



School Communications Procedure

St Mary MacKillop College (SMMC) operates with the consent of the Bishop of the Diocese of Ballarat and is operated and governed by the Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL).

Procedure Statement

SMMC is dedicated to open, transparent, and effective communication with all stakeholders. Effective communication is essential in providing students, college staff, parents/caregivers, and the community with the necessary information to make appropriate decisions. The school is committed to using communication processes and techniques to build positive learning environments for students, college staff, and parents/caregivers, inspiring and educating all students to succeed in becoming productive and valued citizens.

Purpose

The purpose of the School Communications Procedure is to:

- provide accessible and inclusive communication that responds to the needs of diverse groups within the school community
- promote a culture of honesty, trust, transparency, openness, and respectful communication
- ensure the management of confidential information is in accordance with legal obligations, professional standards, and community expectations
- provide the school and broader community with information regarding events, achievements, and activities at the school promptly

Distributing Information to Parents/Guardians/Carers

Email is the preferred method of distributing information within the school community.

Parents/guardians/carers are to inform the school office at 03 5032 9771 if they prefer to receive information in another form.

The following is a list of instances in which the school will need to contact the student's parent/guardian/carer and the appropriate process for each situation.

	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	STEPS
A	Concerns that arise about a student	Teacher House Leader Deputy Principal Principal	The parent/guardian/carer will be contacted promptly via email or phone to discuss concerns about the student. If deemed necessary, a face-to-face meeting will be organised.

B	A student's behaviour is deemed inappropriate or disrupts the learning process.	Teacher House Leader Deputy Principal Principal	The parent/guardian/carer will be contacted promptly via email or phone.
C	A student is injured, complains of illness, or must go home for any reason.	Pastoral Care Receptionist Teacher	School staff member to contact the parent/guardian/carer promptly via email or phone.

Communicating with School Staff

Parents/guardians/carers may sometimes have concerns about a student's academic progress, social relationships, or general classroom matters. In the first instance, these concerns should be raised directly with the student's class teacher or homeroom teacher.

Contact with the class teacher or homeroom teacher is made by using one of the following approaches:

- in writing via email asking to organise a suitable time
- by phone or the school office to arrange for the teacher to contact the parent or caregiver for a suitable time.

If a concern remains unresolved between the teacher and parent/guardian/carer, an appointment is to be made with SMMC to determine how to discuss the issue further.

Right to Disconnect

The Fair Work Act includes a provision where employees can disconnect from communication tools and not respond to their employer after or outside work hours. Specifically, employees have two rights:

- to refuse to monitor, read, or respond to contact from an employer outside of the employee's working hours unless the refusal is unreasonable
- to refuse to monitor, read, or respond to contact from a third party if the contact relates to their work and is outside the employee's working hours unless the refusal is unreasonable.

Laws now include a 'right to disconnect' term and a free-standing right to disconnect in modern awards.


The Fair Work Commission has the authority to issue stop orders for continuous unwarranted contact.




The legislation outlines factors to consider when determining whether contact outside working hours is reasonable. These include:





- the nature and urgency of the reason for contact
- the method of contact (e.g. a phone call would likely be considered more disruptive than an email)
- whether the employee is compensated for working outside of their ordinary hours
- the level of the employee's responsibility within the organisation
- the employee's individual circumstances.



For more information, refer to the [VCEA – Right to Disconnect: Fair Work Act Amendments Information Sheet](#).

School Communication Methods with Parents/Guardians/Carers

	COMMUNICATION TOOL	DESCRIPTION OF USE
1	 Telephone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For urgent matters, student absences, enrolments, changes to contact details, and to arrange meeting times with school staff:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Contact the front office or pastoral care centre by telephone: Phone: 03 5032 9771• Office hours are Monday to Friday – 8.30am – 4.00pm• Staff members are not to be contacted on their personal mobile phones.• Students must not use their mobile phones during school hours, in accordance with the school's Digital Technologies Policy & Agreement• Communication between parents and students during the school day must occur through the College Reception or Pastoral Care Centre. Messages will be passed onto students at the appropriate times during the day.

