informal meetings with business owners, leaders and community groups

Appendix 1: Parents in classrooms and meeting expectations

	K/PP	Year 1-3	Year 4-6	High School
Parent help and parents in the classrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Timetabled through online roster according to timetables - Allowances for “special events” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advertised when required for volunteers - Parents may be approached for specialist areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At teacher’s discretion - Allowances for “special events” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At teacher’s discretion - Allowances for “special events”
Parent Meetings (set)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Held towards start of Term 1 and 3 - Newsletter for each class to be distributed beforehand - All parents encouraged to attend over a two-day period - Central booking system (will endeavor for online) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Held towards start of Term 1 and 3 - Newsletter for each class to be distributed beforehand - All parents encouraged to attend over a two-day period - Central booking system (will endeavor for online) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Held towards start of Term 1 and 3 - Newsletter for each class to be distributed beforehand - All parents encouraged to attend over a two-day period - Central booking system (will endeavor for online) - 3-way conferences to be held where deemed necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parent information evening to be held early Term 1 in conjunction with meet the parent’s BBQ and formal scheduled meetings - Term 3 parent meetings to be held on a different afternoon to Primary school - Evening time slots
Parent Meetings (not set)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can be requested all year around - Scheduled through classroom teachers via email by either parent or teacher 			

Appendix 2: Communication Methods, Roles and Responsibilities

Channel	Details	Audience	Accountability
Newsletter	Available Fortnightly from Website and some hard copies available at newsagency	All Parents/ guardians, Staff, wider community via website	School Leadership
Website	Current, user friendly, informative Annual reports and business plan available School Handbook School Council agenda and minutes Course outlines and class overviews	Internal and External Stakeholders	School officer
Schools Online	Schools Online is a directory of all public schools in Western Australia. Here you will find a range of information about our school	Prospective and current Parents/ guardians and Staff	School Leadership
School App- Skoolbag	Used for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Absenteeism - Events - Major Alerts 	Parents/ guardians and Staff	School Officer Deputy Principal
Diary	Students record homework. School events Feedback to students and parents/guardians by teachers. Signed by parents/ guardians and teachers nightly	Year 1-6 Students and Parents/ guardians	Classroom Teachers and Students
Emails	Teacher-parents/ guardians contact Emails provided on website under staff profiles	Parents/ guardians and Staff Students to teachers	Administration and Staff
Assemblies	Highlight values and virtues of the school. Celebrate and showcase to act as a window to our classrooms	Students, Staff, Parents/ guardians, Families and wider community	Classroom Staff Student Council
See-Saw	Up to date events and information and photo evidence of student work – Kindy and PP	Parents	Classroom teacher

Social Media - Facebook	Needs basis. Used for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Celebrating school/student achievements - Sending out notifications - Daily highlights - Snapshots of special events 	WHDHS school community	School Leadership, (guidelines available on school website)
Hard Copy Notes	Permission Slips Specific administrative events	Parents/ guardians	Administration Classroom Teachers
Face to Face	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parent Information Sessions, early Term 1. - Formal and informal interviews as required. - Regular class open afternoons 	Parents/ guardians, external providers Protocol to book a time convenient	Classroom Teachers, School Leadership
P&C	Open meetings for community to discuss fundraising and school events	Parents/ guardians, community	School Leadership P&C President
School Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To establish the broad direction and vision of the school within the school's community 	Elected members from school and community Parents and community	School Chair and Principal

Appendix 3: Communication

Internal stakeholders	External Stakeholders	
	Local	Broad
Students	Shires of Wongan-Ballidu and Victoria Plains	Relevant State and Federal government departments
Parents/ guardians and families of students	Feeder schools both government and private	Relevant politicians and community leaders.
Teachers and Staff	Tiny Seeds, Therapy Group, Mainly Music,	Education providers (incursions, excursions, sporting groups)
School Council	Local Businesses	Tertiary institutions, SCSA, SIDE
P&C	Workplace providers	Directions, TAFE
Prospective Families	Users of Wongan Hills District High School Facilities by agreement	Education sector networks and associations e.g. TRBWA, WAPPA, Inland Lighthouse Network, WADHSAA, AITSL, ACARA.
Prospective Staff	University liaisons	

Appendix 4: Breach of Communication Charter before school

RE: Teacher availability and DOE Visitors and intruders on public premises policy

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

Our teachers are expected to organise their classrooms and the learning activities for the day prior to 8:30am and then to welcome students into the classroom to help them prepare ready for their learning day at 8:50am. This period of time is not deemed an appropriate time to discuss concerns (or larger issues), meet with teachers or hold conversations with other parents in the classrooms.

If parents require a meeting with their child's teacher, they are advised to make an appointment time, through the classroom teacher or through the school office. By doing so, the meeting can be properly coordinated, attended and focused. This is consistent with our Parent Communication Policy.

If there are simple communication needs for the teacher, please use any number of the other communication strategies that we have available - a message through Skoolbag, an email directly to the teacher, a note in your child's diary or a message via the front office.

The development of this policy is to protect the teacher's preparation time, their ability to support students preparing for the learning day and the health and well-being of staff. It also enables students to settle into their school day without the presence of parents (their own and others) in that space.

Should you wish to discuss this correspondence please make an appointment through the school office.

Regards,

Mr Bruce Nind
Principal
Wongan Hills District High School