



Communication between Parents and the School

The purpose of this document is to serve as a general guide for ensuring effective communication from parents to teachers, staff and administrators. Communication refers to both the sending and receiving of information, such as email and notes, and verbal communications such as telephone conversations and face-to-face meetings. In order to ensure a successful exchange of information, it is important that all parties follow a few key principles.

Good communication between teachers and parents doesn't just happen. It requires special skills on our part; skills such as good listening techniques, tact, kindness, consideration, empathy, enthusiasm, and an understanding of parent-child relationships.

Our beliefs:

- All families have strengths.
- Parents are learners too.
- Parents have important perspectives about their children.
- Family members care about each other.
- Cultural differences are both valid and valuable.
- Many family forms exist and are legitimate.

Therefore, we endeavour to:

- Recognise that schools and homes have shared goals.
- Respect caregivers and communicate that respect.
- Be positive!

We have mutual responsibilities to:

Maintain respectful and open communication

- Always use a respectful and polite tone
- Request, don't demand
- Be ready not just to provide information, but to listen to observations and perspectives
- Enter the exchange with an open mind and assume a shared best interest for the child
- Be prepared to work collaboratively to solve problems

Maintain confidentiality

- Recognize that confidentiality may limit information that can be shared from school to parents, including consequences for other students' behaviours

Take time to respond to communications

- Make every effort to respond as soon as possible to parent communications, with the understanding that the teaching day sometimes precludes immediate responses
- Take the time to collect needed information before responding

Recognise that

- Parents can choose to email teachers if they wish. The teachers' cg email is a work email and as such is available to the community.

- Teachers can choose to have a meeting over sensitive issues that are raised in an email
- Parents can email absentee notes to teachers. These emails need to clearly identify the name of the child and the parent with the date/s and reasons for absences.
- Whilst email is a convenient form of communication excessive use of emails can reduce productivity, damage trust and become a form of harassment.

We need to be mindful that:

- Staff should only use email to communicate with parents/carers when parents agree to this form of communication
- Only the Principal or his/her delegate may provide staff with parent email addresses.
- If a parent chooses to communicate via email, this will be relayed to staff.
- Advising the Coordinator prior to any communication with a parent is recommended
- We never write about a third party
- We only include factual information
- We always avoid emotive language
- If a parent is sending excessive amounts of emails to you tell your Coordinator and arrange an interview to talk through issues
- It is advisable to use the *cc* or *bcc* function to inform the Coordinator about the contents of any emails
- The tone, timing and length of an email are important
- **Whatever you write in an email can be used in legal proceedings**