	COMMUNICATION TOOL	DESCRIPTION OF USE
2	 <p>Email</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All families are requested to provide their email details on their enrolment application. Changes to email address must be communicated directly to the school office. • Teachers/School Staff will respond to parent/caregiver emails within three (3) school days during the school week. • The administration email address is office@mackillopsh.vic.edu.au • Administration Officers and the Leadership Team will access their emails at various times throughout the day. They will respond to parents/guardians/carers within one school day, where possible, during the school week. • For urgent matters the school should be contacted by telephone at 03 5032 9771 rather than by email • Messages concerning arrangements for going home should not be sent by email, as staff may not always be able to access emails during the school day. • Invoices related to school excursions and activities are distributed via mail.
3	 <p>Mail</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All families are requested to provide their residential and mailing address on their enrolment application. Changes to address must be communicated directly to the school office. • School fee statements are distributed via mail twice per term.
4	 <p>Text Messaging</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school uses an automated text message service to notify parents/guardians/carers of unexplained student absences. These messages are sent by 10:30 am to any parent or caregiver who has not contacted the school regarding their child's absence via telephone or other means. • Parents/guardians/caregivers can respond to the issued automated text message service to explain their child's absence. • School staff may use text messages to inform parents/guardians/carers about their child's chronic health concerns, for example, diabetes levels • The school may use the text message service to contact parents/guardians/carers regarding other urgent matters, such as school closures due to extreme weather events. • The school may use text messages to inform parents/guardians/carers about compulsory school drills such as lockdown and fire drills. • Text messages are sent to one parent/guardian/carer per student unless other arrangements are in place

	COMMUNICATION TOOL	DESCRIPTION OF USE
5	 <p data-bbox="325 427 440 499">SMMC Website</p>	<p data-bbox="528 237 1342 271">The SMMC website can be found at https://smmc.vic.edu.au</p> <p data-bbox="528 293 874 320">The school website contains:</p> <ul data-bbox="555 331 1453 551" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="555 331 1453 394">• access to information about the school, including policies, procedures, and school reporting documentation. <li data-bbox="555 409 1347 472">• relevant contact information and links to other resources and communication tools. <li data-bbox="555 488 1366 551">• a digital calendar with the most current upcoming events to be checked regularly in case of date changes to events.
6	 <p data-bbox="296 752 469 779">Social Media</p>	<p data-bbox="528 591 1433 624">SMMC Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/SMMCSwanhill</p> <ul data-bbox="555 636 1461 898" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="555 636 1366 698">• The SMMC Facebook page updates school events and activities information. <li data-bbox="555 714 1430 817">• The SMMC Facebook Page is a public page. Please refer to the <u>Social Media</u> section of this Procedure for guidance on contributing to or commenting on the page. <li data-bbox="555 833 1461 898">• The Facebook page is an excellent place to check for any last-minute updates, such as changes to sporting events due to inclement weather. <p data-bbox="528 909 802 943">SMMC Instagram - <u>link</u></p>
7	 <p data-bbox="304 1106 456 1140">School App</p>	<p data-bbox="528 978 1422 1041">The Parent Access Module (PAM), accessed via SIMON Everywhere, gives parent/guardians access to:</p> <ul data-bbox="576 1052 1206 1341" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="576 1052 807 1079">• Calendar items <li data-bbox="576 1090 914 1117">• Attendance information <li data-bbox="576 1128 759 1155">• Timetables <li data-bbox="576 1167 719 1193">• Reports <li data-bbox="576 1205 1007 1232">• Assessment Tasks & Homework <li data-bbox="576 1243 954 1270">• Your Child’s Medical Profile <li data-bbox="576 1281 1110 1308">• Excursions & School Activity Permissions <li data-bbox="576 1319 1206 1346">• Bookings for Parent/Student/Teacher Interviews <p data-bbox="528 1357 1398 1420">Parents/guardians/carers can log into PAM on their computer, or via the SIMON Everywhere App on their mobile phone.</p> <p data-bbox="528 1431 730 1458"><u>Student Reports</u></p> <p data-bbox="528 1469 1449 1532">Student Semester Report are distributed via the Parent Access Module twice per year – at the end of Terms Two and Four</p>
8	 <p data-bbox="276 1727 488 1794">Face to Face Communication</p>	<p data-bbox="528 1550 852 1576">Parent Teacher Interviews</p> <ul data-bbox="544 1603 1453 1944" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="544 1603 1453 1706">• Year 11 & 12 Parent, student and teacher interviews occur in Term One and Term Three, to discuss students' progress, concerns, goals, and other issues. <li data-bbox="544 1718 1453 1780">• Year 7 - 10 Parent, student and teacher interviews occur in Term Two to discuss students' progress, concerns, goals, and other issues. <li data-bbox="544 1792 1422 1861">• Senior Student Transition Interviews occur in Term Four, for students moving into Year 11 or Year 12 in the following year. <li data-bbox="544 1872 1422 1944">• Bookings for these interviews are made on the Parent Access Module (PAM) accessed via SIMON Everywhere

