

Rationale

Flagstaff Hill Primary School is committed to fostering a positive and inclusive school community where effective communication is a cornerstone of our values - Be Brave, Be Curious, Belong. This Communication Policy outlines our commitment to open, respectful, and proactive communication among students, families, staff, and stakeholders.

Purpose

- The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines for communication within our school community, ensuring that it reflects our core values and promotes a culture of understanding, respect, and collaboration
- Establish clear expectations for both staff and families regarding the use of electronic and other methods of communication.
- Implement a policy which maintains a safe workplace for staff and supports them to balance their work and home life.

Communication Platforms



Edsmart: The primary method for general whole school communication is Edsmart. This will be used to communicate whole school information and events. Parents receive communications from EdSmart as e-mails.



Phone: For urgent messages, detailed discussion or to book a meeting time. E.g. Your child is to go to OSHC at the end of the day or you wish to meet with the Wellbeing Leader about specific concerns.

Please contact the front office within office hours for any general questions or concerns, or if you're not sure who you need to speak with. Our staff will connect you with the right person.



Email: An environmentally friendly way of communicating. Email communication is at its best when it is brief and informative. Issues that require a level of detailed discussion should be dealt with in person or over the phone.

*Please note that we will aim to reply to all contact within two work days during the school week.



Qkr! App: Qkr! is our preferred platform for the parents/caregivers to make payments for school fees, uniform, excursions, camps, etc. Cash/efpos payments can be made at the front office and credit card payments can be made by phone.



Website: The school website has information regarding policies, school-based information and events.

facebook



Facebook: A school Facebook page (called Flagstaff Hill Primary School) is used to share upcoming events, reminders and good news stories. This is not a primary communication method.

NB: Communication platforms are subject to change over time. We will always endeavour to use a platform that may be more effective or efficient.

Families: Communication protocols and expectations

Families are expected to:

- Be connected and attentive to the school's communication methods.
 - The majority of school information will be sent via e-mail
 - See list above
- Provide accurate contact details to the school.
 - When personal details have changed, or if you are unsure if contact information is up to date, please contact the Front Office Staff.
- Communicate absences or early departures for their child/ren through the front office
 - **Email:** dl.1018.studentabsences@schools.sa.edu.au with a brief reason for the absence or
 - **Phone:** 8270 1744 Select 1 Student absences (leave a voicemail which will come through to Front office email) or
 - **Return SMS** to 'unexplained absence' SMS received
 - Please note that communicating absences are a Department for Education requirement
 - Please do not e-mail teachers with absence information as they are not able to check e-mails while teaching, or may be absent.
- Be respectful, inclusive and constructive in all interactions with staff.
 - Families should be calm and not react with high levels of emotion. If it relates to a concern or problem, the focus must be about understanding the problem and finding a solution.
 - Negative or confrontational messages will be avoided or forwarded to leadership.
 - Keep an open mind and be aware that there may be different views and perspectives about a situation.
 - Staff will exit a conversation or meeting should they feel threatened, unsafe or if it becomes unprofessional and will report to the Leadership Team. This protocol also applies to the Leadership Team.
- Choose the best mode of communication for the topic:
 - **Urgent communication:** Phone the front office on 8270 1744 for urgent communication such as a change in end of day pick-up plans
 - **Academic progress, behaviour or wellbeing** discussions are often best in person (or over the phone)
 - **Lengthier discussions:** phone or e-mail to make an appointment at a mutually agreeable time with the relevant staff member. Staff are not available to meet with parents formally at drop-off or pick up time without prior arrangement as they have a duty of care to students at that time.
 - **Non-Urgent Information*:** e-mail the relevant staff member or front office. Teachers are not expected to check e-mails while teaching (8:40am-3:10pm)
 - **Confidential Information*:** should be conveyed in person or on the phone.
 - **Please remember that electronic messages are not necessarily confidential and can be subject to Freedom of Information.*

