

1 Policy

St Oliver Plunkett Catholic Primary School (School) recognises that educational outcomes for students are enhanced when there are positive relationships between the home and School. The 'Communications Policy' affirms the School's commitment to and responsibility for ensuring that communication with families is effective, open and timely.

2 Rationale

Our School Leadership Team, teachers and support staff, work in partnership with families to build a strong sense of community where staff, parents/carers and students feel they belong. We support each other in the exchange of ideas and strive to maintain an environment where ideas are valued and respected. This provides a strong foundation upon which to deliver the best possible learning outcomes for all students.

3 Aims

Communication underpins our School community. This policy provides a framework for effective communication, with the following key goals:

- To promote a strong and positive sense of school community;
- To reinforce the common goal shared by staff, parents/carers and students and the need for cooperation;
- To promote an accepting environment that encourages active participation and the sharing of ideas and knowledge;
- To ensure that communication is effective and always respectful, polite and honest; and
- To ensure that important information can be accessed quickly and easily.

Ultimately all communication is intended to ensure that students achieve the best possible learning outcomes.

4 Implementation

4.1 Communication with Parents/Carers

The School implements a range of formal strategies for communication with parents/carers. These strategies include a combination of printed and emailed information, access to internet based resources, and personal interview and information session opportunities.

All formal written communication will be reviewed by a member of the School's Leadership Team prior to being issued or made available to students and/or parents/carers. A copy of all formal written communication will be maintained on file in the School office.

In addition to formal strategies the School community is welcomed to events and performances that celebrate student achievements and milestones. Community members are also invited to be actively involved in and informed of School activities through participation in the Parents & Friends Association.

A guide to the School communication strategies is included in **Annexure A**.

Annexure B provides clarity for parents/carers on the preferred approach to discussions on matters of concern relating to the School or to their child.

The School acknowledges the Brisbane Catholic Education Student Protection Policy and processes for the communication of matters relating to Student Protection and adheres to all requirements.

Teachers and parents/carers must at all times respect the confidentiality of sensitive information relating to students.

4.2 Social Media

Social Media may be used by the School and the School community as a method of communication. Social Media will be used at all times so that due respect is given to the reputation and good name of the School.

When using Social Media, our community is expected to ensure that they **do not**:

- Impersonate or falsely represent another person
- Bully, intimidate, abuse, harass or threaten others
- Make defamatory comments
- Use obscene or offensive language towards others
- Post content that is hateful, threatening or divisive.

5 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Role of the Teacher

- Approach all interactions with parents/carers in an open, courteous and respectful manner.
- Listen actively to any concerns, seeking clarification when necessary to better understand the parent/carer's point of view and desired outcomes.
- Present their own, or the School's point of view in professional and objective terms.
- Seek support from the School's Leadership Team (Principal/Assistant Principal) if needed.
- Provide the parent/carer with an appropriate response in an agreed format and within an agreed timeframe.
- Defer meetings to a later time if productive discussion and resolution cannot be achieved for any reason.

5.2 Role of Students

- To be open, courteous and respectful to teachers, parents/carers and fellow students and to listen actively when required.
- To convey all printed communications from home to School or from School to home, in a timely manner.
- To speak informally or formally with their classroom teacher, the School Guidance Councillor, or a trusted member of the School staff if they have an issue or concern.

5.3 Role of Parents/Carers

- Follow the procedure outlined in **Annexure B** when seeking to communicate or discuss matters relating to the School or to their child with teachers or other School staff.
- Approach all interactions with teachers and School staff in an open, courteous and respectful manner.
- Listen actively to any concerns, seeking clarification when necessary to better understand the School's point of view and desired outcomes.
- Seek support from the School's Leadership Team (Principal/Assistant Principal) if needed.

- Agree to defer meetings to a later time if productive discussion and resolution cannot be achieved for any reason.

6 Review

This policy and the supporting Annexures will be reviewed every 3 years, or earlier at the discretion of the Principal.

7 Related documents

- i. The Brisbane Catholic Education Student Protection Policy and processes, available at: <http://www.bne.catholic.edu.au/students-parents/student-protection>
- ii. The School Volunteer Code of Conduct publication, available from the School office, or the online Parent Portal.
- iii. The School Media Consent Form, available from the School office, or the online Parent Portal.