COMMUNICATION TOOL	DESCRIPTION OF USE
	<p>Parent Information Nights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent information nights provide information to the school community. Information evenings occur annually to outline the year ahead. • Teachers will discuss processes, procedures, expectations, and curriculum. • For sensitive issues and concerns, communication should be by face-to-face meetings. • Parent-Teacher-Student Conversations/Conferences are formal meetings held at least twice a year (usually in Term 1, Term 2 and Term 3) and at other times when requested or required. • Parents/guardians/carers can make appointments with teachers and school leaders via email or through the office. Teachers will provide contact email information at the beginning of the year through class and/or electronic newsletters (one per term) and information evenings. • Communication between parents/guardians/carers, and staff is always welcomed and encouraged. • If a parent wishes to speak to a teacher, homeroom teacher, or school leader about a particular issue, they should contact the College Office to arrange a meeting time with reasonable notice.
<p>9</p>  <p>Newsletter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/guardians/carers will receive fortnightly newsletters each term • Newsletters will update families on what students are learning, news, and events from the term. • Newsletter are published to the school's web page here
<p>10</p>  <p>School Opinion Survey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMMC conducts School Opinion Surveys annually to obtain the views of parents and caregivers, students, and school staff on what they do well and how they can improve. • Opinions on the school, student learning, and student well-being are sought from parents/guardians/carers in all families and a sample of students from the school. • All school staff and Principals are asked for their opinions on the school as a workplace. Teaching staff are also asked additional questions about their confidence in teaching and improving student outcomes. • The school shares the key results of the survey with the school community.

Social Media

When anyone within the school community is contributing to the school's social media platform, it is important that such contributions are positive and respectful. Members of the school community must not post any material which:

- vilifies individuals on the basis of their religion, gender, race, or sexual preference

- is racist, hateful, defamatory, libellous, derogatory, threatening, harassing abusive, discriminatory, or humiliating
- contains material (written, audio, video, and other electronic forms) that infringes Intellectual property rights such as copyright
- contains personal information about another individual without their consent (including identifying information, email addresses, phone numbers, or private addresses)
- falsely represents another individual, organisation, government, or entity
- implies endorsement of a product, business, company, or organisation
- promotes a product, business, company, or organisation, the only exception being their school
- interferes with or prejudices the course of or otherwise deals with civil or criminal proceedings that are presently before any court, tribunal, commission, or similar body or any investigation by the police, Crime and Corruption Commission, or other agency.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
School staff	<p>School staff will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respond to parent/guardian/carer emails within three (3) working days during the school week • school staff are not required to return emails at night or on weekends and ordinarily will not be checking emails during those hours. • use language that is clear and accessible to parents/guardians/carers and the community • activate an autoreply message detailing relevant information concerning staff on leave • ensure that school email account users respect confidentiality, privacy, legal and professional privilege, and the rights of others and that the content and dissemination of email do not jeopardise those protections.
Parents/guardians/carers	<p>Parents/guardians/carers will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide the school with the most current contact information including telephone numbers and email addresses • contact the school via phone to advise of short-term student absences due to illness. • refer all school related matters to the school. If parents/guardians/carers have any concerns, they must contact the school directly.

Principal	Michelle Haeusler
Approval Date	21.03.2025