



Parent/ Teacher Communication Guidelines

Rationale

The St James school community encourages all parents to actively engage with the school. These relationships are vital in maintaining a positive and productive school community and is an important part of every student's learning and wellbeing.

Goals

- To strengthen our 'Open Door' approach to communication and genuine interest in listening to and engaging with all members of the school community.
- To provide guidelines that explain how parents can best communicate requests, feedback and concerns with the school.

Guidelines

Finding the Right Time:

- Many parents contact the school via the phone, email and in writing. Many parents also seek face-to-face opportunities with teachers. As staff are responsible for a number of tasks and have high demand times (such as 8:30am – 8:50 am; 3:20-3:35pm), it can be challenging to respond to parents promptly. It is important that parents understand that while staff do want to respond to and resolve parent concerns/enquires, staff are committed to the learning, wellbeing and routines of all students. Staff have meeting commitments after school. Usually these are on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and some Thursdays, beginning at 3:35pm.

Timely Response:

- Staff understand that parents can become anxious about incidents and situations and hearing from the teacher affects this. We expect that staff respond to parents as soon as possible but no longer than 48 hours (i.e. **Two working days**) after the parent makes initial contact, even if it is to offer an appointment or to inform that the incident is under investigation and further communication will follow later.

- It is not an expectation that staff will reply to correspondence over weekends, during holiday periods or after 5:30 pm on weekdays, however, some staff may respond.
- Parents are encouraged to make an appointment with staff to discuss issues.

Various Mediums:

- School staff members are advised not to engage in conversation with parents via notes and email as written messages can be misinterpreted. While the school understands there will be some exceptions to the rule due to circumstances, parents are asked to understand that teacher responses in writing will be for matters of clarification, a request for more information or an offer to meet in person.
- The school promotes face to face or telephone conversations for issues that require discussion and/or resolution.
- The school provides staff emails to parents for ease of communication.
- Staff are completely engaged in learning and teaching whilst working with students and are not accessing communication via technology.
- Regular contact also comes through channels such as Level and School Newsletters, Schoolbag App updates, Emails, Parent Handbook, Learning Conferences and written reports (both twice a year), Information Evenings, School Website.
- Generally speaking:
 - ❖ The first contact is the child's classroom teacher.
 - ❖ There are then various other staff who hold positions of leadership in particular areas that may be of assistance.
 - ❖ The Deputy Principal or Principal are also available to help as well

Evaluation

These guidelines were devised in 2018. It was reviewed by staff and ratified by the Education Board in the same year.