



# Communication Guidelines

Communication between all members of our school community is guided by our values, humanity, curiosity and fairness.

## **Email Communication:**

Northcote High School considers email a vital communication tool and recognises the importance of prompt replies. Nevertheless, the high volume of email traffic and the resultant impact on workload necessitates some guidelines for all users of the school email system.

### **General Guidelines:**

1. To facilitate a timely response, try to limit emails to less than 200 words. Clearly and concisely explain your issue or question. Teachers and staff deal with many students and would appreciate that you provide a brief background for your particular situation.
2. Try to direct your inquiry to the most relevant person. Our General Office can help direct you.
3. Northcote High expects sensitive issues relating to children to be discussed person to person. Parents are warmly invited to ring to make an appointment, or write to request one. In addition, dates of Parent-Teacher-Student Conversations are listed on our website.
4. Defamatory or abusive emails will not be responded to. It is wise to avoid sarcasm when writing an email, as this can be misinterpreted.
5. Because teachers are not always desk-based, their response times may not be immediate. It is reasonable to expect at least, an acknowledgement of receipt of the email within two working days (except if the staff member is away ill or on camp/tour), and full response within three working days. If you do not receive a response within this time frame, we recommend you call to speak to the Office. Staff have been asked to display an Out of Office Message when they are away on school business. Please note, that staff are not expected to respond to emails over the weekend or holiday periods.
6. Be sure to include your child's name and Tutor group in the message.

### **Forwarding other people's messages:**

7. A number of "chain letters" are regularly passed around by email. Please do not **forward** these to staff. These may include: fundraising appeals, warnings of internet viruses and cyber-attacks (these are invariably hoaxes), "funny story/photo" emails, political or religious commentary.
8. If you **forward** emails to staff members, please state clearly what action you expect the recipient to take. Help us to best respond to your query by summarising the relevant details of any previous correspondence: it can be difficult to infer this from an email trail.
9. The use of internet abbreviations and emojis is not required and does not necessarily "read" correctly on all computers.

### **Making a complaint:**

If you wish to make a complaint, it is recommended that you do not write a lengthy email, in the first instance. Contact our Year Level Program Leaders, Head of School or one of the



Principal Team to discuss the best way to do this. They may ask you to clearly identify the topic or issue in writing. They will certainly wish to meet with you. The process of formal and informal complaints will be explained to you.

**Face to Face meetings:**

It is necessary to make an appointment for face to face meetings with staff members. Staff are usually occupied in classes and/or meetings during working hours. Making an appointment will ensure that your needs are met. It is not appropriate to visit the school and demand an impromptu meeting.