



# Communication is KEY @ Walloon SS



Walloon State School is committed to open, honest and timely communication. We are also committed to communication being respectful, measured, sensitive and constructive. In adhering to these principles we aim to strengthen the goodwill and the positive partnership between parents/carers and the school, to enhance the wellbeing and learning opportunities for our students.

## Our chosen modes of communication at our school are –

1. **SchoolStream App** – our main information sharing mode – absences recorded by parents/carers, consent forms filled in, event information/reminders, Principal newsletter...all key messages come via this mode
2. **Email** – reports are emailed at the end of each semester, class teachers will share important information directly to class parents/carers, financial communication from the office, parent/carer to teacher or admin contact
3. **Phone** – for urgent or timely contact between home and school
4. **School Facebook Page** – the purpose of the page is showcase learning, what's on reminders, school events or community notices and idea sharing

### The aim of these guidelines is to:

- *clearly articulate the School's commitment to the positive use of our communication tools*
- *to acknowledge the potential benefits of staff and parents/carers communicating via email, but also understand its shortcomings*
- *establish clear expectations for both staff and parents/carers in the use of our communication tools.*

## 1. EMAIL

Email is an environmentally friendly way of communicating that can save time when used effectively. We acknowledge that email can be very convenient for parents/carers who are working and find it difficult to catch up with school staff during regular work hours. Having said that, our school community values face-to-face and telephone conversations and understands that these forms of communication are preferred in most situations.

### Expectations of Both Staff and Parents/Carers

*When communicating via email, staff and parents/carers are expected to adhere to email etiquette, including:*

Emails are at their best when they are brief and informative. Issues that require a level of detailed discussion should be dealt with in person or over the phone.

**At the beginning of an email the sender can use 'No Reply Necessary' to convey an information sharing email only.**

- ❖ Emails should always be respectful and constructive.
- ❖ Emails work best when they are positive. Avoid sending negative or confrontational emails. Email is not to be used to vent.

- ❖ Never write about or seek personal information regarding third parties (staff, other students or parents).
- ❖ The tone or intent of emails can easily be misunderstood. Be conscious of this and pick up the phone rather than send an email in this instance; or send an email to request a time to meet/speak.
- ❖ Staff and parents/carers are not expected to respond to emails that are contentious or require ongoing dialogue. A face-to-face meeting should be arranged in this circumstance.
- ❖ Email is not 'instant messenger' and a response is not guaranteed the day it is received. Responses to emails within 48 hours is reasonable. Consideration needs to be made to staff who work scheduled days (Part-time teachers). If a staff member works two days a week, then the response time may be longer given they are not on site again for up to another week.
- ❖ Staff must use their EQ email address only for emailing their class group.
- ❖ Staff and parents/carers must ensure they do not disclose the email addresses of others without permission to do so. Use of BCC is required when group emailing.

### Expectations of Staff

- ❖ Email should not be used to discuss a sensitive issue or for an issue that has not been previously discussed with the parent.
- ❖ When an email is received from a parent that requires some time to gather information and reply properly, the staff member should respond acknowledging that the email has been received and indicate when an informed response will be sent eg.  
eg• *Thank you for your email. Please direct this enquiry to the school administration team on [admin@walloonss.eq.edu.au](mailto:admin@walloonss.eq.edu.au) or to [principal@walloonss.eq.edu.au](mailto:principal@walloonss.eq.edu.au)*
- eg• *Thank-you, your email has been received. I will endeavour to contact you within 48 hours.*
- ❖ When on leave, staff will **activate an auto-reply message** detailing relevant leave dates.
- ❖ Staff who work scheduled days must ensure their email footer includes the days they are scheduled to work.
- ❖ Staff will only respond to parents/carers emails during the hours of **8:30am - 4:30pm**
- ❖ Staff will not to respond to offensive, contentious or abusive emails and should immediately forward them to the school principal.

### Expectations of Parents and Carers

- ❖ Please only send **non-vital messages** by this medium. For example, do not use email to inform a teacher that your child "is not to go to OSHC or needs to catch the bus that afternoon", as the teacher may not see the message in time. Remember that given work demands, teachers may not get to read emails until well after 3pm.
- ❖ Please don't use email to seek to discuss in detail your child's academic progress, learning expectations, or behavioural issues via email. ***These will only be addressed over the phone or in person.***
- ❖ Emails that are intended for the office staff should be sent directly to the school's email address, that being: [admin@walloonss.eq.edu.au](mailto:admin@walloonss.eq.edu.au) or directed to the principal on [principal@walloonss.eq.edu.au](mailto:principal@walloonss.eq.edu.au)

- ❖ Remember to respect staff personal time, including weekends and holidays. Parents/Carers should not send emails outside of work hours and expect an immediate response. Replies will only be sent during the school's agreed hours of **8.30am – 4.30pm**
- ❖ It is the responsibility of every parent/carer to keep the school administration and class teacher up-to-date with current email addresses. NB. Report cards are emailed home at the end of each semester.

## 2. Face-to Face Contact

- Teachers are always pleased to see parents/carers at mutually convenient times.
- Interactions need to be respectful at all times – any aggressive or confrontational behaviour will not be tolerated.
- Please avoid turning up and expecting the teacher's time to discuss something at length without making an appointment. By making a mutually agreed time to catch up, the teacher has time to ensure your questions/concerns can be answered/discussed and no one's time is wasted.

## 3. Facebook

- Our school Facebook page is a place where we share *snippets* of information, reminders, student photos, event photos, ThankYou's etc. It is NOT a place for parents to ask questions because the page is not 'manned' frequently enough for you to be responded to in a timely manner. Please phone or email the teacher or office with any questions you may have.
- WSS Facebook page is a public facing, social media mode where we share school happenings and events. It is not a forum for discussion.

## 4. School Stream

- This is the school's **MAIN** communication channel.
- Parents and Carers advise the school of absences, sign consent forms for activities, put in uniform orders, respond to surveys, give feedback when requested, keep up to date with school events and it is where we store school policy and procedures for your referral eg. Parent/Carer Information Handbook, Student Dress Code etc...
- It is a CLOSED community whereby only immediate parents and carers are given access.
- Any emergency information will only be shared via this mode due to the sensitive nature, the need-to-know of our parents/carers only and to reduce unnecessary alarm to the wider community.

## Implementation

*This policy is effective as at start Term 2, 2020*

*Principal*

**Lisa Noonan**

*Walloon State School*

