**Three Way Academic Conversations**

The three way conversations are part of our reporting process. The enhanced ‘report interview’ provides the tutor/whānau teacher and student an opportunity for in-depth discussion of academic progress with parents and family.

It emphasizes the desire to all work together to enable learners:

* To establish a Personal Education Plan with learning and extra- curricular goals.
* To be supported and challenged when setting goals and identifying future career pathways.
* To develop the capability to manage, reflect on and re-define their goals.
* Families to feel supported with their child’s goals, expectations and needs in the school.

The strength of this partnership can help determine the level of success a learner has at school and can be used to encourage them to engage in and take ownership of their learning.

**The conversation process: An example from Manurewa High School:**

* Letters are sent to homes with specified interview times set by the school.
* The tutor/whānau teacher follows up via phone to confirm appointments.
* The tutor/whānau teacher prepares and collates information required for the conference.
* Interviews are 20 minutes long and facilitated by the tutor/whānau teacher in specified rooms.
* The goals/targets are jointly developed by the learner, their parents/caregivers and the tutor/whānau teacher.
* The goals and questions are filled in as the interview progresses.
* The tutor/whānau teacher records key goals and targets electronically on the supplied spreadsheet. These are entered onto the school student management system and student copies for student folders will be distributed after the meeting.
* A copy of the goals/targets are sent home and recorded onto reports
* The goals are reviewed, reflected on and modified in whānau times as the year progresses.

**How does the interview run?**

* The tutor/whānau teacher follows a given framework with prompts/questions to guide conversation.
* It must be personal to the learner with a focus on the partnership between home, learner and the school.
* The focus is on the academic growth and development of the learner
* It must be focused, efficient and professionally run for 20 minutes – preparation is vital for success.
* As a pleasant, positive experience which is not a counseling session nor a complaining session.
* Be an active listener – re state what they say (eg, I think you are saying that…Is that right?)
* Be non-judgmental (use comments such as …what about…what if…what would you think)
* Faculty Leaders and Deputy Principals are available for questions/support in the allocated rooms and may sit in with some interviews.

**Time considerations for senior managers**

* Timetabled time to actually read/study each student profile.
* Staff meeting time allocation to discuss the progress of students from subject to tutor/whānau teacher.
* Professional development for staff.
* Closing the school for 2 days.
* Once or twice a year?

**Evaluation process**

* The student.
* The families.
* The community.
* The tutor/whānau teachers.
* Senior management/school leaders.

**What does the tutor/whānau teacher** **need?**

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| **Personal and**  **Management skills** | * Good relationship building and communication skills. * Empathy and sensitivity when conferencing with multicultural students and families. * Scheduled time for interviews and preparation. * Highly effective organization and planning. |
| **Knowledge** | * Overall curriculum and NCEA knowledge, enabling them to explain to the student and families what is required, including course endorsements and UE requirements. * Understand all the data – NCEA, asTTle, Numeracy testing, PAT, Reading Tests etc. and all documentation around the counselling and PSTs. * Understand of the purpose of the data- what does it mean, where can it lead? * Confidence with using and understanding spreadsheets and the school’s Student Management System (SMS). |
| **Data** | * Timely data based evidence to inform progress of individuals from SMS. * Traffic Lights for tracking progress (RAG sheets) and other tracking systems. * Summary subject sheet, not for parents, by subject teachers to discuss in PST. * Attendance data. * NCEA Records of learning. * Half year report. |

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| **Knowledge of**  **Learners** | * Good understanding and holistic knowledge of the learners in their whānau group. * Career paths their students are considering from previous academic counselling sessions. * Know the student –the relationship is built on trust and respect. * Refresh knowledge of student from previous sessions and records. * Check that student is on track with credits. * Talk to subject teachers if there is an issue that needs sorting. * Have options to suggest for students not keeping on track- eg, catch up sessions, peer support etc. |
| **Professional development** | * Professional development on open and closed questions - on not telling students the answers, but the whānau teacher learning to ask questions e.g. ‘What do you need to do to improve?’- **Not** ‘You need to come on time’. * Professional development in conducting a conversation using a script. * Observations of best practice when conducting conferences- (see Starpath DVD Resource). * Training in how to understand **all the data** – NCEA, asTTle, Numeracy testing, PAT, Reading Tests etc. and all documentation around the conferencing. * Courses for teachers on NCEA and its complexities- e.g. UE and endorsements. |
| **Resources** | * NCEA Booklet- information for parents. * Careers information for parents- University brochures, referral sheets for further appointments for specialists- careers, Deans, Subject teachers, HODs. * Conversation script for the interview. * Feedback from all subject teachers. |

**Checklist for three way conversations:**

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| **Conversation planning and training** |
| * A checklist of all the below and the sequence of ‘what to do’ on the day. * A script to guide the various aspects of the discussion from the introductions to the close and farewells. * All available achievement data regardless of year level (eg. PAT or asTTle data and subject data for juniors) with NCEA data added for seniors. * Attendance data. * A brief report-like statement from each subject teacher of the student commenting on the student’s learning in that class to date (these do not have to be neat tidy or even grammatically accurate as they are not given to the parent and student but used as a prompt for discussion). * Each student’s goals for study/career, NCEA and any learning goals in progress. * A credit tracker sheet which details what subjects (and how many credits) the student has enrolled for and what credits have been achieved so far – this is preceded by information to staff as it requires data to be collected from the student prior to the meeting so it can be included in the teachers pack and given to the parent at the conference.   A calendar of all the key data entry and assessment times throughout the year. |
| **Takeaway sheets for parents** |
| * Next steps for parents – opportunities to further engage today and future dates. * Helping your son/daughter at home – a list of ways to support your child to learn. |
| **Organisation of the student-parent-teacher conversation days** |
| * Commitment on the annual calendar for two days planned months ahead and likely the year prior. * A framework for how the days will be timetabled – how to fit 30 minute sessions across two days allowing for meal breaks. * A decision about who will conduct the conversation (e.g. form/tutor teacher only? – there is a need to have some extra people available to attend to issues and other events occurring that maximise the opportunity to engage parents) – a ratio of 20-25 students per teacher – this needs to be calculated within the length of the days. * Allocation of enough form/tutor teachers and other staff to cover every student. * Timetabling ALL students with a teacher over these two days – this time and date information is needed for the letter of invitation. |

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| **The process for inviting parents** |
| * The first letter of invitation from the Principal is posted home. This explains the purpose of the conversationand what parents and students can expect and what is expected of them, along with some practical information about the management of the conferences such a how to ask the school for a letter of release from work. * This letter is accompanied by an appointment form with a tear-off reply section. * A script for a call to the home to confirm the appointment and how to talk with parents who say no, not coming or letter not received – these phone calls are the responsibility of the form teacher. * Text (‘advertisement’) for notices in local papers and/or text for an article in local paper. |
| **Information for staff about the organisation of the conversation days** |
| * List of duties – who will do what covering everything from cars and security, coffee and tea in the hall for parents, crèche or other child care arrangements, BBQ (sausage sizzle), relievers for form teachers if required, key personnel in hall or central area to promote aspects of new school initiatives etc, liaise, collect information as required. * Specialist roles eg. deans checklist of actions and responsibilities for the conversation days. * Information about what will happen regarding parents who do not attend (the letter and other materials they will be sent etc). |
| **Resources for review processes** |
| * Templates and formatted forms of questions for collecting student, parent and teacher voice to provide feedback about the conferences. * Instructions for analysing and using data collected from review processes. |