

LISTENING TO PUPILS

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1. Introduction

1.1 North London Collegiate School (the School) believes engaging with pupils and listening to issues that interest and affect pupils, individually and collectively, will help pupils to feel supported, valued and improve their experience at the School.

1.2 This document is intended to summarise the arrangements the School has implemented to listen to its pupils.

1.3 This document must be read in conjunction with the following which are available on the School [website](#):

- Personal Social Health & Economic (PSHE) education Policy
- Pupil Handbook (Distributed in Year 7)
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

1.4 This document applies to the whole school from Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to sixth form.

1.5 This document is available on the School website.

1.6 Copies of the above are held at the Senior School Office for consultation by parents. You may also email the School at Office@nlcs.org.uk to request hard copies which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

2. Aims and objectives

2.1 The School aims to:

- Review and improve current arrangements by which staff and Governors engage and listen to pupils
- Consider and develop new arrangements by which pupils can safely raise concerns

2.2 This policy is informed by NLCS's Six School Values; Curiosity, Community, Commitment, Purpose, Aspiration and Courage.

2.3 As a school and a community, we pride ourselves on the fact that that our students' views shape policy and practice.

3. Statutory and regulatory framework

3.1 This document complies with the following:

- [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations \(2014\)](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education 2025](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(July 2018\)](#)

4. Scope and responsibilities

4.1 The duty to actively promote the wellbeing of pupils underlines the safeguarding responsibilities of the School's Governing Body, working through the Senior Team.

4.2 The Deputy Head (Pastoral) and Head of Junior School take a broad approach to the promotion of wellbeing of pupils including ensuring arrangements for 'hearing the pupil voice' remain adequate and effective.

4.3 The School expects all members of staff to listen to pupils, to take seriously, and act appropriately, on any concerns they may have.

4.4 Members of the School's Governing Body take part in pupil voice sessions when visiting the School.

5. Staff

5.1 All staff are given training in safeguarding and child protection as part of induction training provided at the beginning of every academic year. This training includes information on listening effectively to pupils and dealing with a disclosure. Staff are also provided with safeguarding related updates as required, and at least annually. In addition, the Deputy Head (Pastoral), Section Heads, Head of Junior School and Deputy Heads of Junior School have specialist training in this area which is refreshed every two years.

5.2 Pastoral listening skills are a vital part of the role of a tutor. In addition, staff are therefore trained in how to be an effective pastoral practitioner, for example, how to deal with a disclosure, how to be an active listener, and how to make the most of 1:1 tutor meetings.

5.2 The School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) i.e., the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and several deputy DSLs. Contact details for the DSL and deputies can be found in the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and on the School's website.

5.3 All staff are required to read and confirm they have understood the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and relevant sections of KCSIE. The relevant sections of

the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) are circulated to all staff during the induction training period, and whenever a revised version is issued by the DfE, so that all staff are kept up to date.

- 5.4 In the Senior School the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and Section Heads meet regularly to discuss pastoral cases. All teaching staff use CPOMS (a safeguarding database) to log any concerns about a pupil.
- 5.5 Staff in the Junior School hold meetings during break times to discuss pastoral issues regarding individual pupils and raise these in Junior School briefing meetings and at twice yearly pastoral concern meetings. All staff use CPOMS (a safeguarding database) to log any concerns about a pupil.

6. Form Tutor and Form Time

- 6.1 In the Senior School each form has a minimum of two form tutors. Pupils meet with their form tutors once a day during morning registration. On Tuesdays and Thursdays there are longer periods of form time (30 minutes). Form time is an opportunity for tutors to get to know their tutees and to encourage conversations both individually and amongst the tutor group. Tutors conduct one-to-one getting to know you interviews and report reading during form time. The tutor can offer help and support to their tutees during form time as well as fostering a sense of community. During form time pupils work on personal profiles and self-appraisal documents which provide tutors with other ways of getting to know their tutees.
- 6.2 In the Junior School pupils meet with their form teacher or form buddy teacher and teaching assistants each morning for registration and at the end of a day before pupils leave to go home, go to join their clubs or go to the late room. In addition, the form teachers take pupils for some lessons with each form teacher generally being responsible for a minimum of one core curriculum subject in their class as well as the pastoral care of the pupils. Reception to Year 4 are taught predominantly by their form teacher with some subject specialist teaching. The Lower School form staff accompany their class in assembly.
- 6.3 In the Lower School, an extended form time is scheduled in twice each week. During form time there is an opportunity to speak to pupils both individually and collectively as a class. This is an opportunity for the staff to get to know pupils so that they can tailor their advice and support according to each individual pupil's needs. It is also a time to help build class cohesion and identity, helping pupils develop friendships and collaborate as a class. In the First School all form teachers and teaching assistants are with their classes from 8.30am until lessons begin at 9am.

