



FOOTSCRAY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Communication Policy



Rationale:

Effective communication is central to our everyday lives. The ability to communicate openly and articulately in a wide range of settings is vital for the development of a strong partnership between home and school

Aims:

Open and honest communication is encouraged at Footscray Primary School between all stakeholders:

- That effective communication between all school community members takes place.
- That processes are in place which allow for open and honesty communication amongst all school community members.
- Our communication models key P.Y.P Attitudes such as integrity, cooperative, respectful, empathy and tolerance.
- That confidential information is managed in a manner consistent with community expectations, professional standards and legal obligations.
- That clear, positive and fair processes and guidelines are provided which allow issues or concerns to be aired and resolved in a timely, effective and respectful manner.
- That a positive, productive and harmonious school environment is maintained.
- The school uses a range of forms of communication and for a variety of purposes.

Implementation:

Procedure for contacting classroom teacher

When a parent wishes to contact a member of staff to discuss matters relating to their child, the procedure is to contact the teacher 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 a school administration officer to arrange for the teacher to contact you to arrange a suitable meeting time. You can also email the school for a meeting on footscray.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au Teachers are not usually available to answer phone calls or come to the office during teaching time or whilst on yard duty. Before school hours is usually not suitable, as this is the time staff use to prepare for the school day.
2. Contact the appropriate teacher in writing or via email, asking them to organise a suitable meeting time.

Procedure for contacting school leaders:

When a parent has a concern or wishes to discuss an issue regarding a situation which they considers affects the whole school, their child's wellbeing or relates to a school policy or matter, the procedure is to:

- Contact the Principal, Assistant Principal or a relevant School Leader, using one of the three approaches outlined above.
- 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 an appointment with the Principal by contacting the school office, either by phone or coming to the office personally, and asking the Office Manager or an administration officer to arrange a suitable meeting time.
- In all cases if the matter is urgent and / or relates to the possible risk or harm to a student, a member of staff or another member of 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 the process to work towards a resolution, as well as ensuring that contact is made as soon as possible.
- Footscray Primary School will deal with all complaints and issues sensitively, promptly and confidentially. Matters will be investigated and dealt with in a timely manner. In working through any issues a resolution which treats all parties with dignity and respect will be sought. Issues and matters which have been raised will

be kept in the strictest of confidence and not discussed with any other persons, excepting those directly involved.

- Anonymous complaints will not be accepted or acted upon and nor will complaints being brought forward by a third person. We all need to be courageous when having challenging conversations.
- Resolving matters of concern are best achieved through face-to-face contact with the appropriate person. We encourage talking directly to the person face-to-face with the intention of developing an understanding of all perspectives. Emails and letters should be brief, alerting the person to the issue; they should not be used as a forum for in-depth discussion.
- Formal meetings will be minuted and all persons involved will receive a copy of the minutes. Any correspondence received by the school will be kept in a secure file.

Issues arising between students and families:

No parent should approach the children of other families or their parents with a school related or non-school related issue on the school grounds. Such matters must be addressed to the Principal or Deputy Principal and not discussed with other persons.

Forms of Communication used at Footscray Primary School

| Form of communication | Purpose | Frequency | Accessibility |
|-----------------------------|---|---|--|
| School Handbook | Introduce new families to the school and provide them with essential information | Once at the start of prep or any other new family | Often filed away, not 'on hand', (on website?) |
| School website | To provide up to date information on the school its programs and policies. | Ongoing, updated how often? | Need internet |
| Parent Information sessions | To share information about programs, policies & initiatives | End and start of every year for new parents | May be difficult for working parents to attend at particular times |
| Newsletter | Communicate latest news, key events, policy information, staff development and student achievement. | Weekly | Email, paper based, tiqbiz |
| Tiqbiz | Communicate notices, announcements, newsletter, permission slips and potential for more | As needed, at least once a week. | Need smartphone or ipad |
| Notes home via child | Announcements, events, excursions, requests for help | Occasionally | Not always reliable |
| Assembly | To share and celebrate student learning and achievements, to share the latest news with the whole school population and their families. | Every week | Need to be available in person on Friday afternoon |
| School Council Meetings | For parent, management and teacher representatives to discuss policy, procedure, future direction of the school. To endorse strategic plan. To address issues and challenges. | 2 meetings per term | It is not widely known that non-members can sit in on meetings. |
| Front office staff | To be the front line of advice, direction and help | Any time | Always there but can be busy |
| Notice boards | To display key events, announcements, achievements and any policy changes for parents. | Any time | Need to physically be at school to access the information on them |
| Class Newsletters | For teachers to communicate planned learning intentions across subject areas | At the beginning of | Often filed away, not 'on hand', (on website?) |

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| | including units of inquiry to families. | term | Displayed outside classroom?) |
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Evaluation:

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

June 2015