



## COMMUNICATION POLICY (DRAFT)

### Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to identify the various channels of communication employed by St John's School, their intended purpose and the roles and responsibilities of members of our school community in accessing and using them.

St John's School believes that good communication is vital for our school to be successful. Under this policy communication involves internal communication between staff members as well as external communication with our parent and family community. We aim to ensure that all members are aware of what is happening in our community and that our vision and initiatives to meet it are well known by all. Our communication should be relevant, easy to access, accurate, and appropriate in both content and quantity.

St John's School will continue to develop and trial new communication platforms, channels, and tools to improve information sharing and engagement of all in our school community.

Information sharing is encouraged across the school and those using the school channels and associated tools are expected to do so in accordance with the school's Catholic values and ethos and in compliance with this and other relevant policies, procedures and codes of conduct, including the school's Child Safe and Privacy Policies.

### Communication Chain

1. Communication about absences should be sent to both the Administration Officer and the class teacher.
2. Requests for long term absences such as family holidays should be sent to the principal and the class teacher.
3. Parental concerns about student learning, growth and achievement should always be addressed with the classroom teacher or relevant specialist teacher; this is also the case for behavioural and friendship concerns that may arise. Please act on the latter in a timely manner as these issues are easier to deal with at the point of concern rather than some days or weeks later.
4. Concerns that persist or arise once again can then be directed to the relevant member of the school's Leadership Team including the Deputy Principal or the Principal.
5. Matters concerning school priorities, organisation or governance (including suggestions for possible initiatives, social and fundraising functions) should be brought to the Deputy Principal or the Principal directly in the first instance.
6. All matters that remain of concern to parents after utilising the above should be addressed to the Parish Priest as proprietor of the school.
7. Staff from the Northern Region of Catholic Education Melbourne may also be contacted to mediate solutions to concerns between the school and parents.

## Communication Channels

St John's School currently utilises a number of communication channels and tools including:

Channel and/or Tool	Purpose
The School Website	Provides information to existing and prospective parents on a range of matters related to the school including curriculum, enrolments, student wellbeing, upcoming dates and school news, our school community, school policies and FAQs as well as contact details.
Staff email addresses	These are accessible from the website's contact page and are routinely given to parents at the start of the year to allow staff and parents an easy means of communicating important information about events, absences and other relevant matters.
Monthly reflection	<p>Available through the website and issued at the end of each month in the school year, this reflection looks back on the month that has been and shares reflections about events and learning that has taken place as well as being a source of information for extracurricular activities and a place for local community groups to advertise events or services that may be of interest to our families.</p> <p>The Parish page of the Reflection has links to the Parish Bulletin for each week of the month so that those who have missed parish news are able to catch up. The Parish community actively support the school through their financial giving program so this page gives parents a chance to see the ways this support can be returned through the various parish initiatives.</p> <p>Articles for the Monthly Reflection need to be submitted in electronic format to the office at least two working days before the due publication date. Advertisements for inclusion in the Extra-curricular and Community sections should have a title, brief description and, where appropriate, a PDF flyer that can be uploaded. Websites that users are directed to for further information should be child safe in nature and consistent with the Catholic ethos of the school.</p>
Weekly bulletin	Issued each Sunday evening during the school terms, this bulletin alerts members of community about events coming up in the week as well as upcoming events in the term with a reference to the school calendar and blog pages for additional information.

School calendar	<p>Added to on an ongoing basis, this calendar is available on the school website and contains dates, times and locations of events happening with in the school year as well as brief information where appropriate.</p> <p>Additions to the school calendar can be forwarded to the office or to members of the school's Leadership Team to be included on the calendar.</p>
Classroom blog	<p>Updated by teachers at least twice per term with highlights of events or work covered in class. Parents are given the joint user name and password at the beginning of the year to access this page</p>
Email Groups	<p>Various email groups are put together as required. These include a whole school email group is used for items relevant to the entire school community, a staff email group for email to the entire teaching staff, a family group for each class, and an Education Advisory Committee group.</p>
Parent contact lists	<p>The Parents and Friends distribute a class contact list each year, with permission from participating parents, to enable communication between parents for the purpose of play dates, shared rides, social occasions, passing on information and requests about school events etc. The list is not to be used for personal or business marketing, and individual privacy and courtesy is to be respected at all times.</p>
Note pockets	<p>Each child will be issues with a note pocket (i.e. document wallet or extra-large pencil case) to take home paper notes. For the junior students this pocket will also be their take home reader pocket. Parents are requested to regularly check the pocket to be aware of and deal with such correspondence.</p>
Student Diaries 3-6 and Home Reader Logs P-3	<p>Each child in 3-6 has a Student Diary that they are encouraged to record their program timetable in as well as homework assignments and upcoming events. This book will be used to remind child of things that they have to bring to school from time to time.</p> <p>The Home Reader Log for P-3 should be filled in each night to advise the teacher of what reading has been accomplished and where children are with their home reading program.</p>

