

# COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS



9 - 11 William Street  
Port Fairy, 3284  
Phone: 03 55681371  
Email: [principal@spportfairy.catholic.edu.au](mailto:principal@spportfairy.catholic.edu.au)  
[www.spportfairy.catholic.edu.au](http://www.spportfairy.catholic.edu.au)

INFORMATION CURRENT AS OF FEBRUARY 2021

## **ST PATRICK'S COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES**

These guidelines have been developed to outline the processes of effective and efficient communication to and from parents and between staff members. The aim of the document is to provide clarity around:

- The appropriate process for communication between Parents and St Patrick's School
- The appropriate process for resolution of any enquiries and issues

To support the students and staff of St Patrick's School to communicate effectively with each other, we need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are respectful, professional, timely and clear. Building positive relationships between all stakeholders in a child's education is based on mutual respect and trust that results in supporting the improvement of student learning.

### **DEFINITION OF COMMUNICATION**

Effective communication is an exchange between parents and carers, communities and schools that involves information sharing and opportunities to learn about each other. To have a significant impact on student outcomes, communication needs to be focused on student learning. It must also be a genuine exchange of information and ideas between the school, the home and the community.

### **OBJECTIVES**

**All communications at St Patrick's School should:**

- keep staff, students, parents and other stakeholders well informed
- be respectful, open, honest, ethical and professional
- use jargon free, plain English and be easily understood by all
- be actioned within a reasonable time
- use the method of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience
- take account of relevant policies

## **HOW ST PATRICK'S SCHOOL COMMUNICATES WITH PARENTS**

There are a number of avenues of communication within the School e.g. newsletters, diaries, Skoolbag and appointment with staff. Communication is a critical aspect of ensuring the best possible outcomes for individual students.

It is not always possible to speak to staff during school hours, due to teaching, yard duty and meeting schedules. Should you need to contact teaching staff, email is the preferred method of communication. If you would like to speak to staff personally, please phone and make an appointment for a meeting or leave your name and a message so that staff may return your call. Please remember to allow sufficient time for staff to return your call dependent upon their teaching and pastoral duties on any given day.

Communications will take place in many different forms:

- School newsletter - this is released weekly on a Thursday via email & Skoolbag
- Skoolbag App - downloaded from the App Store or Google Play - newsletters, alerts, canteen menu, etc.
- PAM (Parent Access Module) - reports, interviews, school absences, excursions permissions etc.
- Student Reports - released at the end of Term 2 and Term 4
- Learning Conversations - end of Term 2
- Notes and letters to parents
- Whole school assemblies
- St Patrick's School website
- Special events and celebrations e.g. Beginning of year Mass, Awards Night, Catholic Education Week, etc.
- School Policies and Guidelines
- Student diaries
- Seesaw App
- School Facebook page

### **NEWSLETTER**

Our newsletter is distributed weekly by email and it is also available online through our website and Skoolbag. The purpose is to report on recent activities and highlight upcoming events. To ensure you continue to receive our newsletter email, please inform the office if your email changes.

### **SKOOLBAG APP**

St Patrick's provides a free app for both iPhone and Android phones that you can download for the App Store or Google Play. Just search St Patrick's Port Fairy to download our App. The App is used to give you important alerts and reminders about events, changes to events or unforeseen situations, along with quick links to contact the school. It also gives you instant access to PAM (Parent Access Module), newsletters, canteen menu, school contact information and more. After downloading the App, make sure you leave notifications on in your settings.

## **ST PATRICK'S SCHOOL COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS**

## **SEESAW APP**

Seesaw is an app that we use for regular communication with parents regarding their child's learning. Your child's teacher will be able to assist you with login instructions.

## **PAM - PARENT ACCESS MODULE**

PAM provides parents and guardians with access to the school intranet through their own private portal. It allows real time access to the student's timetable, academic results, school reports, medical profile and attendance. Through PAM, families can book Learning Conversations and Numeracy and Literacy Testing interview times, up date medical information, log absences and give permission for excursions.

