



Communication Policy

Adopted: October 2015

Amended: October 2015

Jolimont PS Policy Framework:

At Jolimont Primary School (**Jolimont PS**) we are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive educational environment.

This objective is only achievable if open communication, respect, fairness and positive relationships are valued and promoted.

This Communication Policy (**Policy**) is part of the Jolimont Policy Framework (**Framework**). The Framework has been prepared to ensure that everything at Jolimont PS is done in a manner that is consistent, transparent and informed.

This Policy will be interpreted and implemented in accordance with the high-level direction and context provided by the Framework.

Policy background:

We are committed to working together to meet the various needs of our school community.

What happens at school and the relationship between home and school is critical to ensuring that:

- students are happy, secure and open to learning;
- staff are valued, informed and high performing; and
- our school community are supported and engaged.

Central to achieving this is trust, open and effective communication between all members of the school community.

This Policy outlines the principles and actions that will be applied to achieve our communication objectives and support the achievement of broader Jolimont PS objectives.

Policy Rationale:

Communication at Jolimont PS is central to everything that we do. Communication facilitates awareness, understanding, involvement and learning.

Communication is used both inside and outside the classroom. Including between:

- students;
- students and staff;
- staff;
- staff and existing and prospective parents/families; and
- the Jolimont PS school community and the wider community.

Appropriate communication is a critical life skill that should be taught and modelled within our educational setting.

The manner, mode and content of communication is also a reflection on Jolimont PS, impacts on Jolimont PS's cohesiveness and success, and impacts on the reputation of the school community (collectively and individually).

Who Are Our Stakeholders:

Internal stakeholders	External Stakeholders	
	Local	Broad
Students	City of Subiaco	Relevant State and Federal government departments
Parents/guardians and families of students	Neighbouring schools (government and private)	Relevant politicians and community leaders.
Staff (teaching and non-teaching)	Local Businesses	Education providers (incursion , excursions, sporting groups)
School Board	Neighbours	Wider Community and Business
P&C	Users of Jolimont Primary Facilities	Tertiary institutions
Prospective Families	Childcare providers	Media
Prospective Staff		

Policy Principles:

To ensure:

- All communication contributes to a positive, productive and harmonious school environment for all.
- All communication is directed to the successful development of our students and our school community.
- That expectations, guidelines and standards are clearly communicated to all current and prospective students, staff, parents and families and other community members.
- Communication is appropriate in manner and content:
 - That communication is respectful, equity and understanding;
 - That proper consideration is given to the individual needs and characteristics of recipients;
 - That communication does not and is not used to discriminate, bully, harass or offend in any way;
 - That communication is courteous and appropriate for a place of work; and
 - That communication otherwise complies with professional standards and legal obligations.
- The mode of communication is appropriate:
 - That effective, informative and relevant communication occurs between all school community members;
 - That processes are in place for open and honest communication amongst all school community members.
 - That all communication is optimised, efficient, properly targeted and timely;
 - That communication is considered holistically, and consideration is given to multi-modal strategies;
 - That proper consideration is given to the individual needs and characteristics of recipients;
- That confidential information is managed in a manner consistent with community expectations, professional standards and legal obligations
- That clear, positive and fair processes and guidelines are provided which allow issues or concerns to be aired and resolved in a timely, effective and respectful manner

School Community Bodies / Positions

Administration

The Principal is responsible for managing all school communication (including delegation of communication management).

All staff will comply with any directive given by the Principal regarding school communication.

P&C

The P&C communicates with the school community on events, projects and fundraising.

P&C communications are limited to P&C business.

The primary mode of internal P&C communication will be the P&C meeting (held twice a term). The Principal and Deputy Principal will be invited to attend each P&C meeting.

In addition to P&C meetings, the President will be proactive in keeping the Principal informed and updated on P&C issues and activities.

The P&C must communicate, as needed, to ensure that its role and activities are understood by the school community.

All correspondence regarding P&C business should come through the President and Principal following school system.

P&C communications to the school community must be authorised by the Principal prior to being sent.

P&C communications to the school community must not detract from wider Jolimont PS communications. P&C communications should, where possible, form part of wider Jolimont PS communications.

Bulk use of email information is discouraged. Newsletter, Jolimont Update and Website formats should be used as first priority. Where email communication occurs, parent email addresses must always be kept private and confidential - use the BCC address box.

School Board

The School Board communicates with the school community on strategic direction, overall school performance and school satisfaction.

School Board communications are limited to School Board business.

The primary mode of internal School Board communication will be the Board meeting (held twice a term, or as required).

In addition to Board meetings, the Chairman will be in regular contact with the Principal regarding School Board activities.

School Board communications with the school community will, at a minimum, be through the Business Plan and Annual Reports.

The School Board must communicate, as needed, to ensure that its role and activities are understood by the school community.

School Board communications to the school community must (except in exception cases) be authorised by the Principal prior to being sent.

School Board communications to the school community must not detract from wider Jolimont PS communications. School Board communications should, where possible, form part of wider Jolimont PS communications.

