

Communication Policy

Rationale

At East Para Primary School, we believe in building good relationships and having a strong partnership between the school and its' community to promote a positive learning environment for staff and students. We are committed to open, honest and timely communication which is both respectful and constructive. Open communication is vital in establishing a positive working partnership with your child's school and teachers. It is important for families and staff to follow certain communication protocols.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to

- Clearly express our school's commitment to positive use of electronic and other forms of communication.
- Establish clear expectations for both staff and parents in the use of electronic methods as a communication tool.
- Implement a policy which maintains a safe workplace for staff and supports them to effectively balance their work and home life.

Expectations for Whole School Communication

- We use Seesaw, Skoolbag/Audiri, newsletters and notes as our primary method of communication for whole school information and events.
- Individual classroom teachers and specialist teachers will use Seesaw to share learning experiences, work samples and any relevant information/notes/messages relating to their specific class. The office will share all school reminders or information through Skoolbag/Audiri, text message and notes.
- It is not always possible for staff to post instantaneous pictures/messages/work samples on Seesaw. Staff will aim to upload at a convenient time.
- The school also has a webpage with information regarding policies, school-based information and staff.

Information sharing options include, but not necessarily limited to:

- Principal's Report at GC and newsletters
- Regular staff meetings
- Governing Council meetings
- One to one meetings ∓ Email notices/newsletters
- Phone messaging
- Seesaw ∓ Policies
- Family Forums
- School website
- Skoolbag/Audiri

Expectations for Families/Carers

- If urgent communications are required throughout the day or a change in expected routine, please communicate via a phone call to the Front Office and they will pass the message on.
- When there is a communication breakdown and/or an issue arises, the first point of call is to arrange with the associated staff member to discuss and resolve the matter. It is recommended that any issues or concerns should be raised within 48 hours
- Families/carers should be respectful and courteous in their interactions with staff. They should remain calm and not react with high levels of emotion.
- Families are expected to provide up to date contact information such as phone numbers and postal address. When personal details have changed, or if you are unsure if contact information is up to date, please contact the Front Office staff.
- Families/carers must communicate absences for their child/ren to the Front Office on 8264 3944 or Seesaw message the teacher. Communicating absences are a Department for Education requirement.
- Families should be aware and adhere to the school's grievance procedures.

Electronic Communication

- Communication through electronic means is most effective when communication is brief and informative. Issues/concerns requiring more detailed discussions or information need to be addressed either face-to-face or over the phone at an agreed and convenient time.
- Electronic communication is to be respectful and constructive. If it relates to a concern or problem, the focus must be on understanding the problem and finding a solution.
- Negative or confrontational messages are to be avoided. Goodwill and understanding comes from effective communication, not demands or negativity.
- Staff and families/carers are not expected to respond to electronic communication that is disputable or requires ongoing dialogue. A face-to-face meeting should be arranged.
- Families send non-vital messages only through electronic modes. For example, do not send communication regarding OSHC or alternate pick-up arrangements as teachers may not see the message in time or there may be a relief teacher without access. Remember that given work demands, teachers may not see the message until the end of the day. If you need an answer more promptly, please contact the school via phone.
- Please do not seek to discuss in detail your child's academic progress, learning expectations or behavioural issues via electronic correspondence. These are best addressed over the phone or face-to-face in a personal conversation.
- Remember to respect staff personal time, including weekends, holidays, sick days, and non-working days.
- When sending messages outside of work hours, please do not expect an immediate response. While some staff may choose to respond to messages it is not an expectation, nor should it be seen as being disregarded if a message is not responded to during these times. It is expected that staff reply within two working days. If there has been no contact after two days, please contact the school again for follow-up.
- Staff have other whole of school commitments once students are dismissed each day. It is strongly encouraged to schedule a meeting with relevant staff should you require more than just a short conversation.

Face-to-Face/Phone calls

- Families/carers are to remain calm and respectful when communicating face to face or over the phone.
- For lengthy discussions or queries an appointment should be made with the appropriate staff member.
- Please do not attempt to meet with staff formally at morning drop off or afternoon pick up times; staff have a duty of care to the students and require that time for organizational matters and general communication with families.
- When phone calls are made through the school, families are to be aware that staff have other obligations to adhere to during the working day. Staff may not be able to take your call immediately. A message will be passed to the appropriate staff member, and they will contact within two working days.

Expectation for Staff Electronic Communication

- Classroom teachers will communicate classroom concerns, work samples and relevant information through Seesaw.
- Communication through electronic means is best when communication is brief and informative. Issues or concerns requiring more detailed discussions or ongoing dialogue need to be addressed either face to face or over the phone.
- All electronic communication must be respectful and constructive.
- Staff will aim to reply to any form of parent communication within 2 working days.
- Staff may choose to send or respond to work-related messages at a sensible time, but there is no expectation of responding to these messages outside of school hours (8:00am-4:00pm Monday to Friday).
- Staff are not to respond to offensive or abusive messages: they will be forwarded to a member of the Leadership Team.

Face-to-Face/Phone calls

- Any concerns or communication that requires an in-depth or lengthy conversation should be prearranged at a mutually agreed and convenient time.
- Staff are committed to all school priorities, commitments and meetings and should not schedule any other commitments or meetings during these times unless prior approval from Leadership is obtained.
- Staff will abort a conversation or meeting should they feel threatened, unsafe or it becomes unprofessional.

Internal Communication

There are a variety of internal communication modes and expectations of staff.

- Staff are expected to check their emails each day.
- The whole school calendar should be used with all events posted. • Internal electronic means of communication should be respectful, informative, and succinct.
- Most staff are available for a quick face-to-face catch-up in an informal capacity but matters that require more than a couple of minutes of someone's time, a meeting should be scheduled at a convenient time.
- Microsoft TEAMS is encouraged to be used.

School Grievance Procedures

Schools are complex organisations. With so many members of staff, students and parents, occasionally inadequate communication leads to misunderstandings. Your concerns can usually be considered by making direct contact with appropriate personnel as soon as possible.

1. If you have an issue about something that has happened at school the first step is to contact your child's teacher. It is likely your child's teacher has information relating to the incident/concern and can help you understand what happened. You may need to set up a meeting time as the teacher has classroom responsibilities.
2. If you are not satisfied with the responses you get, you can ask to see a Leadership Team member. This might mean having to organise an appointment so that you have uninterrupted time to discuss your concerns. The Leadership Team are likely to investigate the issue so there could be a time delay before they can get back to you to discuss what they have found out and to plan an action together with you.
3. In some cases, you may not be happy with the result of this meeting. You can contact the Parent Complaint Unit on 1800677435. This unit will investigate your concern and attempt to support you to resolve the issue.

We hope to work with you to reach a resolution at the local level (step 1 or 2) and have a harmonious relationship with our school community