Communications Policy

Rationale

At Rosanna Golf Links Primary School we are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment which promotes open communication, fairness and positive relationships where all members are respected and valued. We believe that the relationship between home and school is a very important part of ensuring that children are happy, secure and open to learning. As a school community, we are committed to working together to meet the various needs of our school community. Central to achieving this is trust and open, effective communication between all members of the school community.

Aims

- That effective communication between all school community members takes place
- That processes are in place which allow for open and honest communication amongst all school community members
- 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.
- That open and respectful, two-way communication is available to all members of the community.
- That all stakeholders can confidently voice their opinions and concerns and have these acknowledged.

Actions

1. Guidelines for Implementation:

Rosanna Golf Links Primary School will use a range of strategies to communicate effectively with the school community. These are listed in the Appendix- *Mechanisms for Communication.*

- The main source of school community information is the weekly electronic newsletter, which acts as an integral tool for communicating the school events and procedures to the school community.
- It is the responsibility of parents and carers to read the newsletter to stay abreast of the current happenings at the school.
- It is also the parents/carers responsibility to ensure that their current email is up to date so that communication is ongoing and available to use as required.
- The *Mechanisms for Communication* (see appendix) will be reviewed annually to reflect and update the current operational communication processes at work in the school.
- It is acknowledged that teachers have time constraints during the school day and issues or concerns are best dealt with when uninterrupted time and proper attention can be given to them. Wherever possible, appointments should be made in advance with the classroom teacher.
- 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.

1.1 Curriculum and class information

Teachers and year level teams will communicate curriculum information at the beginning of the year and at the end of Term Two and Three for the following term, via a team newsletter.

1.2 Guidelines for communication- appropriate use of Email

Rosanna Golf Links Primary School considers email a vital communication tool and recognises the importance of proper email content and speedy replies. Nevertheless, the high volume of email traffic and the resultant impact on workload issues necessitates some guidelines for all users of the school's email system. Staff members are provided with DET email accounts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of communication both within the organisation and with the broader community. When using email, seek to:

- Facilitate a speedy response, try to limit emails to less than 200 words
- Clearly and concisely explain your issue or question
- Direct the enquiry to the most relevant person
- Emails coming through the General Office will be forwarded to relevant staff at the earliest possible convenience
- Acknowledge teachers and leadership are not always online due to teaching and meeting responsibilities, their response times may take from 2 to 4 days within the working week

1.3 Guidelines for communication- Phone

Rosanna Golf Links Primary School encourages parents and staff to use the telephone as an important tool to communicate personal concerns and issues that cannot be discussed via email. It is also important that all conversations by all parties are respectful and courteous.

Telephone communication is also useful for queries, urgent messages that need to be relayed to students and teachers.

Staff may not always be able to return telephone calls during the normal school day and may take up to 48 hours to return the call. Email may then be used to respond to the call and arrange a meeting time.

2. Contact Procedures

2.1 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:

- Contact the school, either by phone or coming to the office personally, and ask a school administration officer to arrange for the teacher to contact you 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.
- Contact the appropriate teacher in writing or via email, asking them to organise a suitable meeting time.
- 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.

2.2 Contacting other school personnel:

When a parent has a concern or wishes to discuss an issue regarding a situation which they consider affects the whole school, their child's wellbeing or relates to a school policy or matter, the procedure is to:

- Contact the Principal or the Assistant Principals 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 staff 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 the most appropriate person to resolve the issue, as well as ensuring that contact is made as soon as possible.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3-4 years as part of the RGLPS review cycle.

Additional Resources

This policy is to be read in conjunction with:

- Cyber Safety Policy
- Esmart Policy
- Communication of School Policies to School Community Policy
- Grievances and Complaint Policy

Appendices

APPENDIX A

Email Protocols for Teacher and Parent Communication

Protocols for Parent email use:

Email may be a fast and convenient way for you to send messages but this may not be the case for many of our teachers. Teachers read emails at different times of the day and so an immediate reply is not possible. In fact, you may not receive an email reply at all, since the staff member will determine how best to contact you: by email, phone call or to schedule a personal conference.