Bulk use of email information is discouraged. Newsletter, Jolimont Update and Website formats should be used as first priority. Where email communication occurs, parent email addresses must always be kept private and confidential - use the BCC address box.

Parent Representatives to Parent Guardians

Each classroom will have one or more Parent Representatives. Parent Representatives communicate with the parents of students (within that classroom) regarding social events.

Communications should be only used for social event contact.

All correspondence regarding school and classroom business must come through the teacher.

Parent Representatives must seek permission from parents prior to disclosing personal / email information.

Policy Actions:

Modes of Communication:

Staff to Staff communication

- Staff meetings - fortnightly
- Bulletin - whole staff weekly.
- School development meetings – termly.
- Weekly collaboration meetings – weekly.
- Emails- specific staff and staff groups, avoid ALL STAFF emails.
- Communication to Office Form regarding student health and well-being when necessary.
- Student/class handover communication annually.

Teachers to Parents/guardians and Families

- Diary – daily.
- Emails - regularly, minimum once a fortnight (to be also cc'ed to the Principal).
- Face to Face Interviews - as required.
- Parent/teacher evening – as per school and Department Reporting to Parents policy
- Parents/guardians Information sessions – annually at beginning of Term 1, or as required.
- Notes and Permission Slips - as required.
- Website as required.
- Reports – end of Semester 1 and 2.
- Notice Board as required.
- Schools Online as per Department system requirements.

Parents / guardians to School

- Diary.
- Emails to classroom teacher / front office.
- Phone call to front office. Classroom teachers will be informed of parent / guardian phone calls unless it is inappropriate to do so.
- Informal and formal scheduled face to face meetings. Parents / guardians should be encouraged to contact and discuss class related issues with the classroom teacher in the first instance.

Absenteeism notification

- Email - teacher or front office.
- Diaries.
- Written notes.
- Verbal - face to face.
- Phone call to front office.

School to School / Local / Broader Community

- Business Plan.
- Annual Report.
- School Handbook.
- Website.
- Media statements.
- Ministerial briefings.
- Advertising / brand development / promotional material.
- Letters / Newsletters / Emails to local from Principal, School Board Chairman or P&C President.
- Formal and informal meetings with business owners, leaders, community groups and professional forums.

The Principal must be informed prior to any School to Local / Broader Community communications. This must include the nature, content and timing of any communication.

Where appropriate any feedback from the communication should also be provided to the Principal as soon as reasonably practicable. This will ensure that the Principal (as the primary spokesperson for Jolimont PS) is in a position to respond to any communications that the School may receive from the Local / Broader Community.

Mode Guidelines:

Mode	Details	Audience	Prime Accountability
Newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available Weeks 3,6, and 9 of each term • Weblink email 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff / parents / guardians by weblink email/ website • wider community via website 	Administration Nicole Macnaughton
Jolimont Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly (Friday) • Content is brief • Sent by email (Mail Chimp) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff / parents / guardians by weblink email/ website • wider community via website 	Administration Nicole Macnaughton
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current, user friendly, and informative. • Annual reports and business plan available. • School Handbook available. • School Board summary in newsletter and annual summary at the end of year and annual report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal and External Stakeholders 	Administration Nicole Macnaughton
Schools Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per system requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prospective and current Parents/guardians • Prospective and current Staff 	Administration
Diary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework record. • School events • Teacher feedback to students and parents/guardians. • Signed by parents/guardians and teachers weekly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1-6 Students • Parents/guardians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom Teachers • Students • Parents

Mode	Details	Audience	Prime Accountability
Emails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newsletter • Teacher-parents/guardians contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/guardians • Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration • Staff
Assemblies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rostered Fridays. • Celebrate and showcase to act as a window to our classrooms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All classes once per year (including PP combined). • Music Assembly. • LOTE assembly. • Highlight values and virtues of the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Staff • Parents/guardians, Families • wider community <p>As the audience varies from one assembly to the next. Assemblies are not an appropriate mode for whole of school community communication.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom teachers • Administration.
Notice Boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to date events and information • Reflects/reinforce information in the newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Parents/guardians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P&C • Heather Duggin
Hard Copy Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permission Slips • Specific Administrative letters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/guardians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration
Face to Face	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Information Sessions - early Term 1 • Formal and informal interviews as required 	<p>Parents/guardians, external providers</p> <p>Protocol to book a time convenient to all parties</p>	<p>Classroom Teachers, Administration</p>
Local Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contacted through school or P & C representative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broader community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration • P&C Media liaison representative.
General Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Department protocols must be followed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broader community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal and Media Unit only

Mode	Details	Audience	Prime Accountability
P&C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open meetings for community • Twice a month • Summary of meeting sent to Principal and place on Website. Link to current information in Jolimont Update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/guardians, community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration • P&C President
School Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open meetings for community once a year • Meeting summary in newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elected members from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school • community • Parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal • School Chair
External Interpreters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contacted when required through agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/guardians requiring an interpreter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration

Implementation Guidelines:

Student Diaries

Rationale

- Proactive way of providing parents with information
- Reduces the possibility of miscommunication regarding events, homework etc.
- Parents have the opportunity for day-to-day involvement
- Principal can assess the extent to which parents are involved
- Provides an organizational tool. Organization links in with the Whole School Social and Emotional focus "You Can Do It"
- Provide feedback that students can show parents

Student Use

Each class will have a consistently applied system of how the students diary will be organized on a day-to-day basis.