7. Personal Social Health & Economic (PSHE) education and Citizenship

- 7.1 PSHE teaching in the Senior School provides opportunities for pupils to raise concerns and ask questions, either in the lesson with their PSHE teacher, or afterwards in follow up discussions in form time with their form tutor. In Year 7 pupils are given the opportunity to complete a series of questions that encourage them to raise any concerns they may have concerning School or matters outside of School.
- 7.2 In the Junior School the programme of study for Citizenship and PSHE provides opportunities for direct teaching and opportunities to engage in discussion on a variety of pastoral and contemporary issues. Pupils may raise concerns, either via discussion in the class itself or at the end of a lesson with the form teacher.

8. Whisper (for Senior School students)

- 8.1 If a student feels unable to speak to an adult face to face they have the opportunity to open a dialogue anonymously with the DSL or Head of Mental Health and Wellbeing (DDSL)
- 8.2 Whisper is monitored by the DSL who receives an email alert when a student uses it. Whisper entries will typically be answered within 24 hours. Depending on the nature of the Whisper the DSL will triage accordingly. If the Whisper includes a disclosure of a serious safeguarding nature the DSL will contact Whisper for assistance in identifying the student.
- 8.3 Feedback is given to students based on the pastoral knowledge and experience of the DSL. The DSL will seek to build a relationship with the student in the hope that they might be willing to reveal their identity and speak face to face.
- 8.4 Whisper should not replace face to face conversation with a trusted adult but acknowledges that some student's voices are harder to hear and that it is better for a pupil to receive support online anonymously rather than not at all.

9. Personal Appointment Time

- 9.1 In the Lower School, once each term the form teacher makes a specific appointment time to meet with pupils on a one-to-one basis. This is called a 'Personal Appointment Time'. The teacher talks to pupils about a wide variety of issues, not simply academic, and finds out what they are enjoying, their friendships, extracurricular opportunities and other matters. Pupils are encouraged to write up a reflection either before or after the session depending on the particular focus.

10. Circle Time

- 10.1 In the First School Circle Time takes place each week. In the Lower School Circle Times are planned regularly and take place in form time. The sessions are

collaborative and allow pupils to explore concerns collectively in order to help resolve issues.

11. Lower School Colour Team Circle Time

- 11.1 These sessions are run in vertically grouped colour teams so there are twenty pupils ranging in age from Year 3 to Year 6 in the session run by a member of the teaching staff. The aim of these sessions is to enable pupils from different year groups to discuss issues and to develop links across the year groups. Each of these sessions has the same theme for each of the ten colour teams, such as: I am proud of myself for... I would like to....

12. First School Mixed Age Groupings

- 12.1 First School pupils have vertically grouped activities periodically such as Rainbow Sports day and Mixer Days once a term.

13. School Counsellors

- 13.1 The School Counsellors work closely with the Deputy Head (Pastoral), Section Heads, Head and Junior School Deputy Head (Pastoral). The Deputy Head (Pastoral), Head of Mental Health and Wellbeing, and the Junior School Deputy Head (Pastoral) have regular meetings with the School Counsellors to follow up referrals. Pupils can meet with the School Counsellors if there are any issues where staff feel some input would be beneficial. The parents of the pupil can be in touch with the School Counsellor while still protecting confidentiality in the sessions.

14. Junior and Senior School Pupils

14.1 School Councils

The Student Council is a representative body run by pupils in the Upper School and overseen by the Big 6. It hosts three meetings per half term, one for Year 7/8, one for Year 9/10 and one for Year 11/12. Form representatives are invited to the meetings to and discuss issues raised by pupils. The representatives report back to their forms. Issues such as coaches, lunch, outdoor space, fundraising etc. are discussed and ideas and opinions canvassed.

In the Junior School, the School Council is a representative body which meets on a regular basis to discuss issues related to the School and pupil body. It includes two elected members from each class (Years 3 to 6) and Year 6 elected executive members. The members of staff who run the School Council encourage all pupils to contribute, and the pupils who represent their forms feedback to their classes and ask for contributions on a regular basis. In addition, there is a suggestions box for ideas that the School Council could consider.