To use email effectively in a school setting, we have developed the following guidelines for parents/carers:

Email is appropriate for:

- Brief enquiries about general school matters
- School related issues only
- Passing on relevant information to the appropriate personnel e.g. classroom teacher, specialist teachers etc.
- Communicating between teachers and parents
- Regular communication about a student's day at school in place of a communication book, when agreed between the teacher and the parent (following a face to face contact.)

Email is not appropriate for:

- Reporting an absence or forthcoming appointment for a child/children. This should be done through the Compass portal
- Your child's academic progress. This is best addressed through a telephone conversation or a personal conference with your child's teacher
- In depth discussions about your child, however, email can be used to raise a topic to be discussed at a face to face meeting
- Submitting their child's homework; this should be the responsibility of the student
- Sending non-vital messages. For example, do not use email to inform the school that your child is to meet you somewhere when the day ends. Instead, use the telephone to contact the office to be sure that the message is received and clearly understood
- Threatening or offensive language
- Sensitive information about the child or an incident that has occurred- which is better communicated in a more confidential way (eg; phone conversation or face to face meeting).

When sending email:

- Identify yourself in the subject line of your email and, if appropriate, the name of your child.
- It should only be addressed to the intended recipient (To: as the primary recipient)
- The use of 'Cc' (Carbon copy) is to be used if you would like another recipient to be aware of your email as a secondary recipient but not as an invitation to respond
- The use of 'Bcc' (Blind carbon copy) is to be used for tertiary recipients as a privacy measure or if sending to recipients who do not know each other, such as in a mailing list so that email addresses are hidden
- Ensure emails are respectfully written as meaning can be misinterpreted
- Response to emails received by staff should be given within 3 working days
- Staff are only required to respond to emails between the hours of 8:30am and 5:00pm, Monday to Friday
- Staff are not required to respond to emails during weekends or school holiday periods.

Please note that it inappropriate to share correspondence received from staff with students.

Privacy:

- Please remember that email is not necessarily confidential and can be subject to FOI (Freedom of Information) regulations. Confidential information should be conveyed by phone or personal contact
- Due to privacy, DL (Distribution Lists) will not be available to parents and the general community
- Events committee may use the email DL lists to contact parents for support and promotion for scheduled events only.

Protocols for Staff email use:

The school maintains email accounts for teachers to facilitate parent/teacher communication and internal, as well as system wide staff communication. The school reserves the right to block or filter email messages to staff that are not directly related to school business or to the school's educational mission.

1.3 Staff using email to correspond with parents must adhere to the following:

- Staff must use a school provided email account for all staff/parent communications
- Email must never be used to discuss contentious, emotional or highly confidential issues - these issues should be dealt with face to face or by telephone
- Email parents only when they have agreed that email is an appropriate form of communication
- The use of Cc and Bcc may be used by all parties to notify others of the conversation only if relevant.

1.4 When sending an email:

- Emails should be short and directional in nature and only include facts
- Care should be given when using student names. Refer to students by first name, initials or 'your son/daughter' depending on the content. Do not discuss non-related students or issues to parents
- Email messages to parents should be consistent with professional practices for other correspondence. This includes grammar, format and salutation
- If you wish to make a complaint, it is recommended that you do not write a lengthy email, in the first instance. You may use email to contact a person from the leadership team to discuss the matter with you in person
- The use of Cc and Bcc may be used by all parties to include others in the conversation only if relevant.

1.5 Privacy

- All emails that reside on the DET servers may not be confidential. Email messages may be requested by the public under FOI (Freedom of Information) laws and may, unless they are exempt under the law, be open to public inspection
- When sending an email to all parents that have given permission at one time, the Bcc Blind Carbon Copy) facility must be used to list addresses to ensure that privacy is maintained.

APPENDIX B.

