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GUIDELINES TITLE:	SCHOOL COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES
PUBLISHED:	2010
LAST REVIEWED:	2017
IDENTIFIER:	201303
CONTACT:	School Board Chair, Florey Primary School
RELATED DOCUMENTS:	ACT ETD complaints Policy 2013 Florey Primary School Student Welfare Guidelines Florey Primary School - Social Media Moderation Guidelines

PURPOSE

These guidelines outline the Florey Primary School methods of communication. They describe appropriate channels of communication, the rationale for the guidelines, and methods of communication between the various members of the school community.

1. GUIDELINES CONTEXT

1.1 Florey Primary School Communication Guidelines provide a framework for effective and respectful communication which: -

- promotes understanding and cooperative teamwork between parents/carers, staff and students
- encourages active participation of students, parents/carers and staff in effective communication
- streamlines communication by encouraging the use of appropriate mechanisms and channels of communication.
- informs parents/carers of upcoming events and their details.

1.2 These guidelines aim to engender a strong sense of community where staff, parents/carers and students can share ideas and knowledge in an inclusive environment that contributes to providing the best possible learning outcomes for our children.

1.3 To achieve this, various school community groups have been considered.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 'Community' refers to parents and carers, students, staff and other stakeholders such as Board members

2.2 'Families' refers to parents and carers of students

3. RATIONALE

3.1 Florey Primary School believes effective communication between members of the school community is fundamental to:

- supporting student learning and welfare
- encouraging positive partnerships and participation
- supporting family participation through timely action
- meeting compliance and regulatory requirements such as reporting.

4. PRINCIPLES

4.1 Florey Primary School believes that communication should: -

- acknowledge 'parents/carers as the first educators of their children and their right to participate in their children's schooling'
- acknowledge and reflect the shared and complementary responsibilities of staff and parents and carers
- enable the planning of more inclusive strategies to enhance parent/carer participation, acknowledging the right of parents/carers to have their opinions respected and considered
- acknowledge the need for sensitivity to the rights and roles of adults with different caring responsibilities
- be respectful, solutions focused, and culturally sensitive at all times by all parties
- acknowledge teacher knowledge of students and their contribution to and understanding of student learning.

5. PROCEDURES

5.1 Communication at Florey Primary School will: -

- provide clear information on student wellbeing, policies, programs, assessments and general concerns
- be made using a variety of contact mechanisms – (verbally in meetings and forums, in writing through letters, notes home and email, by telephone, through text via the Florey Primary School App, Newsletter, the community calendar, Florey Facebook Page and website, online via learning management tools, or using interpreters or other appropriate outside agencies when needed), and
 - judgements about appropriate contact method/s will have regard to the nature of the communication (essential, important or general information), its urgency, sensitivities and confidentiality requirements, and the recipient/s
 - at a minimum, the school will communicate essential and important information that is relevant to the whole school via the weekly newsletter eg. whole school events, changes to school rules/policies, safety reminders etc
 - relevant to individual classes/year groups via hardcopy notes home (and email where appropriate) eg. excursions, staffing changes, notifiable diseases (such as lice, whooping cough)
 - relevant to individual students via verbal and written contact with those parent/carers who have been authorised by law to receive information about their children i.e. specifically those parents recorded on the school database as ‘Contact 1’ or ‘Contact 2’ N.B. In cases where parents/carers reside in different locations and provide legal shared custody or responsibility for their children, communication will be duplicated (written) or repeated (verbal) to facilitate equal access to the communication.
- In emergencies, necessitate the first available form of communication in the interests of the child’s well-being or safety. That is, if the first contact is not available then the next contact will be called until contact is made with a listed contact person.

5.2 Principal’s Role

- **All activities as described in the Executive’s role below as well as: -**
- Inform the community of critical and non-critical incidents that may impact on student safety and wellbeing. In the process, the principal must remain mindful of student and family privacy as well as the impact of such communication on families sense of safety and wellbeing.
- Communication may include but is not limited to :
 - stranger danger
 - incidents of aggressive behaviour
 - notifiable diseases
 - threats to whole school.

- Communication may be sent by email, hard copy, the school app and /or facebook.
- Communication may be sent to individual families, a class group, a year cohort, the whole school or via the newsletter depending on the incident and privacy issues. See attachment 1 as a guide for communication of incidents to families.

5.2 **Executive Team's Role**

- Provide communication to parents/carers with regard to student wellbeing, educational programs, staffing changes, events, ETD policies and news, school fundraising and community events.
- Maintain confidentiality in any discussions with parents/carers with regard to students.
- Liaise with the P&C in relation to planning and implementing P&C events and activities at the school through attendance at P&C meetings and by phone, email or appointment.
- Liaise with staff with regard to student learning, wellbeing, behaviour concerns.
- Undertake any mandatory reporting that is required.

