

Communication Guideline and Complaint Handling Policy (Parents and Guardians)

1. RATIONALE

The relationship between home and school plays a very important part in a child's education.

Communication between school and parents is seen as essential to promote a mutual understanding between both parties to enhance the quality of education at this school. With effective communication it is believed that a more supportive environment will develop.

Two-way communication is a critical factor in the partnership between parents and the School. Where a partnership exists, it is easier for parents to feel confident about the teaching and learning taking place in the classroom and to solve problems.

We will seek to keep parents well informed about what is happening at school.

Our staff will acknowledge any inquiries, concerns, requests or complaints from parents and other school community members and will welcome any questions or feedback. Our policy in dealing with inquiries, concerns or complaints is simple and straightforward.

Our School will maintain processes to ensure inquiries, concerns, requests and complaints are addressed promptly and in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness. Every effort will be made to resolve any issues at the school level.

This policy ensures that enquiries, concerns, requests and complaints are dealt with promptly, consistently and fairly and contribute to continuous improvement.

2. HOW OUR SCHOOL COMMUNICATES WITH PARENTS?

There are a number of avenues of communication within the School, e.g. newsletters, diaries and appointments with staff. Communication is a critical aspect of ensuring the best possible outcomes for individual students. In the first instance please contact your child's Home Room Teacher, House Tutor Teacher or Class Teacher to make an appointment to discuss any areas of concern. If you are uncertain who to contact or need further clarification or issues are not resolved, please contact the relevant Head of Sub School for advice on further action.

It is not always possible to speak to academic staff during school hours, except during morning recess and lunchtime, if they are not on duty.

Should you need to contact academic staff, please phone or email and make an appointment for a meeting or leave your name and a message so that staff may return your call or email. Please remember to allow sufficient time for staff to return your call dependent upon their teaching and pastoral duties on any given day.

Communication will take place in many different forms:

- Regular information about the School through newsletter
- Formal written reports
- Parents and Friends (P&F) meetings
- Parent information evenings
- Parent/teacher interviews
- Notes and letters

- Displays of children's work
- Assemblies
- Special events and celebrations
- Student Guide
- Student Diary
- Policies
- Parent information sessions

Parents are welcome to talk to their child's teacher when they need to and should make an appointment to avoid disrupting the learning program.

Newsletter

A whole school newsletter is distributed weekly.

Formal Written Reports

Preschool reports are in Portfolio format and will be shared with parents at the end of each semester.

Kindergarten to Year 10 receive a formal report at the end of Semester 1 and 2.

Years 11 and 12 receive two formal reports – one at the end of Term 1 and one at the end of Term 3.

Parent/Teacher Interview Procedure

Formal parent/teacher interviews are conducted at various times throughout the year at both campuses. The dates of these interviews are published in the School Newsletter and on the School Calendar.

Should a parent request an appointment outside of normal parent/teacher interview times, teachers will ring the parent and arrange a mutually convenient time.

Calendar

The School Calendar is located on our website and includes all important activities, meetings and excursions for the year. If you would like an item included in the School Calendar, please contact the Head of School Operations.

Heads of Sub Schools approve all calendar dates and changes to dates. School activities take priority over social events. 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. Extra copies of which are available from the Administration offices.

Diary Procedure

All students are provided with a School Diary. Diaries must be brought to school each day and carried at all times except for recess and lunch.

Diaries provide an invaluable means of communication between parents and teachers. When necessary, parents may write short notes in the diary to arrange an interview appointment, etc.

Please note: Absentee notes must still be sent in separately.

Diaries must be kept entirely free of graffiti, stickers or decorations and are not to be used as a social diary. Students not abiding by this rule will be required to purchase a replacement diary from Student Admin.

Mahers Lane – Staff check school diaries regularly. Home Room/House Tutors and parents and guardians are to sign the diary each week.

Sunshine Avenue – Diaries should be read and signed by the teacher and by the parents and guardians every day.

Diary notes from home should contain information from the parent relating to their child for that particular day, e.g. pick-up or after school care arrangements.

Guidelines for the use of the school diary

For Students

- Every student is required to have a School Diary.
- Students are not to use the diary as a personal diary to record personal messages or social activities.
- Students are to keep their diaries free of graffiti and in a clean and tidy state. Diaries deemed to be in an unacceptable condition will need to be replaced.
- Students are to take their diary to class each lesson.
- Pages are not to be removed or folded. If this occurs, a new diary will need to be purchased.

For Parents

- Parent or Guardian is to sign the diary each week for Mahers Lane students and each day for Sunshine Avenue students.
- Parents' support of the diary system is essential for sound communication and monitoring of progress.
- Parents should check that homework is not only completed but is being entered. If parents have any concerns they should contact the relevant Class Teacher or House Tutor Teacher.
- Students wishing to leave school early or be excused for coming to school late, are to provide a written note from the parent addressed to the Head of School.

Assemblies

Parents are invited to Assemblies. Assemblies are notified in the Newsletter.

Parent Information Evenings

Parent information evenings will be notified in the Newsletter or a letter sent home to parents.

Interviews

Interviews will be of two types:

- Parent/teacher interviews held as required at the request of either party.
- Interviews for those parents who wish to discuss the student's report.

Presentation Night

In December, two presentation nights are held – one for Junior School and one for Mahers Lane (Middle and Senior Schools). These evenings enable the Lindisfarne community to farewell the Year 12 students and to view the presentation of the Annual Awards.

Lindisfarne Parents and Friends Association

The Parents and Friends Association is a forum for parents to discuss the education of their children, and members are also encouraged to embark on discussions of other key issues. Members are encouraged to discuss general education, safety, health issues, uniforms, matters that affect the staffing of schools, matters that have bearing on the welfare of students, as well as a whole range of local, state or national issues that arise. The Parents and Friends Association plays an important role in fostering community involvement by organising activities such as fundraising and social events.