STAFF TO STAFF COMMUNICATION			
MECHANISM	**PURPOSE**	**ACTION**	**FREQUENCY**
School Strategic Plan	• To review current school practice and performance. • Set goals for strategic planning	• School improvement Process- review current goals on an annual basis to set direction of AIP and develop future goals every 4 years	• 4 year review cycle • Parent, staff and student survey annually
Annual Implementation Plan	• To articulate the actions to be taken to achieve one year targets that will work towards 4 year priorities	• Leadership and staff formulate plan at the beginning of each year to implement the goals of the strategic plan • AIP reviewed at the end of each year	• Annually developed
School Server PD for all new staff	• Introduce all new staff members to the school server • Show staff where all policies and procedures are located on the server	• New staff to access in their own time and familiarise themselves with the documents, policies and procedures	• Once
Performance and Development reviews	• To implement whole school goals • Annual review to identify professional learning needs/opportunities • Career path planning	• Leadership team supports staff through formal and informal meetings to plan/support and evaluate their progress. • Staff prepare documentation prior to formal meeting times • Principal advises the Department when the processes are completed	• Ongoing throughout the year • Formal meetings at the Planning Stage, • Mid Cycle Review • End of cycle review
Leadership meetings	• To ensure whole school cohesion, strategic planning and management	• Principal, Assistant Principals and Leading teachers raise issues, share information and plan at whole school level	• Fortnightly
Staff meetings	• To provide information, raise issues and discuss school management	• Whole staff meetings held fortnightly	• Fortnightly

	activities and programs		
Professional Learning meetings	• To provide professional development in key learning areas as identified in the AIP	• Staff to build capacity in teacher professional knowledge and skills in Key areas of AIP	• Approximately six weekly meetings per term
Team meetings and planning sessions	• To share information, raise issues, plan and discuss team and class management • To plan collaboratively in teams to improve student outcomes	• Prep, Year 1/2, Year 3/4 and Year 5/6 team meetings and planning sessions • All staff are members of a collaborative teaching team	• Two hour team planning session per week during APT • Fortnightly team meetings before/after school (in line with consultative/leadership meetings)
Communication whiteboards	• To provide daily information, timetable changes and staff absences	• Open to all staff for input and notices.	• Ongoing
Staff weekly bulletin	• To provide an overview of weekly absences, school events, excursions and professional development	• Principal/Assistant Principal to publish weekly bulletin on Compass	• Weekly • Ongoing
Staff Emails	• To effectively communicate information and day to day changes between staff	• Staff to use Distribution List for information only pertaining to whole staff issues • Teams to send minutes and information pertaining to relevant staff when required	• Ongoing
School calendar board	• To provide an overview of school events, excursions and professional development	• Upcoming events are entered on the calendar by all staff • Website Coordinator to be informed of planned event	• Ongoing and updated throughout the year
Meeting Schedule	• To outline all PL, staff and team meetings		• Sent out each term

SCHOOL TO COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION			
MECHANISM	**PURPOSE**	**ACTION**	**FREQUENCY**

Newsletter	• To communicate key events, policies, ideas and achievements to the school community	• Admin staff to coordinate items	• Newsletter distributed every Thursday in digital form and linked to the website.
School Council and sub committees	• To represent the school community in governance of the school, including the development of the strategic plan and policies, raising funds, ensuring the school meet the DEECD compliance regulations.	• Elections held annually. Position on school council held for two years • Meeting times and articles are published in the school newsletter • School council and sub committees reformed each year	• Meetings held at least twice a term
Student contact details	• To ensure all student information, health issues and contact details are up to date	• Printout of student information sent home with each student for review by parents/carers to ensure contact details are accurate	• Early Term One
School website	• To provide information about the school and its programs	• The website is updated weekly and includes the newsletter	• Ongoing updates
Team Newsletter	• To communicate key events, curriculum focus and reminders for the term	• Team Leaders, in consultation with team members, writes and distributes the newsletter	• Newsletter distributed on the last week of each term for the following term
Facebook	• To provide information about the school and promote its programs and events.	• This platform is updated as special events occur	• Ongoing updates
COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS			
MECHANISM	**PURPOSE**	**ACTION**	**FREQUENCY**
Compass	• To provide parents with access to attendance records and report absences to the school • As a gateway for parents to book into school events such as interviews and school based events	• Teachers use Compass for electronic roll marking two sessions per day.	• Every day- roll marking • As required for events