5.3 **Teaching Team's Role**

- Provide communication with families, the canteen and executive staff with regard to student learning, student wellbeing, educational programs and events (e.g excursions, morning teas, parent information sessions etc) as required.
- Maintain confidentiality in any discussions with parents/carers with regard to students.
- Undertake any mandatory reporting that is required and inform executive of reports undertaken. Executive staff will support the teaching team in undertaking mandatory reports if required.
- Report on student progress via semester reports and parent/teacher interviews.
- Provide information and documentation with regard to excursions and camps.
- Specialist areas such as the English as a Second Language or Dialect (EAL/D) teachers, the Gifted and Talented Liaison Officer (GATLO) may contact families to discuss options or needs of these particular groups of children.
- Anti-racism contact officer (ARCO), Anti-sexual harassment contact officer (ASHCO) a responsible for contacting families as situations arise.

5.4 **The School Board's Role**

- Provide a report via the Newsletter and P&C meetings of Board activities and decisions.
- Provide requests for voluntary contributions to families.
- Seek community consultation on policies and procedures as required.
- Work with the principal to report to the community on the performance of the school via an Annual School Board Report.

5.5 **The P&C's Role**

- Provide a forum for parents and community to engage with the school.
- Advocate on behalf of parents and community.
- Liaise with the Principal/Executive Team in relation to planning and implementing P&C events, canteen events and activities at the school. This may include attendance at a staff meeting to discuss or provide information about an event.
- Provide communication to the community with regard to fundraisers and community events.
- Provide information to the community about the use of funds raised by the P&C.

5.6 **Parent's and Carer's Role**

- Bring concerns to the attention of the school.
- In the first instance should work with the classroom teacher to resolve any concerns about their child's learning/wellbeing.
- If not resolved, then concerns should next be taken to the head of the team (SLC).
- If concerns remain unresolved, then the Principal or Deputy Principal should be contacted either by phone, email or by appointment.
- Regularly update contact and medical details for any student enrolled at Florey Primary School. This may require proof of change e.g. court orders, evidence of prescribed medication dosages, utilities bill.

5.7 **Student's Role**

- Report any wellbeing concerns to their classroom teacher or the teacher on duty.
- Discuss learning concerns with their classroom teacher.
- Bring ideas to the Student Representative Council for discussion and possible communication to the Principal.
- Discuss their learning and any major concerns with parents/carers.

6. **TIMEFRAMES**

- Every effort will be made by all groups involved to communicate in sufficient time to allow full participation in events.
- Student wellbeing concerns will be communicated wherever possible within 24 hours of any concerns.
- Official reporting of student progress occurs at the end of each semester.
- Parents/carers and teachers should communicate concerns promptly and to the appropriate person to allow a fast resolution.

7. **GUIDELINES OWNER**

7.1 Florey Primary School Board

8. RELATED POLICIES

- 8.1** Florey Primary School Student Welfare Procedures (Available at: http://www.floreyps.act.edu.au/our_school/policies_and_procedures)
Florey Primary School Social Media Moderation guidelines (available on the school Facebook page).
ACT ETD complaints Policy 2013 (Available at http://www.floreyps.act.edu.au/our_school/policies_and_procedures)

The guidelines were developed by Florey Primary School Board through consultation with the school community in 2010. Last date reviewed: May 2017. Date next review: May 2019.

Attachment 1 – Guide for Communication of Incidents to Families

Type of Incident	Example of Incident	Communicated to: -	Possible methods of Communications
Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An incident that causes significant disruption to the school's normal procedures eg bomb threat • The school placed in lockdown • Significant threat to the safety of student/s and or staff • Police notification and involvement in the school 	<p>Whole school community</p> <p>Whole school community</p> <p>Individual; class; cohort or whole school depending on the incident</p> <p>Individual; class; cohort or whole school depending on the incident</p>	<p>Email, facebook, letter</p> <p>Email, facebook, letter</p> <p>Email, facebook, letter, School App</p> <p>Email, facebook, letter, School App</p>
Non Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notifiable diseases • Stranger Danger – car, students approached • Stranger Danger – on line, photo, video • High level of student aggression in class. 	<p>Whole school community</p> <p>Whole school community</p> <p>Individual; class; cohort or whole school depending on the incident</p> <p>Class or cohort</p>	<p>Email, facebook, letter</p> <p>Email, facebook, letter, School App</p> <p>Email, facebook, letter</p> <p>Email, letter</p>