



# Communication policy

## **Rationale:**

**It is essential that staff members of the school communicate information in agreement with established protocols to preserve the professionalism of the school, to protect the rights of individuals, to uphold our duty of care to students, and comply with departmental and legal requirements.**

## **Aim:**

To ensure that the communication of information is carried out correctly and in a manner that complies with school, departmental and legal requirements. The School Council of Frankston Heights Primary School want a strong and positive sense of school community where staff, parents and carers and students feel they belong. One where we all feel we can share ideas and knowledge in an accepting environment. This provides a strong foundation upon which to deliver the best possible learning outcomes for our children.

## **Strategies: As a school community we will:**

- Utilise communication basics such as always being respectful, polite and honest. We should strive always to be clear, accurate, timely, relevant, targeted, open, reciprocal and interactive.
- Strive for open, positive and meaningful communication in everything we do.
- Support each other to be involved in the exchange of ideas and in maintaining an environment where people feel their views are valued and respected and where they feel they have been heard.

## **Communication Avenues:**

- **Face to Face:** an appointment may be made through the school office to meet with staff. Teachers may be available before and after school for discussions.
- **Phone Conversation:** Messages can be left at the school office for a return phone call.
- **Newsletter:** a fortnightly newsletter will be available to all families either through Sentral or by requesting a hard copy from the school office.
- **Term grade level newsletters:** outline the term events and curriculum foci are published at the beginning of each term to FHPS Parental Portal
- **Parent Teacher Interviews/3 way conferences:** Parents will be offered opportunities to meet with their child's teacher to discuss academic progress and emotional wellbeing. Additional meetings will be coordinated for students on an Individual Learning Plan or funded under the Program for Students with Disabilities.

- **Expo Nights:** Offering a firsthand view of the classroom and learning programs.
- **Written reports** will be made available to parents twice annually (mid year and end of year). Reports are published to the FHPS Portal.
- **School Webpage / Facebook:** is available to parents and provides information about school policies and school events.
- **Annual Report to the school community:** is published annually and is a reflection on school achievements over the past 12 months. This is made available to the community on the school webpage.

## **Building positive relationships**

### **Strategies:**

- **Seek mutual respect**

The unique relationship that a parent or teacher has with a child might at times lead to differences of opinion as to what is best for the child. Both parties need to appreciate and respect the special skills and insights that each brings to their relationships with a child.

- **Understand and appreciate each other's perspective**

If a child is hurt in the playground, or isn't provided with information to make correct choices, it is natural for a parent to protect and defend their child. Teachers need to appreciate the parent's perspective and parents need to appreciate that the teacher wants to protect the child too.

- **Use two-way communication**

Tension in the parent/teacher relationship can arise when both parties are strongly motivated to do the best for the child. The ability to voice differences of opinion, respectfully and with understanding, indicates that the school community is working well together.

- **Set common goals**

Most parents and teachers would agree that they want the best for the child. However, in practice, either may sometimes find themselves promoting a particular solution to the exclusion of all else. In such circumstance, a facilitator will be appointed to help bring both parties back to focusing on common goals.

- **Have realistic expectations**

If a teacher's or the parents' expectations are unrealistic, they will be dissatisfied with the best efforts that the other party is able to make. Positive relationships are built when each party is able to meet each other's expectations.

- **Clarify responsibilities**

Each staff member needs the knowledge and encouragement to: identify what parents need identify if what the school provides in meeting parents' needs help parents find out more about what the school has to offer their children.

### **Privacy:**

- Any person seeking information from the school that falls outside of the above must be directed to the principal who may require that a formal written Freedom of Information request be made which will be referred to the Department of Education's Freedom of Information unit.
- Information sought by the police, including interview of students must be directed to the Principal Class members of the school.

- Requests from the Department of Human Service Child Protection unit personnel regarding students or families will be complied with at all times.
- The school will comply with court subpoenas, but will not respond to requests from lawyers seeking information without Department of Education approval.
- Family Law papers must be provided to the school on enrolment or when produced by the courts.