It would be inappropriate for Parents and Friends Association meetings to discuss individual parent/student, teacher/student issues. These should be a matter for discussions between the parents and the teacher/Principal. In addition, it should be remembered that under the provisions of the Education Act the Parents and Friends Association is precluded from exercising authority over the teaching staff.

The Parents and Friends Association meet monthly and the date and campus are advised in the School Newsletter. All parents, teachers and interested community members are invited to attend.

Correspondence

Leave and General Information

Letters regarding leave for students and general information should be in writing addressed to the Principal. These can be handed to the classroom teacher who will forward for placement on the student's file.

Complaints, concerns or requests

Please see Addressing Inquiries, Concerns, Requests or Complaints

Email

Whilst email is a fast tool for communication, parents are advised that staff may not be able to immediately respond to email queries due to teaching commitments. Email is appropriate for forwarding items for information purposes, but not for urgent matters.

3. ADDRESSING INQUIRIES, CONCERNS, REQUESTS OR COMPLAINTS

Our school will maintain processes to ensure inquiries, concerns, requests and complaints are addressed promptly and in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness. Every effort will be made to resolve any issues at the school level.

This policy ensures that enquiries, concerns, requests and complaints are dealt with promptly, consistently and fairly and contribute to continuous improvement.

Principles underlying the policy

- The educational well-being of our students is our first priority.
- All persons in the School community including students, parents, administrators, teachers and support staff have a right to be treated with respect and courtesy.
- Parents and community members are able to raise concerns and make enquiries, requests or complaints about any aspect of school life and have them dealt with fairly and promptly.

Advice for Parents and Guardians – What can parents do if they have a problem?

Many problems can be solved by seeking information as early as possible. If parents have any questions or concerns about their child's progress, or any other issues, they should contact the class teacher. The best way to do this is to contact the School office to arrange a mutually-convenient time for a telephone conversation or meeting.

Advice for Parents and Guardians – Process to follow where there is a problem

- Try to identify the problem clearly before going to the School. If there is more than one problem, list them to ensure that the extent of the problem is clear to the School.
- Decide whether the problem is a concern, a query, request or a complaint. This will help in finding a solution.
- Make an appointment to talk with the teacher. This can be arranged through the School office.
- Try to stay calm even if you don't feel it; being calm will help to get your concerns across more clearly than if you are upset or angry.
- If the issue involves an incident involving another parent's child, do not approach the child or parent. Raise the issue with the School first.

Recommended procedures for parents and/or guardians in raising concerns or complaints

School-level resolution

Discussion with relevant staff member

Contact the class teacher or other relevant staff member to discuss the concern/complaint. This is best done by making an appointment through the School office. The staff will work with you to resolve the problem.

Review or investigation at the School level

If the issue is unresolved, and further action is required, please put your concerns in writing through the following channels:

Junior School	Head of Junior School
Middle School	Head of Middle School
Secondary School	Head of Senior School
Pastoral Care Issues	House Tutor or Home Room Teacher Head of House or Year Coordinator
Academic Issue	Class Teacher Director of Faculty Dean of Studies

If the concern or problem is still not resolved, the Principal should be contacted in writing.

The Principal will acknowledge the letter with a written reply as soon as possible, even if a resolution is not available at this stage.

The Principal will consider the issue and identify what action is to be taken and by when, and will clarify the process if a formal complaint is to proceed.

This action and timeline will be confirmed with you in writing. You should be aware that when a formal concern/complaint is made in writing about the performance of an individual staff member, the staff member will receive a copy of the document.

Complaints regarding Students

If a parent wishes to make a complaint about another student, then the parents should not contact the student or the student's parents. A letter should be addressed to the Principal outlining concerns.

If any complaint has been made against another student, the subject of the complaint has the right to be given a copy of the complaint and respond.

Complaints regarding Curriculum

All complaints regarding curriculum should be in writing and addressed to the Dean of Studies (for Mahers Lane), and Head of Junior School, who will investigate the matter and advise the parents appropriately.

Complaints regarding Child Protection Issues

If a complaint is regarding reportable conduct or professional misconduct, then the Child Protection Policy will apply. All complaints of this nature should be forwarded to the Principal in writing "marked Private and Confidential" or an appointment made to meet with the Principal through contacting the Principal's Executive Assistant.


Parent Channels of Communication

The following is offered as the first point of contact regarding particular issues (phone numbers and contact details are available in the Parent and Student Guide).

	Query	Contact
1	Child's Progress	Teacher
2	Behaviour issues in class	Teacher
3	Behaviour issues in the school yard	Heads of Sub Schools Heads of House Year Coordinators
4	Child placement in class	Head of Junior School Head of Middle School Dean of Studies
5	School organisation	Heads of Sub School
6	General enquiries	Reception
7	Dress Code Policy	Heads of Sub School Heads of House Year Coordinators
8	Uniform purchases	School Uniform Shop
9	Canteen	Canteen
10	Fundraising – whole school	Business Manager
11	Contributions and charges payments	Accounts - Administration
12	Excursions and Camps	Heads of Sub School Camp Coordinators
13	Newsletter	Marketing Officer
14	Curriculum	Dean of Studies Head of Junior School
15	Child Protection and Misconduct Issues	Principal

4. POLICY ADMINISTRATION

This policy will be reviewed periodically, or in the event of any information or incident that indicates the need for a review, or following relevant legislative or organisational change.

COMM001 Communication Guideline and Complaint Handling Policy (Parents and Guardians)	
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Person Responsible	Geoff Lancaster
Position	Deputy Principal
Approved by the Principal	 Approved May 2019