## **STUDENT REPORTS**

Reports are shared with parents/guardians at the end of Terms 2 & 4 through PAM.

## **LEARNING CONVERSATIONS**

Learning Conversations are conducted at the end of Term 2. Students from Years 3-6 are encouraged to attend these interviews with their parents. The dates of these interviews are published in the school newsletter. An email is sent to all parents, and newsletter and Skoolbag alerts will be used to remind parents to book an interview. Appointments are made on a first come first served basis. All interview bookings are made through PAM.

## **LITERACY & NUMERACY TESTING**

The school sets aside two days at the end and beginning of the school year for Numeracy and Literacy Testing. All students are tested at this time. The dates of these interviews are published in the school newsletter. An email is sent to all parents, and newsletter and Skoolbag alerts will be used to remind parents to book an interview. Appointments are made on a first come first served basis. All interview bookings are made through PAM.

## **CALENDAR**

The school calendar is located on our website and from a link on our newsletter, it includes all important activities, meetings and excursions for the school year. Where possible, dates will be advertised ahead of time, however, in some instances this may not be possible.

Calendar changes and updates are published in the school newsletter and website.

## SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES

Parents are invited to school assemblies (when COVID Guidelines permit). Assemblies are held every second Friday at 2.50pm in the school hall, dates of assemblies are advertised in the school newsletter. Each class takes it in turn to lead our assemblies.

## PARENT CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

The following is offered as the first point of contact regarding particular issues.

| ENQUIRY TYPE                          | FIRST POINT OF CONTACT   |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Student Progress                      | Classroom Teacher  |
| Specific Subject Concern              | Subject Teacher  |
| Student Wellbeing Concern             | Classroom Teacher  |
| General Enquiries                     | School Office  |
| School Uniform (Product Purchase)     | School Office  |
| School Uniform Concerns               | Classroom Teacher  |
| School Fees                           | School Office or Principal   |
| Excursions/Camps                      | Classroom Teacher or Supervisor outlined in permission letter on PAM |
| School Newsletter                     | School Office  |
| Child Protection or misconduct Issues | Principal  |
| Curriculum                            | Principal  |
| iPads                                 | ICT Coordinator  |
| Student Absence - Single day          | School Office - PAM  |
| Student Absence - Extended            | Classroom Teacher  |

Please note that if after the first point of contact greater clarity or resolution is needed, the following contact can be made:

For Academic Concerns - Principal or Deputy Principal

For Pastoral Concerns - Principal or Deputy Principal

## **GUIDELINES FOR PARENT COMMUNICATION TO STAFF THROUGH TELEPHONE, LETTER OR EMAIL**

1. Emails or letters should not be used to communicate urgent or critical matters. It is always best to speak with the member of staff concerned by telephone or in person. Please contact the School to arrange an interview to discuss urgent or critical matters with the appropriate person outlined in the table provided.
2. Due to the nature of their work, teachers spend almost all of their time in the classroom. When they are not in the classroom teachers may be in staff meetings, on excursions or planning and marking. They also have limited lunch time, with many staff also performing yard supervision during this time. Teachers have a range of duties to fulfil and as a result, it may take longer than a parent might wish for them to respond to an email, letter or telephone call. Generally speaking, teachers will endeavour to respond to an email, letter or telephone call within two working days, within the hours of 8am-5pm.
3. It is important to reflect upon the tone, timing and content of an email or letter before it is sent. Correspondence written in haste or in anger rarely helps to sort our issues or problems; in fact, a poorly written or emotionally charged correspondence will almost always have the opposite effect. Too often, harshly written and 'angry' emails or letters result in later regret.
4. Some members of staff have many different responsibilities. It is therefore important to ensure that you have made contact with the correct member of staff to be able to address your particular question or issue. The Parent Channels of Communication table and School Website of staff listed responsibilities may give you an indication of who to contact. However, it is school policy that you direct your initial discussion with the person with whom you have the concern.
5. Emails and letters are a quick and convenient way of communicating "good news". You are encouraged to use emails to send messages of encouragement and support to staff. Please contact the office if you require a teacher's email address.