Informal meetings with parents/carers and teacher	• To share day to day relevant information to support individual students	• Parent/carer or teacher initiates meeting	• As required
3 way student led conferences	• Students present their learning to the parent and the teacher	• Parents use booking system to organise a time to be involved in 3 way student led conference	• Beginning of Term Three
Meet the teacher	• Parents meet with their child's and are provided with information specific for that level	• Scheduled information session and opportunity to speak with classroom teachers	• Beginning of Term One
NAPLAN National Assessment Program Literacy & Numeracy	• To assess student performance in Language Conventions, Writing, Reading and Numeracy against national benchmarks	• One week of testing in Term Two • Reports are issued to parents at the end of Term Three	• Term Two
Semester written reports	• To provide a comprehensive report about students' overall assessment in key learning areas. • To communicate achievements in areas other than English and Mathematics, behaviour, social development and work habits.	• Teachers complete assessment and moderation and prepare written reports • Reports are submitted to the leadership team for review • Data is collected electronically and stored for data analysis • Reports issued to parents at the end of Term Two and Four	• Last week of Term Two • Last week of Term Four
Progress Reports	• To provide real time feedback on English and Mathematics achievements as children are taught concepts	• Progress reports are an individual learning Plan with children enrolled in their current achievement level curriculum.	• Ongoing assessment published through Compass in Progress Reports.
Student Support Group meetings	• SSGs are designed to support students with disabilities and additional learning needs.	• SSGs will be facilitated by the Deaf Facility Coordinator or an Assistant Principal with an independent administrative minute taker. • Goals will be tracked through the development	• Children within our Program for Disabilities Program will be offered a half hour SSG each term

		of an Individual Learning Improvement Plan.	
TAL (Team Around the Learner)	• TAL meetings are designed to support students who are vulnerable and at risk of disengaging from learning and/or present with behaviour, social and/or emotional needs.	• TAL meetings will be facilitated by an Assistant Principal with an independent administrative minute taker. • Children will be provided with a management plan which is representative of the child's need.	• The focus is on making sure the needs of the learner are met and sustained, so meetings are flexible and based on the needs as identified by the Assistant Principal.
See – Saw Digital Portfolio	• To provide students, teachers and parents with an opportunity to reflect upon student learning • To support written reports and as a body of evidence to demonstrate student achievement	• Students and teachers communicate achievement • Used during the 3way Student Led Conference as the vehicle for demonstrating learning	• Digital platform of a minimum of nine posts per Semester.
Prep Assembly	• To recognise and share achievements and information with parents and students	• Conducted by Prep teachers	• Weekly
Whole School Assembly	• To recognise and share achievements and information with parents and students • Further promotion of events and importance information for parents	• Assembly conducted weekly by student leaders • Opportunity for sharing of skills and achievements with students, teachers and parents	• Weekly

STUDENT VOICE

MECHANISM	PURPOSE	ACTION	FREQUENCY
Informal meetings with student and teacher	• To share relevant information to support students • Feedback mechanism for students	• Students or teacher initiates meetings on informal needs basis and discusses learning goals	• As required
Junior School Council	• To allow students to make positive contributions to the	• Staff member coordinates representatives elected	• Annual elections and regular meetings

	school environment and wider community	from each Grade 1 to Grace 6 class.	
School Assembly	• To recognise and share achievements and information with parents and students	• Assembly conducted weekly by student leaders • Opportunity for sharing of skills and achievements with students, teachers and parents	• Weekly