



PARRAMATTA EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL

Communication Procedure

1. Rationale

Parramatta East Public School is a place of learning in which thousands of interpersonal interactions happen each day. We are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive educational environment. This objective can only be achieved if open communication, respect, fairness and positive relationships are valued and promoted.

Efficient and effective communication is critical to ensure the school is making progress in the three strategic directions outlined in the school plan (2018-2020)

- Strategic Direction 1: Explicit, high quality learning experiences
- Strategic Direction 2: Collaborative and effective teaching
- Strategic Direction 3: Leadership build capacity and improves learning outcomes, and school systems.

Communication at Parramatta East Public School is central to everything that we do. It occurs inside and outside the classroom between students, staff, executive and administrative staff, parents, families and the wider community. Appropriate communication is a critical life skill that should be taught and modelled within our educational setting.

Interactions within our school are not restricted to face-to-face communication. Increasingly, messages are communicated by staff, students, and parents using online communication tools. These tools provide enhanced learning opportunities for our students, new and exciting ways to engage with parents, and efficient ways for teachers to collaborate. All members of our school community have the right to expect safe access to these services.

Communication technologies include, but are not limited to, desktop computers, laptops, tablet devices, telephones, mobile phones and any device which has access to the internet. The Parramatta East Public School Communication Procedure should be used in alignment with our Child Protection, Student Behaviour & Bullying, and Anti-bullying procedures.

This procedure document outlines the expectations of students and staff at our school to communicate in a safe and respectful manner. This document aligns with the following NSW Department of Education documents:

- [Online Communication Services: acceptable usage for school students](#)
- [Communication Devices and Associated Services Policy](#)
- [Communication Devices and Associated Services Guidelines](#)
- [NSW Department of Education Social Media Policy](#)
- [NSW Department of Education Code of Conduct](#)
- [NSW Government Dignity and Respect in the Workplace Charter](#)

2. Communication Principles

Members of the Parramatta East Public School community must ensure:

- All communication contributes to 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:
 - Any communication must be made with respect, equity and understanding;
 - Proper consideration is given to the individual needs and characteristics of the recipient;
 - Communication does not and is not used to discriminate, bully, harass or offend in any way;
 - Communication is courteous and appropriate for a place of work; and
 - Communication otherwise complies with the 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 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.

3. Modes of Communication at Parramatta East Public School

Modes of communication include:

Staff-to-staff communication:

- Whole-staff communication meetings
- Emails
- Noticeboards and bulletins
- Stage and team meetings
- Meetings arranged between teachers, executive and administrative staff.
- Phone calls
- Informal interactions

School-to-family communication:

- Parent-Teacher interviews
- Semesterly reports
- Notes and permission slips
- Website, Newsletter and App (Schoolzine)
- Phone calls
- Emails
- P&C Meetings
- Informal interactions

Family-to-school communication:

- Emails
- Parent-Teacher interviews
- Arranged meetings with executive staff
- Phone calls
- Letters and notes
- P&C Meetings
- Messages through the Schoolzine app
- Informal interactions.

Staff-to-student communication

- Day-to-day teaching and all classroom interactions
- Assemblies
- Playground interactions
- Notes
- Emails and Google Classroom

Student-to-staff communication

- Classroom interactions
- Playground interactions
- Notes
- Emails and Google Classroom

4. Responsibilities of Students

PBL and Strong Minds

Students are explicitly taught effective communication and interpersonal skills in regular classroom sessions from Kindergarten to Year 6. The school has two programs which contribute to building student wellbeing and social-emotional intelligence.

The Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) program, outlines the three core values of our school and how they impact expectations on students in all areas of schooling.

- Be Safe
- Be Respectful
- Be a Learner

These three core values are foundational to our teaching of effective communication to students.

The Strong Minds program focuses on a number of character strengths which help students develop their social-emotional, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills.

The skills and expectations outlined during the teaching of these programs are essential for fostering an environment of positive communication.

The Parramatta East Public School Internet and Technology Code of Conduct

Students at Parramatta East Public School will be familiarised with the Internet and Technology Code of Conduct at the beginning of each school year. The Code of Conduct is aligned to the NSW Department of Education's Online Communications: acceptable usage for students policy, as well as the school's PBL values of being safe, being respectful and being a learner. Teachers will explicitly outline the expectations for appropriate use of technology at school and the consequences for breaching the code of conduct.

The Code of Conduct is sent home with students to discuss with parents before signing. Until this code of conduct has been signed and returned, the student will not be permitted to use any form of communication technology at school.

In the event of a breach of the code of conduct, students may receive a warning, a temporary removal of access to technology, or in some instances an extended removal of access to technology. Misbehaviour with technology will be dealt with in alignment with the School Behaviour and Bullying Procedure.

See Appendix 1 for the Student Internet and Technology Code of Conduct.

5. Responsibilities of Staff

Staff Responsibilities for Communication

The NSW Government's Dignity & Respect in the Workplace Charter outlines that "Everyone in the workplace, irrespective of their position, deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. No one should suffer bullying while going about their work. This can put at risk the health, safety and wellbeing of all employees."

