



# COMMUNICATION

## Policy

### RATIONALE

As a Catholic community we are to live in relationship with each other. The College Mission Statement highlights the importance of having 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. 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.

### 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 and clergy will work within the expectations set out in the Our Lady of Sion Child Safe 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 College 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 outcomes.
- Staff members have professional, legal, departmental, local, and social obligations with regards to communication of information.
- All members of the community have legal and social obligations with regards to electronic communication.
- The most appropriate form of communication will be employed.

### IMPLEMENTATION

- The Communication Guidelines assist in recognising the different relationships within the College and the appropriate forms of communication between:
  - o students
  - o students and staff
  - o staff
  - o staff and parents
  - o the College and the wider community
- Appropriate forms of address reflect the respect that should be accorded to all individuals.
- The Communication Guidelines also underpin the conventions of electronic communications.
- Student, staff and parents are made aware of appropriate avenues for communication within the College.
- Letters and bulk email (other than to students) distributed by staff must be approved by the Principal or Deputy Principal.
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### STUDENT TO STUDENT COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

Students are to be mindful that:



## OUR LADY OF SION COLLEGE

- Electronic communication outside school has implications for what happens at school.
- Students are required to follow the College social media expectations.
- College email and College Intranet (Edumate) are formal modes 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 mode 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.
- Response time to email is normally within two working days. It is not always immediate.
- Students are encouraged to communicate with their teacher to help improve their learning. For example, ask questions, clarify expectations, best learning styles, etc.
- Staff will not provide students with their private phone numbers or private email addresses.
- Electronic communication between staff and students should be via official College media.
- All communication through the College Intranet (Edumate) should reflect College expectations.
- The Student Bulletin is an important tool of communication and is distributed 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. See Electronic Communication Procedures.
- 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 and Code of Conduct
- Distribution lists for emails need to be used appropriately.
- The morning staff briefing provides opportunities for communication of information as well as affirmation and recognition.
- Scheduled meetings may involve the communication of information; however, their main purpose is to provide an opportunity for collaboration, planning, dialogue, team building and feedback.
- An internal phone system including voicemail is provided for all staff and should be checked regularly.
- Communication with the media should be in-line with the College Media Reputation & Promotion Policy.

### STAFF AND PARENTS COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

Staff and parents 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 are encouraged to contact the Homeroom teacher or Year Level Coordinator for student wellbeing related matters. Alternatively, parents 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.



## OUR LADY OF SION COLLEGE

- Teachers should pass on important records of communication with parents to the relevant Year Level Coordinator or Learning Area Leader.
- The College offers two scheduled opportunities per annum for student progress meetings to discuss student progress. Parents are encouraged to make the most of these opportunities.
- The College communicates with parents through letters, bulk email, fortnightly newsletters, information evenings, College Intranet (Edumate), selected forms of social media and the College website.
- Information regarding the cancellation of whole school events such as sports days will be posted on the College Intranet (Edumate) at an advertised time.
- The College Intranet (Edumate) provides parents with access to the College calendar, student timetable, student attendance, student assessment results, upcoming assessment tasks, affirmations, infringements and information for parents, such as presentations from information nights.
- Staff will endeavour to return parent phone calls and reply to emails in a timely manner. Reply time will be impacted upon by various factors such as professional learning days, classroom teaching, other professional responsibilities and off-campus activities.
- Parents are required to provide the Homeroom teacher with a written note for any student absence as well as calling the dedicated absentee phone line.

### OTHER COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

- 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 students and e-Communication Conventions for staff to support communication through these modes.

**Review Date: 2019**

**Ratification by College Board on: May 2015**

**Reviewed in light of Ministerial Order 870: July 2016**