

Ratified: February 2021  
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# St Mary MacKillop College Communication Policy

## Rationale

St Mary MacKillop College is committed to open, transparent and effective communication with all stakeholders. This Communication Policy meets the requirements under Schedule 4, clause 12 of the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017. Schools are required to demonstrate the communication of policies and procedures relating care, safety and welfare of students to staff, students, parents, guardians and the school community.

This policy aims to ensure that:

- effective communication between the school community members takes place;
- processes are in place to allow open and honest communication amongst all school community members;
- confidential information is managed in a manner consistent with community expectations, professional standards and legal obligations;
- clear, positive and fair processes and guidelines are provided which allow issues or concerns to be aired and resolved in a timely, effective and respectful manner.

## Policy Statement

Effective communication is essential in providing students, teachers, parents and the community with the necessary information to make appropriate decisions. St Mary MacKillop College is committed to using communication processes and techniques to build positive learning environments for students, staff and parents in order to inspire and educate all students to succeed in becoming productive and valued citizens.

Electronic communication is the primary method of communication at St Mary MacKillop College. This includes the school website, newsletters, email communications, SIMON Learning Management System, via approved Apps and telephone.

In addition to electronic communication, members of the school community may request printed copies of policies and other documents from the reception of the School. The availability of interpreters or having key documents in community languages can also assist with communication and can be requested.

Members of the community will have regular, formal opportunities for engagement with the school staff and this includes: Open Days, Parent/Teacher/Student conferences, Parent Information sessions, or more informal face to face meetings with classroom teachers and principals as required and other events in which the school community is encouraged to participate. Dates for these events are published in the School Newsletter. If wanting to make an appointment with your child's teacher or the principal please make contact via email, or contact the Front Office on 5032 9771.

At St Mary MacKillop College we have a commitment to transparent, professional and respectful engagement and communications with the members of its school community that considers appropriate privacy and confidentiality principles.

## Communication overview

**School Improvement Plan:** compiled in collaboration with DOBCEL, school leaders and in consultation with the wider school community. It proposes commitments to key improvement strategies and intended outcomes for the School over the School Improvement Cycle, usually four years. An Annual Action Plan is developed to outline the incremental progress towards the commitments each year.

**School Policies:** Policies are available on the school's website or, upon request, from the school office.

**School Prospectus:** The prospectus is provided to new families at the time of enrolment. A current version is also available on the school website.

**School Newsletter:** The newsletter is published each fortnight and is made available via email, on the school website or by contacting the Front Office.

**Principal's meetings with the School Advisory Council (SAC):** provides an opportunity for the Principal to highlight resourcing and operational issues relevant to the general school community. These meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of each month in the Principal's Office.

**Parent Information Nights:** provides information to the school community. It includes the opportunity for all parents at the commencement of the school year. Dates are advertised via the Operoo App, on the school website and on FaceBook.

**Parent-Teacher-Student Conversations/Conferences:** formal meetings held at least twice yearly (usually in Term 1 and 3), and at other times on request.

**Academic reports (written):** DOBCEL Schools must issue twice yearly at the end of Term 2 and Term 4.

## Communication with Staff Members

Communication from parents to staff will receive a response within 3 days. This does not include weekends or school holidays. The preferred mode of response should be in line with the way that communication has been initiated, or requested by the parent.

### Face-to-face meetings

Parents are encouraged to speak to school staff and get to know them. However, if you wish to discuss anything specific in relation to your child, it is important to make an appointment and have this conversation confidentially.

Teachers are available to meet with parents and guardians at scheduled Parent, Student and Teacher interviews to discuss your child's progress. Your child's teacher, homeroom teacher or school leader may also contact you to arrange a face-to-face meeting to discuss a particular issue regarding your child. If you wish to speak to a teacher, homeroom teacher or school leader outside of those occasions about a particular issue, please contact the College Office to arrange a meeting time with reasonable notice.

If there is an urgent matter you need to discuss with a member of school staff, please contact the College Office directly.

### **Phone Calls**

All phone calls to school staff should be via the school main reception line. It is not appropriate to contact school staff on their private mobile numbers. The College Office is generally open for calls between the hours of 8:30am and 4:30pm. Teachers and school leaders will ordinarily be teaching or meeting during that time and will rarely be available to speak with you immediately, but a staff member in the College Office will take a message and alert the relevant person as soon as practical.

If a matter is urgent, please alert the College Office. Urgent matters include urgent health issues impacting students (e.g. Forgotten medication), police issues or serious issues impacting student wellbeing.

For non-urgent matters, school staff, including teachers, will return your call or enquiry within 3 days.

Staff have been instructed to not use personal numbers when contacting parents by phone. In some instances this cannot be avoided. Parents must not communicate in regard to school matters, directly to a staff members private phone numbers. School matters must always be directed through our college reception.

### **Emails**

Emails are a helpful way to communicate. For non-urgent matters school staff, including teachers, will return your email or enquiry within three working days during school term time. School staff are not required to return emails at night or on weekends and ordinarily will not be checking emails during those hours.

We would encourage parents and carers to phone the school directly regarding any urgent matters as there may be a delay in receiving emails.

Staff on Sick or Carers leave are not expected to be writing or answering work emails. Staff on Long Service Leave must not be writing or answering emails. Communication with Staff on leave should only be made in an emergency and should be a phone call, where practical.

Staff should not be writing or answering emails during class time. The exception would be if the email is relevant to the class work, or information needs to be shared with PCC immediately.

### **Social Media**

Whilst limited social media (e.g. Facebook, Instagram & Twitter) is used at the College, it should only be used for educational purposes. School staff are not able to connect with students, parents or guardians via social media for child protection reasons. Please do not attempt to contact school staff via social media. See Social Media Policy for more details.

### **Written notes**

Parents/Guardians may communicate with school staff via paper note. Notes from parents must be written by the parent, not only a parent signature. In most instances this will be followed up by the relevant staff member by a phone call within three days. Please provide your most suitable contact details.

## Policies and Procedures

The following are available on the school website and can also be made available in hard copy for collection:

- School Vision, Mission and Philosophy Statement
- Annual Report to the School Community
- Privacy Policy
- Statement that the school adheres to the Democratic Principles
- Enrolment Policy, including School Fees and Levies
- Code of Conduct for Students and Parents
- Anaphylaxis Management
- Attendance Policy
- Child Safety Policy
- Child Safety Commitment Statement
- Child Protection – Responding and Reporting Obligations
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Complaints Handling Policy
- Communications Policy
- School Duty of Care Policy
- Emergency Bushfire Management
- Arrangements for Ill Students
- First Aid and Student Medical Management (i.e. Asthma, Administration of Medicine)
- Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Digital Technologies Policy
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Reportable Conduct Policy
- Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Policy
- Student Behaviour Management Policy
- Supervision of Students Policy
- School Student Supervision Information for Parents
- Information for Volunteers