

COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

PURPOSE

At Gundaroo Public School, we believe that positive, respectful, clear and effective communication forms the basis of authentic relationships and quality educational opportunities for our students.

The aim of this document is to:

- Provide a clear communication process for staff, families and community members to follow
- Establish clear and concise boundaries for communications
- Ensure that the rights of students, parents and staff are respected and upheld
- Ensure students, parents, staff and other visitors are not subjected to inappropriate behaviours or interactions

This policy is supported by the NSW Department of Education's [School Community Charter](#), outlining the responsibilities of parents, carers, educators and school staff in NSW public schools to ensure our learning environments are collaborative, supportive and cohesive.

RATIONALE

This policy outlines the primary ways in which school staff and families communicate, inclusive of;

- Keeping the community informed
- General school communication
- Structured communication between school and families
- Parent initiated conversations with school staff
- Providing feedback
- Management of complaints

We encourage families to contact us, and staff to contact families, as we believe early intervention, and a collaborative approach will ensure the best outcomes for students in all contexts.

EXPECTATIONS

All communication will be;

- Timely
- Respectful
- Positive
- Courteous
- Constructive
- Professional
- Calm
- Confidential

Inappropriate and disrespectful communication will not be accepted at our school.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY

We regularly make contact with parents to;

- build connections and relationships with families
- follow up permission for events
- touch base about student observations to ensure early interventions
- discuss concerns and develop strategies collaboratively to support students
- share positive stories
- alert families if their child entered sick bay
- follow up absences
- notify families of incidents
- discuss any matter which allows families and school to work as partners in achieving the best educational outcomes for students

At Gundaroo Public School, general school communication occurs through;

- Emails
- Newsletters
- Informal conversations
- Appointments made for longer conversations
- Phone calls
- Notes
- School-based applications (Sentral)
- School website
- Facebook

Structured communication between school and families occur through;

- Parent Interviews
- Three Way Conferences
- Individual student plan meetings
- Awards and recognition
- Emails
- Phone calls
- Requested parent meetings
- Written bi-annual reports

Parent initiated conversations with school staff occur through;

- Emails to teacher or through school email
- Informal, 'touch base' conversations
- Appointments made for longer conversations
- Requested teacher meetings
- Phone calls through the School Office
- Messages to school mobile

Feedback for the school can be given via;

- Completion of surveys
- Email
- Phone call via School Office
- Informal chats
- Requested teacher meetings
- Using the feedback link in the newsletter

All communication between families and staff is expected to be respectful, timely and focused on the best outcomes for students.

STUDENT WELLBEING

General observations and concerns:

- Staff will contact families with general observations and concerns to ensure early intervention and a shared approach to wellbeing.
- Staff will contact families to share positive and incidental observations.
- Families are encouraged to contact the classroom teacher with general observations and concerns to ensure early intervention and a shared approach to wellbeing.

Sick Bay

- When a child enters Sick Bay for First Aid treatment an SMS is sent to the family outlining the reason for the visit and the First Aid administered (if any).
- If an injury or illness has occurred outside of school hours that may impact the student at school, families are asked to make the office or classroom teacher aware.

Incidents

- In the event of any incident occurring at the school which requires notification to the parent (e.g. injury, accident, etc.) the school will contact the parent in a timely manner that fits the incident.
- Incidents are recorded and tracked by the school.

Mobile phones and devices at school

- As per department policy rules, the principal must implement a ban on the use of mobile phones for all students from the time they arrive to the conclusion of the school day, unless the student has been granted an exemption (medical purpose, educational purpose under the direct instruction of a teacher, or with permission of a teacher for a specified purpose).
- Student devices are collected from students and stored at the Front Office during school hours. The school accepts no responsibility for these devices in the event of loss or damage.

PROCESSES

Entering school grounds

Anyone entering the school grounds is expected to:

- Sign in at the main office on arrival
- Treat all persons with respect and courtesy
- Allow staff to supervise, and manage students without interference
- Leave the grounds if requested

Any person prohibited from entering the school grounds by a Court Order or the Inclosed Lands Act must request permission to attend the school by calling the principal. These matters will be considered on a case by case basis.

Parents contacting their child during the school day

- All communication between parents and students during school hours should occur via the school office.

Communication between families and a child's teacher

- Staff will check their emails daily on their days of work, but it is often not until later in the day due to teaching hours and work commitments outside of these hours. Emails will be responded to in a timely manner (within 48 hours) where possible.
- Any information that needs to reach a child's teacher promptly should come via the school office.
- Families are reminded that trying to talk to staff when they are teaching, managing children, on duty or engaging in another conversation is inappropriate as it distracts the staff member from their duty of care.
- Staff recognise that families are often working, and managing family commitments and will arrange suitable times to engage in communication.
- Staff will sometimes approach parents at pick up time to engage in a face to face interaction. If this is not a preferred method of communication, please let the classroom teacher know.
- Staff will at times call parents without prior notice. If the timing is not suitable, please let the staff member know and an alternative time can be arranged.

Arranging a meeting between families and staff members

Our primary goal as staff and parents is to resolve these concerns to ensure the academic, social and emotional wellbeing of our students.

- Parents are asked to contact the teacher directly, via email or in person, or contact the office to make an appointment. Impromptu conversations are to be avoided where possible.
- For most issues, we request parents make an appointment to see the teacher, outlining the reason for the meeting, to allow them to prepare adequately. The teacher will respond within two working days where possible with a plan to address the issue, or timing for a scheduled meeting.
- The teacher and parent know the student best and can partner to resolve most concerns in a timely manner, but sometimes specialist teachers, the school psychologist, administration or executive staff will be called in for their expertise.

ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Dealing with Issues

Gundaroo Public School strives to create a culture where communication between school and home is comprehensive as well as regular and helpful, but sometimes issues arise. We recognise that parents and staff both want the best for each student and we welcome contact from parents when there is an issue to be resolved.

When addressing an issue;

- Staff are to promptly contact families to seek a time to discuss opportunities to work together to support the child.
- Parents should not wait for a small issue to grow into a large one. If the matter involves a child or is an issue of everyday class operation, parents need to make an appointment to see their classroom teacher, detailing the reasons for the appointment.
- The classroom teacher should be the first point of contact. If the matter involves operations beyond the classroom or concerns that are not easily resolved, an appointment should be made with a member of the executive (assistant principal or principal).
- Discussing issues in the community, or on social media platforms can lead to unintentional outcomes and disrupt a solution being found. The easiest way to resolve an issue is to work with factual information, which is most efficiently found by engaging with staff.
- When speaking about members of the community, students or staff, all school staff and community members should carefully consider what is being shared. The law of defamation is designed to protect people from publication of material that is detrimental to their reputation. Publishing material that has the result of a person's reputation being impugned to the extent that others will think less of them is defamation.
- Direct and open communication is encouraged in all circumstances.

Complaints

We believe that there is a difference between an issue, or even a concern, and a complaint. We consider an issue or a concern to be a serious matter, but something that can be resolved with assistance from the class or specialist teacher through an informal approach. A complaint is a much more serious matter that will be treated as an expression of dissatisfaction and will follow a more detailed resolution process.

If a complaint is to be made, parents and community members should first contact a member of the school executive (either principal or assistant principal) to seek a suitable resolution. Where that is not possible, the following avenues are available;

- Contact the Queanbeyan District Education Office on 02 6200 5000, or PO Box 1933, Queanbeyan NSW 2620
- Feedback and complaints can be made via the NSW Department of Education's Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions website at: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us>