

POLICY – Communications Policy

Rationale:

It is essential that staff members of the school communicate information in agreeance with established protocols to preserve the professionalism of the school, to protect the rights of individuals, to uphold our duty of care to students, and the comply with departmental and legal requirements.

Aims:

To ensure that the communication of information is carried out correctly and in a manner that complies with school, departmental and legal requirements.

Implementation:

- Our school has a policy of open and cooperative communication. This practice however recognises that staff members have legal, departmental, local, professional and social obligations with regards the communication of information.
- Parents are readily able to communicate with teachers face to face at any mutually agreeable time throughout the school year, electronically by sending an email through to the school's email account, or in written format directly to the teacher.
- We value and actively seek input from all in our school community with the primary approach to seeking parental input through the members of school council.
- Broader consultation throughout the school community will be undertaken where required and this consultation will be inclusive and non-discriminatory.
- It is important to note that consultation does not mean decision making. Nor does it equate that decision-making will simply be based on popularity of ideas or weight of numbers.
- Department of Education employees are free to make public comment on issues relating to education, but in doing so, must be wary not to make comments that can be construed as negative criticism of our school, School Council, our community, staff or community members.
- As a matter of professional courtesy, and as a requirement of Section 3.6 of the Teaching Services (Conduct of Duties) Order 1998 staff will communicate with the principal before making public comment or formal statement on educational issues or that bears on the organisation or program of the school or place of work. The principal and School Council president will ensure that each other are informed.
- The Information Privacy Act and the Health Records Act require that schools protect the interests of individuals with regard to their personal information and respect the individual's right to control how their personal information is used, and for what purpose.
- The school will only collect consensual information that it requires about individuals, and will only communicate and disclose information for the purposes for which it was collected.
- Any person seeking information from the school that falls outside the school's previous practices must be directed to the principal who may require that a formal written Freedom of Information request be made.
- All such Freedom of Information requests will be referred to the Department of Education's Freedom of Information Unit.
- Information sought by police, including interviews of students must be directed to the principal.
- Requests form Department of Human Services child protection unit personnel regarding students or families will be complied with at all times.
- The school will comply with court subpoenas to provide information at all times, but will not respond to requests from lawyers seeking information without Education Department approval.
- Action may be taken by individuals, the department or organisations against staff members who choose to communicate information improperly.
- The school will table its Annual Report to the Community to an open meeting of School Council as soon as all components are finalised. This report will subsequently be made available to all in our community through the school's website. The content of the Annual Report will reflect the requirements of the DEECD.
- We will provide a minimum of two comprehensive written reports, one parent-teacher interview for students in June with an option for a second in December, additional interviews upon agreement and a 'snapshot' report at the end of terms one (except grade prep students) and four each year.

Evaluation:

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Ratified by School Council: October 2013

To be Reviewed: 2015

“Nurturing Our future”