All staff at Parramatta East Public School are made familiar with the Department of Education's Code of Conduct, as well as the Dignity and Respect Charter. It is the responsibility of staff members to ensure that all interactions are professional, fair, and in alignment with departmental guidelines.

Staff Responsibilities for using Communication Devices

Teaching staff at our school have a responsibility to allow students to engage safely with online environments. This involves the explicit teaching of student expectations outlined above. Teaching staff are responsible for the supervision of students as they use technology in the classroom.

In addition to their responsibility to monitor student use of technology, all staff (including non-teaching staff) are aware of the expectations for their own use of the internet and communication technologies at school. These expectations are in alignment with the Department of Education's Code of Conduct, Social Media Policy and Communication Devices and Associated Services Policy.

The following expectations apply to the use of both departmental and personal devices

Staff have a responsibility to:

- maintain the provision of adequate supervision of students.
- use communication services (including, but not limited to, email) with good judgment, being aware that if an issue addressed in an email becomes the subject of a legal dispute, then those emails would be discoverable: that is, the court and all parties to the dispute would be entitled to see them.
- not send messages that are harassing, defamatory, threatening, abusive or obscene
- remember transmission, storage, promotion or display of offensive, defamatory, or harassing material is strictly forbidden
- not engage in any use that may be considered questionable, controversial, offensive, or could potentially damage the department's reputation.

- comply with state and federal laws relating to the use of communication devices. Not seeking out, accessing, storing or sending any material of an offensive, obscene, pornographic, threatening, abusive or defamatory nature.
- use provided communication devices for official use.
 - There may be circumstances in which a staff member may need to make use of communication devices for personal purposes to a reasonable limit.
- never invite students to join your personal social networking site or accept students' invitations to join theirs.
- never have contact with a student via written or electronic means including emails, letters, telephone, text messages or online chats, without valid consent.
- report any situations where you become aware of the inappropriate use of electronic communication and social networking sites

Failure to adhere to these responsibilities may result in disciplinary action from the NSW Department of Education and in some cases criminal proceedings.

Concerns or complaints over staff communication or use of communication services

In the case that a staff member is concerned about another staff member's conduct in communication, they are to report their concern to their supervisor. If the staff member is uncomfortable reporting the complaint to their supervisor, or the complaint is about their supervisor, they can report their concern to the principal.

The supervisor will oversee the resolution of any issues and may involve more senior executive staff if necessary. The complaint, resolution and any processes in between should be documented by the supervisor.

6. School-Family Communication

Parent-Teacher Interviews

Our school values partnerships between the school and home. In order to best support student learning, the classroom teacher and the parent or caregiver of each child need to work together. Communication plays a critical role in this relationship. The following procedures are in place to ensure a sustainable and effective stream of communication between the classroom teacher and home.

- Parent Teacher Interviews - These occur in Term 1. This is an opportunity for the parent to inform the teacher of any particular needs the child has which may impact their learning. It is also an opportunity for the teacher to discuss any concerns that have arisen in the first part of the year.
- Parents and caregivers may wish to arrange additional parent-teacher interviews to discuss their students' progress or concerns that have arisen throughout the year. A convenient time can be negotiated between the teacher and the parent/caregiver. Parents and caregivers can make a meeting request by:
 - Emailing the school (there will be a response within 72 hours)
 - Phoning the school
 - Sending a written note with their child
- If concerns arise, teachers may request a parent teacher interview to discuss student progress, behaviour or any other concern. In this event, the teacher will call the parent to arrange a convenient time to meet.

Parent teacher interviews must be arranged in accordance with these procedures. Parents are not to approach teachers for information about their child's progress without having made an appointment prior.

Notes, Permission Slips and Messages

The school regularly communicates with families through paper notes sent home with students. If a signature is required, this note will be returned to the classroom teacher by the student.

Responsibility of Teacher

- If organising a school event requiring a paper note to be sent home, this note is to be prepared and approved by the appropriate executive staff member no later than twelve school days before the event.
- Once approved, the note should be given to the administrative staff with instructions for printing and distribution.
- Teachers should check their pigeon hole regularly for notes that need to be sent home. Failure to do this prevents families from receiving important information about school events.
- As notes are returned, the teacher must send all notes to the office in a black zip-up folder each morning.
- The teacher must keep track of who has returned notes by ticking off students on the class list attached to the white permission envelope. This envelope remains in the black folder until the event has passed. It is then kept by the teacher until the end of the year.

Responsibility of Student

- Transport notes safely from school to home, and from home to school.
- If a note has gone missing, acquire a new copy from the school office.

Responsibility of Parent/Caregiver

- Check student's bag each day for communication from the school.
- Return permission notes promptly to assist in the planning and organisation of events.
- If your family can not afford to pay for an event in time, please contact the school. Extensions and assistance can be arranged in some circumstances.

