

NCAI Parent Communication Guide

Introduction

Healthy communication between the school and parents of students is essential to maintain a strong partnership in the education of our students, in alignment with our school's mission. This document establishes clear expectations regarding communication between parents and the school, and is written to promote loving, graceful, respectful and appropriate communication.

We also believe strongly in the Biblical principle of communication taught in Matthew 5:23-24 and 18:15-16. When one has been offended or has a concern of any kind, he/she should go immediately to the person involved to discuss the matter in love. Relationships may be restored and new relationships developed when these principles are practiced between staff members, parents and students. It is the desire of the school family that all would be committed to building up one another and confronting one another with a loving spirit.

We understand that in some cases, language limitations may seem like a barrier to communication between parents and teachers or staff. However, we want to encourage parents to reach out to the proper person regardless of this concern. Most of our teachers, staff and coaches are able to communicate in English and Spanish; in cases where staff are not bilingual, they have ready access to translation support through Educational Assistants and other staff members. We believe that direct communication is worth the extra effort that it takes to overcome language barriers.

Healthy Boundaries in Communication

Please understand that our faculty and staff are often unavailable to respond to communication because they are teaching, involved in meetings, or leading extracurricular activities. Our general expectation is that staff will respond to parent or student communication within 1-2 school days.

We desire to protect members of our school community (faculty, staff, students and parents) from excessive work, stress and exhaustion. In order to maintain a healthy balance between work and personal time, NCAI staff are not expected to respond to parent or student communication after 5:00 p.m. or on weekends. We ask that parents be patient regarding questions or concerns. We are committed to handle all concerns appropriately during working hours.

Generally, our expected communication method between parents and the school is through email. We do not require teachers to use or respond to WhatsApp messages. We value in-person, face to face communication over all other ways of communicating because this gives us the best opportunity to understand and support each other.

1. Absences

When students are absent from school, an email will automatically be sent to parents via TribeSchool. Parents should click on the link in the email and provide additional information about the cause of the absence. **No other communication with the school is necessary.** When a student is absent, the student (or parents of elementary students) should contact their teacher for missed work.

For planned or anticipated absences (medical/other appointments or family activities), see the next section.

2. Common Notifications

Parents should send an email to notify.ncai@nca.edu.ni for any of the following matters:

- Change of transportation plans
- Authorization to leave school with other people
- Change of lunch plans
- Change of extracurricular activities
- Pre-authorization for signing a student out early
- Notification of planned or anticipated absence

This email address is monitored Monday-Friday from 7:15 to 2:15, and parents will receive a response within one hour during this time. All notifications should be sent at least 2-3 hours in advance. Except in the case of an unanticipated emergency, notifications received with less than 2 hours anticipation are not accepted.

Parents should not copy other school personnel on these emails to avoid redundant communication, nor should they call the school or send messages via WhatsApp or another platform. Staff members who monitor these notifications will notify the appropriate personnel (teachers, administrators, bus monitors, etc.) about the changes or planned absences.

3. Communication regarding Finances

Parents should communicate with our school cashier, Edwin Marota (emarota@nca.edu.ni) for all routine communication regarding finances, payments and late fees. For unresolved issues or changes that would affect the family payment contract, parents should communicate with our business manager, Ivania Matamoros (imatamoros@nca.edu.ni).

4. Communication with Teachers

Parents should contact the teacher(s) of their child via email or personal meeting for any of the following matters:

- Questions/concerns about homework or grades
- Questions/concerns about behavior or discipline matters
- Questions/concerns about incidents involving other students
- Questions/concerns about class or school events
- Questions/concerns related to classroom, playground or extracurricular activities
- Questions/concerns related to the treatment of their child by the teacher of their class

It is not necessary to include the principal, director or other school personnel in this communication. Teachers are encouraged to respond within 1-2 school days. If the issue is not resolved via email, parents should set up a personal meeting with the teacher. If the parent still feels that the question or concern is unanswered or unresolved, they should involve the principal.

5. Communication with the Principal

The principal's primary responsibility is to support the faculty in classroom instruction. The teacher, not the principal, is the most knowledgeable person to respond to questions about assignments, grading, class activities, or incidents that occurred in the classroom. For this reason, parents should contact the teacher--not contact the principal--about matters that teachers can resolve. When in doubt, contact the classroom teacher first.

Parents should contact the principal regarding the following matters:

- Anticipated absences of more than 1 day
- Issues concerning school policy
- Unresolved concerns that were already discussed in writing and a personal meeting with the appropriate faculty member
- Concerns about student progress or performance that are more general in nature rather than specific to a single class

The principal may contact parents* regarding the following matters:

- Positive improvements or performance in academics, discipline, or school activities
- Academic probation or major concerns about poor academic performance
- Behavioral probation or discipline matters that have exceeded the systems established by teachers without an acceptable change in behavior by the student
- Other matters more appropriately handled by the principal than by the faculty

*For students in grades 7-12, the principal will usually discuss these matters with the student before contacting parents.

6. Communication with the General Director

The general director's primary responsibility is to oversee all areas of the school and ensure that proper policies and procedures have been established and carried out to support the school's mission and vision. This includes school improvement initiatives as well as final decisions about staffing and student admissions.

Typical parent communication should begin with teachers, or in some cases, with the corresponding principal or administrator. Positive communication and feedback is always welcome. However, if parents have specific concerns, they should only communicate with the general director if the concerns were already discussed in writing or a personal meeting with the corresponding principal, and a satisfactory solution was not reached within 7 days. In cases where communication with the general director is necessary, parents should send an email to Liam Starkenburg (director@nca.edu.ni) or arrange a meeting through his assistant, Melvin Berríos (international@nca.edu.ni).