



# COMMUNICATION

## AIM

To engender a strong sense of community where staff, parents/carers and students can share ideas and knowledge in an inclusive environment that contributes to providing the best possible learning outcomes for our children.

To develop a strong and positive sense of school community where staff, parents/carers and students feel they belong. One where we all feel we can share ideas and knowledge in an accepting environment. This provides a strong foundation upon which to deliver the best possible learning outcomes for our students.

## PURPOSE

- To ensure that all verbal, written and electronic communication associated with Harrisfield PS upholds the school values of Agreement, Communication and Equity
- To promote understanding and cooperative teamwork between parents/carers, staff and students
- To encourage active participation of students, parents/carers and staff in effective communication
- To streamline communication by encouraging the use of appropriate mechanisms and channels of communication

## POLICY

All communications at Harrisfield PS Primary School should:

- keep staff, students, parents/carers, school council and other stakeholders well informed
- be open, honest, ethical and professional
- use jargon free, plain English and be easily understood by all
- be actioned within a reasonable time
- use the method of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience
- take account of relevant school policies
- be compatible with our core values as reflected in our Vision Statement and School Strategic Plan.

## IMPLEMENTATION

### INTERNAL METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

<p><i>Meetings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is an integrated programme of meetings to facilitate involvement of staff both formal and informal. <i>See table below</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All formal meetings are structured, minuted and members invited to contribute to the agenda</li> <li>• Time is put aside for structured opportunities for staff to engage in team work and to contribute to the school's reflection on priorities, activities and future plans.</li> <li>• The approved minutes of meetings are available on Staff Shared Drive</li> </ul>
<p><i>Email</i></p>	<p>Information and notification of initiatives are communicated through the use of email where appropriate. Email is a quick, effective way of communicating information, however it does not replace face to face meetings where some discussion is required. To ensure that each member of staff is using email effectively, the following actions should be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Email should be checked daily.</b> Email time should be blocked into your day</li> <li>• Consider a quick telephone call</li> <li>• Do not copy in more individuals than required</li> <li>• Delete mail regularly</li> <li>• Appropriate language is important in the use of email; emails should be proof read in order to check tone and appropriateness.</li> <li>• Subject Headings should be used in order to allow emails to be found and filed easily.</li> <li>• Do not use email to avoid face to face contact</li> <li>• The School has a separate policy for dealing with internet usage; you are advised to make yourself conversant with this.</li> </ul> <p>EduMail is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Department electronic mail service</li> <li>• the main communication tool used by Department</li> <li>• available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.</li> </ul> <p>EduMail accounts are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• automatically created and removed based on the staff information in EduPay, the Department Human Resource Management System</li> <li>• automatically emailed to the school account once created, where the principal can access the information and distribute the accounts to the relevant individuals</li> <li>• used by school based staff to keep informed about:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Department communications</li> <li>○ school and regional operational activities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><i>Written Communications</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These are placed in pigeon holes, in the staff room, which staff should check on a daily basis.</li> <li>• Phone messages taken by office staff will also be placed in pigeon holes except in cases of emergency.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Notice Boards</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COMPASS online portal is used to inform staff of absence, changes to daily schedule and upcoming events</li> </ul>

## EXTERNAL METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

Schools have many lines of communication to maintain: with parents/carers, DET, other schools, the community and with outside agencies.

Good communication between the school and the home is essential (*school motto: Linking School~Linking Home*), and students achieve more when schools and parents/carers work together. Parents/carers can naturally help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve.

In our school, we aim to have clear and effective communications with all parents/carers and with the wider community. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values through keeping parents/carers well informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents/carers play in supporting the school.

