



# COMMUNICATION

## Policy

*Give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all - Romans 12:17*

### Rationale

As a Catholic community we are called to live in relationship with each other. The College Mission Statement highlights the importance of dialogue and the courage to speak the truth in love, the energy to act for change and of bringing gifts of healing and nurturing to places of discord. Effective communication within the College should foster positive relationships and inherently respect the human dignity of individuals. We recognise that effective communication promotes a safe and healthy environment and facilitates the effective operation of the College to enable the full flourishing of the members of the community.

### Principles

- Effective communication is central to the daily life of the College
- The College recognises the right of all members of the College community to be heard
- All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy, parents/guardians and students will work within the expectations set out in the Our Lady of Sion Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct
- Appropriate structures will be maintained to ensure that effective avenues of communication are available
- Feedback is recognised as an important factor in the College's ongoing improvement
- All members of the community are responsible for communicating respectfully and effectively
- Effective communication requires a commitment to being informed, constructive and considerate of the potential impact on others
- All members of the community have legal and social obligations with regards to communication
- Staff members have professional, legal, CECV and social obligations with regards to communication of information
- The most appropriate form of communication should be employed

### Implementation

The Communication Guidelines below assist in recognising the different relationships within the College and the appropriate forms of communication:

- Students, staff and parents/guardians are to be made aware of appropriate avenues for communication within the College
- Appropriate forms of address and communication reflect the dignity and respect that should be accorded to all individuals
- The College Grievance Resolution Policy supports parents/guardians, staff and students to respectfully and effectively raise concerns



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### Student to Student Communication Guidelines

Students are to be mindful that:

- Communication outside school has implications for what happens at school
- They are required to follow the College social media expectations as outlined in the eSafety Policy, Student Anti-bullying Policy and the Student Acceptable Use of Technology Guidelines
- College email and the College Learning Management System are formal methods of communication and as such correspondence of this nature should reflect College expectations

### Staff and Student Communication Guidelines

Students and staff are to be mindful that:

- In light of the importance the College places on being 'named and known', it is appropriate to use someone's name in all forms of communication
- College email is a formal method of communication and as such correspondence of this nature should reflect all relevant College policies and expectations as outlined in the Our Lady of Sion Code of Conduct
- Students are encouraged to communicate with their teacher to help improve their learning. For example, ask questions, clarify expectations, best learning styles, etc.
- Staff must not provide students with their private phone numbers or private email addresses
- Electronic communication between staff and students should be via official College communication systems
- All communication through the College Learning Management System should reflect College expectations
- The Student Bulletin is an important tool of communication and should be read daily

### Staff to Staff Communication Guidelines

Staff are to be mindful that:

- There are a variety of avenues in which initiatives, questions, concerns, and affirmation can be explored effectively. The 'Teams in the College' document identifies the appropriate avenues.
- It is generally accepted that email is an efficient form of communication, however, given the importance of relationships and dialogue, it is not always the most appropriate
- They have a professional responsibility to read their emails or access their voicemail, and respond in a timely manner (See 'Other Communication Guidelines For Staff' below)
- They need to comply with the clear expectations regarding acceptable and unacceptable behaviour as outlined in the Our Lady of Sion College Child Safety Policy, Code of Conduct and Privacy Policy
- Other important forms of communication are:
  - Staff Briefing twice a week which provides opportunities to share information as well as affirmation and recognition
  - Staff Briefing minutes
  - College calendar which communicates important events and scheduled meetings
  - Daily Staff Bulletins and Events Information documents
  - Scheduled meetings that support professional responsibilities



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- Staff Professional Learning Plan
- College Google communities
- If for an unforeseen reason, attendance at scheduled meetings is not possible, an apology must be given to the Chair of the team and for Professional Practice Consultations, to the Principal via the Principal's PA
- Communication with the media should be in-line with the College Media Reputation & Promotion Policy

### **Staff and Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Communication Guidelines**

Staff and parents/guardians are to be mindful that:

- There are different avenues for which initiatives, questions, concerns, and affirmation can be explored effectively. All members of the community are encouraged to use the appropriate avenue. For example, parents/guardians are encouraged to contact the Homeroom teacher or Wellbeing and Growth Leader for student wellbeing related matters. Alternatively, parents/guardians are encouraged to contact subject teachers or Learning Area Leaders for academic matters.
- It is generally accepted that email is an efficient form of communication, however, given the importance of relationships and dialogue it is not always the most appropriate. For example, email could be used to organise face to face meeting times to discuss matters in detail.
- Teachers should pass on important records of communication with parents/guardians to the relevant Wellbeing and Growth Leader or Learning Area Leader
- The College offers two scheduled opportunities per annum for student progress meetings to discuss student progress. Parents/guardians and students are strongly encouraged to avail themselves of these opportunities.
- The College communicates with parents/guardians through letters, bulk email, fortnightly newsletters, information evenings, the College Learning Management System, selected forms of social media and the College website
- Letters and bulk email (other than to students) distributed by staff must be approved by a Deputy Principal
- The College Learning Management System provides parents/guardians with access to the College calendar, student timetable, student attendance, student assessment results, upcoming assessment tasks, affirmations, infringements and other relevant information for parents/guardians
- Information regarding the cancellation of whole school events such as sports days will be posted on the College Learning Management System at an advertised time
- Parents/guardians are required to:
  - communicate student absence to Student Reception by 9.30am via email, phone call or SMS
  - provide the Homeroom teacher with an email or written note for any early dismissal
- Staff will endeavour to return parent/guardian phone calls or reply to emails in a timely manner. (See 'Other Communication Guidelines For Staff' below)



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### Other Communication Guidelines For Staff

- Emails should be avoided between 7.00pm and 7.00am on working days, over the weekend and during school holidays
- To ensure a smooth start to the term and that important information is conveyed, emails may be sent during the last three working days before the first day of term
- Emails outside this time should have a significant pastoral, academic or organisational benefit to the recipient
- An acceptable amount of time for staff to respond to phone calls and emails from parents/guardians/students/staff is two working days. Reply time will be impacted upon by various factors such as classroom teaching, professional learning days, other professional responsibilities and off-campus activities, and takes into account the working days of part time staff.
- When staff have a planned absence of two or more days, they are required to set up an automated 'out of office' response
- The College provides a contact email address for general community enquiries
- The College has separate policies relating to corporate fundraising and advertising
- The College requests the opportunity to explore and respond to concerns from members of the community before public comment is made
- The Pastoral Care Policy provides guidelines for communication with agencies such as police and child protection authorities
- The College has social media expectations for staff, students and parents/guardians

### Related Policies

- Child Safety Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Code of Belonging
- Electronic Communication (Staff) Policy
- eSafety Policy
- Grievance Resolution Policy
- Media, Reputation & Promotion Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Staff Anti-bullying
- Student Anti-bullying
- Student Acceptable Use of Technology Guidelines

**Review Date: 2023**

**Ratification by College Board: August 2019**