Notes and homework page	Available on the blog site and accessible to all parents by using the blog logon details. On this page all notes that have been sent home in note pockets are uploaded as a PDF for retrieval as required in case a note is missed or lost. Teachers also upload homework assignments here in case the original also goes missing.
Letters from classroom teachers	Teachers will from time to time send notes home about events happening in the school, including permission forms and requests for help. A copy of this correspondence should be given to the office and to the Principal prior to release.
Letters from school leadership	Members of the school's Leadership Team comprising the Principal, Deputy Principal, Religious Education Leader, Wellbeing Leader, Curriculum Leader and Pedagogy Leader will send notes home in the note pockets as required about events and matters for the attention of parents. A copy of this correspondence should be given to the office and to the Principal prior to release.
Letters from student leaders	From time to time student leaders may send out flyer or letter alerting or reminding the students and families of upcoming initiatives or events that they would like supported. This correspondence will always be drafted with a member of the school's leadership and must be approved by the Principal before release.
Office emails	Emails from the office containing reminders, requests and information will be sent out as required. Parents are asked to advise the office of a suitable email address, that is checked daily, to which these can be sent so that we can ensure this information gets through.
Staff bulletin	Compiled at the beginning of the week and available on the Sentral front page, contains details of events for the week and important notices for the attention of all staff. Every staff member, whether full time or part time is expected to refer to this either on Sunday night or Monday morning to ensure they are aware of what is happening.
Google Apps For Education	Students from Grades 1 to 6 have access to Google Drive and associated apps with parental permission. These apps are used extensively in the upper grades especially to allow collaboration between students and to enhance feedback between the teachers and the students. Parents are also able to interact with the work being done in class and to see assignments that have been set.

## Email protocols

- All emails sent from the [sjcliftonhill.catholic.edu.au](mailto:sjcliftonhill.catholic.edu.au) domain should begin with a salutation containing the name of the person to whom the email is addressed.
- Emails from students should be signed off with the name of the person sending the email.
- Emails from staff or office holders of the EAC or P&F should be signed off with their name and position.
- Staff emails should include the school logo, street address and phone number appearing as part of the signature.
- All emails to multiple recipients should either be sent using a group email address or by Blind Copying (bcc) to ensure privacy is respected.
- When replying to a group email, reply to the sender only unless it is a response that you want or need to let other members of the group know about.
- Ensure that email content is appropriate to the Catholic nature of our school and respects our school values.
- Please be aware that emails containing profanity or expletives will bounce back to the principal and/or system administrator.
- For absence notifications, please email the class teacher and also copy in [office@sjcliftonhill.catholic.edu.au](mailto:office@sjcliftonhill.catholic.edu.au).
- Email between parents and teachers related to behaviour or learning issues should also be copied to [principal@sjcliftonhill.catholic.edu.au](mailto:principal@sjcliftonhill.catholic.edu.au).
- Staff on extended leave are to activate the automatic response advising senders of the details covering this so that a response is not expected immediately.
- Emails from parents should be responded to within 48 hours but preferably within 24 hours.

## Website Maintenance Tasks

- Daily Tasks
  - Add upcoming events to the calendar including title, date and time, venue and brief explanatory notes.
- Weekly Tasks
  - Add weekly award winners to the front page.
  - Prepare and publish Weekly Bulletin with upcoming events for the next week.
- Monthly Tasks
  - Prepare and publish Monthly reflection to go out on the last day of each month.
- Yearly tasks (before school returns)
  - Update greeting from the Principal if appropriate.
  - Update staff profiles to ensure currency.
  - Update staff contact list. 
  - Update Blog and Notes pages to reflect current classes. 
  - Update Open Day dates and fees in the Enrolment section.
  - Review all pages to ensure currency and amend as appropriate.
  -  Liaise with Green Graphics for these points.
- Occasional updates as required
  - Add new policies and guidelines as they are developed and/or revised/reviewed.
  - Add new FAQs as they become apparent.
  - Make incidental changes to staff profiles and contacts – e.g. in the case of parental leave.

### **Application of policy**

This policy applies to all members of the St John's School community and to members of the wider community who may have cause to communicate using our channels and tools.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

- The Principal (or the Deputy Principal in the Principal's absence) must approve all letters sent home to parents including excursion/incursion notices, event notices, and classroom and curriculum information.
- Information for the Monthly Reflection should be sent to the school office via email. The school's Administration Officer is to bring such material to the notice of the Principal prior to publication.
- The Principal and Administration Officer will be responsible for ensuring that email groups are kept up-to-date through the year and reviewed and repopulated prior to the commencement of each school year.
- The Deputy Principal will be responsible for generating and publishing the Weekly Bulletin and the Staff Bulletin.
- The Administration Officer and members of the Leadership Team will update the calendar as needed.
- The Deputy Principal will be responsible for weekly updates related to the website and Weekly Bulletin.
- The Administration Officer and Principal are responsible for preparation and publishing of the Monthly Reflection.
- The Principal will ensure that the annual and occasional updates to the website are completed.
- Students, staff and other users must use communication channels in accordance to the relevance user agreement updated annually.

### **Policy review**

This policy will be reviewed and updated at least every five (5) years in accordance with our school improvement cycle or as the school's communication channels and tools change.