FHPS Communication Policy

- **Respect staff time.**
 - **Staff Availability:** Staff are expected to be available for phone calls or scheduled meetings between **8:00-8:30am and 3:10 -4:00pm** during the week (excluding Tuesday afternoons where all staff attend staff meetings).
 - Classroom teachers are generally not available from 8:30am-3:10 pm for conversations, meetings or to respond to e-mails as they are expected to focus their attention on the safety and learning of students.
 - Staff are not expected to respond to communication on weekends, holidays, sick (leave days) or non-working days.
 - When sending messages outside of work hours, please do not expect an immediate response. Staff will endeavour to respond within 2 (of their) working days. Part time staff will communicate a plan with families regarding communication processes.
 - Families are not to contact staff members using their personal contact numbers or through social media platforms.
- **Follow our mobile phone policy**
 - Students do not have access to their phone during the school day
 - There are strictly no student phones allowed on camps or excursions. Staff on the camp or excursion will contact parents if needed. General check-ins for students are not permitted or feasible.
- **Raise concerns with relevant staff members directly.**
 - This includes when there is breakdown of communication and/or an issue arises.
 - This may also include concerns regarding the behaviour of another child, parent or staff member.
 - It is recommended that any issues or concerns should be raised directly with the school within 48 hours. In most instances, this will be your child's classroom teacher.
 - Issues need to only be raised with the one staff member concerned, who will follow up or refer it to the person who can help.
 - It is not helpful to air grievances to other parents or on social media (including Friends of Flagstaff Facebook page)
 - It is not appropriate to approach other children to discuss issues.
- **Be familiar and with adhere to the **Complaint Management Policy****
 - Should anyone wish to raise a formal concern or complaint to the Principal or Governing Council, send an email to: dl.1018.info@schools.sa.edu.au to be forwarded to appropriate person on your behalf.
- **Be clear.**
 - Communication through electronic means is most effective when communication is brief and informative.
 - If raising an issue, provide factual details including relevant names, dates, actions
 - Let the staff member know if you are simply providing information or are expecting actions or follow-up.

Staff: Communication protocols and expectations

Staff are expected to:

- **Be respectful, inclusive and constructive in all interactions with families.**
- **Inform parents of the term learning overview**
 - This is sent via EdSmart in week 1 each term (Classroom and Specialist teachers)

FHPS Communication Policy

- Provide brief updates about what is happening in the classroom at least twice a term.
 - This is sent via EdSmart in weeks 4 and 8.
 - This can include photos of children engaging in learning, samples of work, projects, oral presentations, assembly items etc.
- Contact parents via phone, or make a face-to-face appointment to discuss their child in person when lengthy discussions are needed
- Reply to phone call requests and electronic communication within 2 (of their) working days.
 - Staff are primarily focused on teaching and learning, as well as having other whole of school commitments once students are dismissed each day.
 - There is no expectation for staff to respond to messages outside of their working hours (generally 8.00am-4.00pm Monday-Friday only)
 - Staff are encouraged to switch notifications off outside working hours to support their own personal wellbeing.
 - Part time staff will communicate a clear plan with families around who is responsible for communication on each day.
 - Please be assured that staff will follow up issues and take appropriate action.
 - Staff may send an acknowledgement e-mail and follow up more thoroughly within a longer time frame when necessary.
 - If families do not receive a response within a week, please contact the front office: dl.1018.info@schools.sa.edu.au to ensure the message has not been lost
- Contact families if a student is absent from school for 3 days or more without a given reason.
 - Staff will follow the **Attendance Policy** to ensure the wellbeing of students.
- Ensure whole school information is sent from the Leadership Team regularly
 - This includes details of positive news, events, new learning, professional development and research behind practice.
 - This also includes ensuring the website has up to date information for families.
- Address issues raised in accordance with the school's **Anti-bullying policy** and **Behaviour Support policy**.
 - We recognise parents' rights to discuss issues affecting their child, however, due to privacy and information sharing guidelines, details about other children involved in incidents cannot be disclosed.
- Communicate with families if they are concerned about behaviour, wellbeing or health related matters.
 - This includes on camps and excursions if necessary.
 - Staff will make sure policies are being followed including no student mobile phones on camps and excursions or in use at school
- Focus communication on understanding problems and concerns and finding a solution together with the family.
 - This will involve keeping an open mind and being aware that there may be different views and perspectives about a situation.