



COMMUNICATION POLICY

Rationale:

At St Mary's we are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that promotes open communication, respect, fairness and positive relationships. All school community members have the opportunity to be listened to and supported. As a Catholic school, the Gospel values and Restorative Practices form the basis for a proactive approach for communication and problem solving.

Goals:

- To promote positive and open communication to build relationships
- To provide guidelines to address and resolve any issues between all parties within the school community.
- To reach a resolution that is respectful to all parties.

Implementation:

Procedure for contacting a teacher or staff member

When parents wish to contact a teacher or member of staff to discuss matters relating to their child, the procedure is to contact the teacher or staff member involved, giving a brief outline of the issue. Contact should be made using one of the following approaches:

1. Contact the school, either by phone or coming to the Office personally, and ask the school secretaries to arrange for the teacher or staff member to contact you to make a suitable meeting time. Teachers are not usually available to answer phone calls or come to the Office during teaching time.
2. Contact the appropriate teacher in writing, through email or ClassDojo asking them to set up a suitable meeting time.
3. Speak briefly with the appropriate teacher either before or after school hours (not at a time when they are teaching or on duty) to arrange a suitable meeting time.

Procedure for contacting other personnel

When a parent wishes to raise a matter with the School Leadership Team or Administration Team, contact should be made by phoning the Office or by an email message.

When parents have a concern or wish to discuss an issue relating to a member of staff or of a sensitive nature, they should make direct contact with the Principal by phoning to make an appointment or by email.

In all cases if the matter is urgent and/or relates to the possible risk of harm to a student, a member of staff or the school community, the Principal should be informed immediately and the urgency of the matter conveyed. The Principal will determine who is the most appropriate person to deal with the issue and will ensure that contact is made as soon as possible. All details of staff email addresses are published annually in the school newsletter.

Avenues for making contact with school personnel:

There are various means by which you can make contact.

Telephone – call 9433400

Email – used only for a short message

Skoolbag – used to communicate student absence. A phone message can also be left for student absence

ClassDojo – short communication to the teacher or by the teacher to the parent. Not to be used for student absence

Face to face – teachers can be contacted by a phone call to the Office, email or ClassDojo to arrange a suitable meeting time

Online communication quiet time is between 7.00pm to 7.00am

St Mary's School will deal with all complaints and issues sensitively, promptly and confidentially. Matters will be investigated and dealt with as soon as possible (Grievance Policy may be implemented). The Restorative Practices approach will be implemented in order to work towards achieving a resolution that treats all parties with dignity and respect. Issues that have been raised must be kept confidential and not discussed with other parties. Matters related to student safety will be dealt with according to 'Child Safe Standards' and 'Mandatory Reporting Guidelines'.

Solving matters of concern are best done through face to face contact with appropriate person. Emails and letters should be brief alerting the person to the issue and not to be used as forum for in depth discussion.

Formal meetings will be minuted and all parties receive a copy of the minutes. Any correspondence received by the school in relation to matters of concern will be kept in a secure file.

Anonymous complaints may not be accepted or acted upon.

St. Mary's School endeavours to address and respond to all complaints. In some situations, it may not be able to fully address complaints that are made anonymously or without sufficient detail being provided to enable an investigation or resolution of the matter. To ensure procedural fairness, respondents have a right to know the particulars of the allegations being made against them, and be given an opportunity to respond to them.

Issues arising between students and families:

Parents/Caregivers should not approach the children of other families or their Parents/Caregivers with a school related or non-school related issue on the school grounds or environs. Such matters must be addressed to the Principal or Deputy Principal and not discussed with other parties or posted/discussed on social media. (Refer to Parents/Caregivers/Student Behavioural Standards Policy).