<p>Communications with Parents/carers</p>	<p>Student diaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each student has a diary and this is to be used by parents and the school alike as a means of communication. Parents and staff are expected to sign the diary each day and write some communication at least weekly. Senior students are to use diaries to communicate homework tasks, reminders and upcoming events as a means of preparing for secondary school.</li> </ul> <p>Verbal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents/carers, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional. Where and when possible an interpreter service will interpret and translate staff/parent communications.</li> </ul> <p>Newsletter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school's Newsletter is published on a fortnightly basis</li> <li>The newsletter will promote School successes and will incorporate news relevant to the School. Members of staff are encouraged to contribute appropriate items to the newsletter which should be emailed to the Principal or Business Manager.</li> </ul> <p>Letters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff will endeavour to reply to parents/carers' letters as quickly as possible. Any letter of complaint should be referred to the Principal or Assistant Principal for advice.</li> <li>Letters to parents/carers must be approved by the Principal or Assistant Principal before posting/delivery.</li> <li>Copies of all correspondence with parents/carers, other than absence notes, will be placed in student files.</li> <li>Absence notes are sent to the office and at the end of the school year are archived.</li> </ul> <p>SKOOLBAG App</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school uses the SKOOLBAG app to inform parents of upcoming events, times for assembly, returning times for excursions. Parents may also take advantage of the app to report student absences which are received by the school in an email. This is a service which is available 24 hours a day, from any location.</li> </ul> <p>E mail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents/carers are increasingly using email as a method of communicating with staff. Staff will respond as soon as possible after proof reading to check tone and appropriateness of their email. The Principal or Assistant Principal should be copied into any response to a parent's email having first gained approval for a draft copy of your reply. Staff may forward emails from</li> </ul>
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	<p>parents/carers to the Principal or Assistant Principal to deal with if preferred and should always do so if the content is a complaint.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A hard copy of any email sent to a parent/carer or received by you from a parent/carer should be filed. The same applies to all internal email transmissions concerning student matters.</li> </ul>
Telephone calls	<p>Office staff should not put calls straight through to extension numbers during class times.</p> <p>Office Staff should first ask if the person is available to answer a call and either email or contact the staff member via internal phone at an appropriate time.</p>
Social Networking Sites/Blogs etc	<p>Staff will not communicate with parents/carers or pupils via social networking sites (such as Facebook) or accept them as their “friends”.</p>
Written Reports	<p>Twice a year we provide a full written report to each child’s parents/carers on her/his progress in each subject. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development. Students are also given the opportunity to comment on their own progress and parents/carers are invited to make a similar comment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In addition, parents/carers meet their child’s teacher/s at Information Night in February and during the year for a private consultation at parent-teacher interviews. This gives them the opportunity to celebrate their child’s successes, and to support their child in areas where there is a particular need for improvement.</li> <li>• We encourage parents/carers to contact the school if any issues arise regarding their child’s progress or well-being.</li> <li>• When children have special educational needs, or if they are making less than the expected progress, we find it helpful to meet with parents/carers more regularly.</li> <li>• We welcome the presence of any other adult the parent/carer wishes to invite to a school meeting to act as interpreter. Interpreters will be booked for Parent/Teacher Interviews and other parent meetings, as required.</li> <li>• We will also make any reasonable adjustments to our arrangements if this will enable a parent/carer with a disability to participate fully in a meeting at our school, or to receive and understand a communication.</li> </ul>
Public access documents available on request are:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Strategic Plan, developed and issued every four years</li> <li>• Annual Implementation Plan</li> <li>• Annual Report</li> </ul>
School Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school website provides information about the school and an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience. Important school documents are published on the website, including Annual Report, School Strategic Plan, policies and school newsletters.</li> </ul>
Home-school communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A calendar of school events is included in the fortnightly newsletter and on the school’s website.</li> <li>• When students are issued with a School Diary, parents/carers are able to record a wide range of information that they wish to share regularly with the teacher. Teachers use the diary to record homework assignments, and as a regular channel for communication with parents/carers.</li> <li>• The school encourages parents/carers to share any issues about their child at the earliest opportunity. Teachers will arrange to see parents/carers as soon as possible.</li> <li>• Many parents/carers of junior students have the opportunity to have a brief word with the teacher when they collect them after school.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We arrange various meetings for parents/carers throughout the year.</li> <li>• A SMS system is in place to inform parents that their child is absent from school if the parent has not advised previously.</li> </ul>
<p>Communication with other schools and outside agencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support comes from medical services (such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy), from Educational Psychologists, and other health professionals and specialists. It also comes from various welfare-focused services, such as, Department of Human Services, local council and family support agencies.</li> <li>• We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our school should provide a safe and secure environment. We are the people most in contact with our children, and we are therefore in a unique position to identify and help abused children. Teaching staff are bound by Mandatory Reporting regulations.</li> </ul>