Students are expected to take home their diaries each day and return them the following day.

Teacher Use

Teachers will provide support and processes on using the diary.

Teachers will:

- have a method of checking the diary each day;
- sign the diary once a week; and
- interact with the diary at a minimum once a fortnight.

Communication with classroom teachers

Parents should keep the relevant classroom teacher informed of anything that may impact on the child's emotional wellbeing at school. This allows the teacher to be proactive in observing and support the child through difficult situations. Classroom teachers will communicate this information to Administration in appropriate circumstances (such as where special procedures may be required).

Parents are encouraged to make direct contact with, and discuss, any concerns about their child's progress with the class teacher. Accordingly, class teachers must be open and receptive to parent contact regarding matters of concern.

For quick matters, immediately before or after school are ideal times. For more involved or confidential matters, an interview time will need to be made with the relevant teacher.

Any parent wishing to discuss concerns with the Principal or Deputy Principal regarding their child's teacher will in most cases need to have addressed the concerns with the teacher first.

Procedure for contacting a classroom or specialist teacher

When a parent wishes to contact a member of staff to discuss matters relating to their child, the procedure is to contact the teacher involved, giving a brief outline of the issue.

Contact should be made using one of the following approaches:

1. Contact the school, either by phone or coming to the office personally, and ask a school administration officer to arrange for the appropriate teacher to contact the parent to arrange a suitable meeting time. Teachers are not usually available to answer phone calls or come to the office during teaching time or whilst on yard duty.
2. Contact the appropriate teacher in writing or via email, asking them to organise a suitable meeting time.
3. Speak briefly with the appropriate teacher, either before or after school hours (not at a time when they are teaching or on yard duty), and ask them to arrange a suitable meeting time.

Procedure for contacting other school personnel

When a parent has a concern or wishes to discuss an issue regarding a situation which they considers affects the whole school, their child's wellbeing or relates to a school policy or matter, the procedure is to contact the Principal, Deputy Principal, using one of the three approaches outlined above.

When parents have a concern or wish to discuss an issue relating to a member of staff or of a sensitive nature, they should make an appointment with the Principal by contacting the school office, either by phone or coming to the office personally, and asking the Office Manager or an administration officer to arrange a suitable meeting time.

In all cases if the matter is urgent and / or relates to the possible risk or harm to a student, a member of staff or another member of the school community, the Principal should be informed immediately and the urgency of the matter conveyed. The Principal will determine who is the most appropriate person to deal with the issue and the process to work towards a resolution, as well as ensuring that contact is made as soon as possible.

Issues arising between students and families

No parent should approach the children of other families or their parents with a school related or non-school related issue on the school grounds. Such matters must be addressed to the Principal or Deputy Principal and not discussed with other persons.

Concerns and complaint

Principles

From time to time parents may encounter difficulties or concerns. When this occurs, parents are encouraged to endeavour to resolve the issue informally, initially with the classroom teacher. It often helps to seek information or an explanation about the concern, or to speak directly to the person involved.

Jolimont PS will deal with all concerns and complaints and issues sensitively, promptly and confidentially. Matters will be investigated and dealt with in a timely manner.

In working through any issues a resolution which treats all parties with dignity and respect will be sought. Issues and matters which have been raised will be kept in the strictest of confidence and not discussed with any other persons, excepting those directly involved.

Anonymous complaints will be investigated at a preliminary issue for the purpose of identifying if there is any substance to the complaints. In the absence of clear evidence, anonymous complaints may not be further acted upon.

Contact should be made with the Principal or a Deputy Principal if assistance is required in clarifying an issue of concern or for the making of a formal complaint.

Protocol

Resolving matters of concern are best achieved through face-to-face contact with the appropriate person. Emails and letters identifying the existence of a complaint and the need for face-to-face contact should be brief (i.e. merely alerting the person to the issue). Such written communications should not be used as a forum for in-depth discussion.

Formal meetings will initially be facilitated by the Principal or Deputy Principal, with a view to achieving the resolution of the complaint in an expeditious, equitable and courteous manner. Depending on the circumstances this may involve separate meetings with relevant persons, conciliation or mediation meetings involving relevant parties, or some other format. Formal meetings will be minuted and all persons attending the relevant formal meeting will receive a copy of the minutes.

Where a complaint is resolved, otherwise than at a formal meeting, the resolution of the complaint will be documented and relevant persons informed in writing.

Any correspondence received by Jolimont PS or created in response to the complaint will be kept in a secure, access restricted and confidential file. The Principal will establish and maintain, from time to time, protocols surrounding the creation, maintenance and retention of secure, access restricted and confidential files.