14.2 Pupil Voice

The School frequently uses the process of 'Pupil Voice' to gauge the views of pupils which involves pupils either being selected or volunteering to meet with a member of staff to discuss their views on a particular topic or initiative. These discussions help inform future planning. This is linked both to pastoral matters and to our cycle of curriculum area views in the Senior School and subject reviews in the Junior School. Governors also have the opportunity to meet with pupils to discuss a range of topics.

14.3 *Pupil Questionnaire*

Every Autumn Term all pupils in the Senior School are requested to complete a 'Happiness survey'. This includes questions about any pastoral provision as well as issues relating to the curriculum. A similar survey is conducted in the Autumn Term each year in the Junior School. It is completed by pupils in Year 2 to Year 6. The results of the survey are analysed by the pastoral teams. This allows for follow up with individual pupils and with future planning.

14.4 *Big Six and Year 6 Junior Leaders*

In the Senior School the Big Six meet with the Head of Sixth Form once a week to discuss current issues and raise any concerns within the Sixth Form. They also meet once a week with the Headmistress and Head of Sixth Form to raise and discuss issues that are relevant to the Senior School.

The Junior Leaders meet regularly with the Head of the Junior School who talks to the pupils about such issues as homework and friends. These pupils hold the post for a term, so the Head of the Junior School sees a number of Year Six pupils over the course of an academic year.

14.5 *Peer Mentors and Buddies*

In the Senior School sixth form pupils act as peer mentors to pupils lower down the School. The peer mentors receive safeguarding training from one of the Safeguarding Leads and further training and supervision with the School Counsellors and Pastoral Staff. Pastoral staff will match them up with pupils. The peer mentors also host tea and chat sessions where pupils can pop in. Similar supervised are run by the sixth form Mental Health and Wellbeing Society.

Year 7 pupils are assigned a buddy higher up the School to help them settle in and find their way around School. Buddy lunches and meet ups are arranged throughout the year. Both these initiatives are important methods to help pupils communicate with each other and indirectly with staff.

14.6 *Upper School Assistants*

Every year Upper School students apply to help with clubs and activities in the Lower School. The Upper School students are encouraged to get to know the pupils in their class well and are instructed to always refer any pastoral, social or other issues that the pupils may share with them on to the form teacher.

14.7 *Sixth Form Support and Form Assistants*

Sixth Form students volunteer to spend some of their non-contact time with a First School class. They are given tasks in their allocated lesson e.g. working with a small group and pupils and staff look forward to them coming. They might help to prepare the young pupils to prepare for the School day, hear readers and play. If a Sixth Former has any concerns about a young pupil the Sixth Former will speak to the form teacher.

15. Coach Pals and Chaperones

15.1 First School pupils who travel to School by coach have a 'coach pal' - an older pupil who buddies them during their journey. Strong relationships are formed this way and the older pupils provide a listening ear to their 'little pals'. Coach pals will liaise with the form teachers/teaching assistants if they have any concerns so that the pupils can be reassured.

15.2 First and Lower School early coach routes home have an adult chaperone who travels with them. The chaperones get to know the pupils well and liaise with form staff and the Deputy Head (Pastoral) where necessary.

16. Catering

16.1 The Catering Manager has a regular Pupil Voice meeting where they talk about the food on offer to pupils and on any changes that the catering department may wish to make. Pupils can raise concerns they may have about the food on offer and the Catering Manager will respond to these concerns.

17. Inclusivity

17.1 NLCS seeks to be inclusive at all times not least in its approach to listening to students. It is important that Student Voice reaches the harder to hear voices as well as those voices that are underrepresented, for example, pupils with SEND, EAL or those less likely to volunteer their views.

17.2 In order to be fully inclusive NLCS uses digital feedback tools, identifies specific student to take part in student voice and encourages every student to be a representative on the Student Council during their time at NLCS.

18. Monitoring and review

18.1 The Head and Senior Team will regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the arrangements set out within this document. They will do this by measuring the results of the Wellbeing Survey conducting in November of each school year, as well as analysing trends in safeguarding data and outcomes of school council proposals.

- 18.2 The arrangements will be subject to review at least annually (or more frequently if changes to legislation, regulation or statutory guidance so require) by the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and Head of Junior School.
- 18.3 The arrangements will be subject to review at least annually (or more frequently if changes to legislation, regulation or statutory guidance so require) by the relevant committee of the Governing Body.
- 18.4 The date of the next review is shown on the front page.