Mechanism	Purpose	Action	Frequency
Communication between School and Parents/Carers			
Newsletter	To communicate key events, ideas and achievements to the School community.	Administrative staff compile the newsletter content including items from the School Leadership Team, teachers, students, the Parents & Friends Association, and community groups as appropriate.	Distributed fortnightly in digital form. A copy is uploaded to the School website. A printed copy is available in the office for collection.
Curriculum Outlines and Subject Overviews	To communicate learning goals, strategies, activities and/or programs that are specific to the student's year level.	Year level teaching teams prepare the documents collaboratively.	Distributed each year in digital form. A printed copy is available on request. Discussed during the Information Evening at the commencement of the school year.
Information Nights	To communicate detailed information relating to a specific School initiative or program and to provide opportunities for consultation.	Hosted by Executive, Principal or Assistant Principal, or teachers as appropriate. Advertised in the School Newsletter and via social media as appropriate.	Scheduled as required
Parent/Teacher interviews	Parents and teachers meet to discuss student achievement, progress and concerns.	An invitation to attend interviews is issued to parents/carers by the School administration.	Late Term 1 and late Term 3
Semester Reporting	Provides a comprehensive report about a student's academic progress, achievements, social development and work habits.	Teachers complete assessment, moderation and prepare reports. Reports are submitted to the School Leadership Team for review and comment. Reports are uploaded to the Parent Portal.	End of Semesters 1 and 2
Parent Portal (A secure online space for parents)	Presents collated information about a student including contact and medical information, academic progress and results etc.	Administrative staff compile content as information is updated and results become available.	Ongoing updates
School website	Provides information about the School, School Programs, student achievements, School Policies and provides access to supporting documents.	Administrative staff update the website weekly.	Ongoing updates

Mechanism	Purpose	Action	Frequency
Social Media (e.g. School Facebook and Twitter)	Optional method of communication allowing important or urgent updates to be relayed to participating families quickly. Alternatively, the School may post photographs* or updates of current events relating to students and the wider community.	Administrative staff manage content.	Ongoing updates as appropriate
Communication within the broader School community			
School Assemblies	To recognise and share achievements and information with students and parents.	Prepared and lead by students, teachers and the School Leadership Team. Parents advised of special presentations or celebrations.	Weekly
School Concerts Skills & Talents	To foster a sense of community and to provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate their skills through performance.	Prepared and led by students, teachers and invited guests as appropriate. Parents advised of timing.	End of school year End of each term
School notice boards	To provide additional information relating to School activities	Updated by School staff members and/or Parents and Friends members.	Ongoing updates as appropriate
Meetings of the Parents & Friends Association	To provide ongoing opportunities for parents/carers to be involved in and informed of School activities.	Chaired by elected parent/carer volunteers. Meeting times and articles are published in the school newsletter. Minutes are published on the School website.	Monthly

* Subject to necessary parent/carer consent

1 Purpose

This guide applies when a parent/carer moves to discuss a concern, issue or enquiry relating to the School, or to their child, with a member of the School Leadership Team or with their child's teacher. The process is also illustrated in the included flowchart.

The School maintains that the resolution of concerns is best achieved through face-to-face contact with the appropriate person and encourages parents/carers to seek an early resolution to any issue that arises.

2 Matters Relating to the School

Examples of concerns or enquiries that relate to the School include:

- Child Protection concerns
- Workplace Health & Safety concerns or observations
- Student Enrolment enquiries
- Payment of School Fees enquiries
- Staffing enquiries

The Parent/Carer should make an appointment to meet with a member of the School Leadership Team. The outcome of the meeting is to include:

- A mutual agreement of actions to be taken;
- A mutual agreement of the timeframe for actions; and
- A record of the meeting is to be retained by the School.

If a resolution cannot be reached or the parent/carer is not satisfied with the outcome of the meeting they can direct further enquiries to the Area Supervisor for Brisbane Catholic Education School Service Centre South.

3 Matters Relating to the Classroom

Examples of concerns that relate to the classroom include:

- Curriculum enquiries
- Clarification of classroom routines
- Homework concerns or enquiries
- Social issues
- Behaviour management concerns or enquiries

The Parent/Carer should make an appointment to meet with the teacher using one of the following methods:

- Contact the school administration and arrange for the teacher to make contact to confirm a suitable meeting time;
- Contact the teacher in writing or via a brief email, requesting a suitable meeting time; or
- Speak briefly with the appropriate teacher, either before or after school hours (not at a time when they are teaching or on yard duty), requesting a suitable meeting time.

Emails and written communication should be brief and all emails to teachers must be sent to the relevant teacher's School email address.

Teachers will endeavour to respond to emails within 2 working days. The School office should be contacted for matters requiring a more urgent response.

4 Complaints

The School acknowledges that parents/carers may have cause to make a complaint about an issue of concern. Complaints should be directed to the School Leadership Team or may be directed to the Area Supervisor for Brisbane Catholic Education School Service Centre South.

5 Communications Flowchart

