



## COMMUNICATION POLICY

### RATIONALE

- 1.1 At Surrey Hills we believe that effective communication contributes directly to the best learning outcomes for students. For this reason the school places great emphasis on the establishment and maintenance of effective channels of communication with and between staff, parents and the wider community. We recognise that effective communication encompasses the exchange of ideas, where people feel they have been heard and their opinions valued, and where information is clear and accurate.
- 1.2 It is essential that staff members of the school communicate information in agreement with established school protocols so as to preserve the professionalism of the school, to protect the rights of individuals, to uphold our duty of care to students and to comply with departmental and legal requirements.

### PURPOSE

- 2.1 To ensure that the communication of information is carried out correctly and in a manner that complies with school, departmental and legal requirements.
- 2.2 To develop effective forms of communication between school and home about school programs, policies, students' progress and school events.
- 2.3 To ensure that communication both from school and home is provided in a friendly, professional manner; provides accurate and timely information which demonstrates that feedback is being heard.
- 2.4 To ensure that communication is in a language and manner appropriate to the cultural context of the parents.
- 2.4 To ensure that social media is used in a controlled environment. Permission to use social media tools such as blogs and wikis must have permission from the principal and be secure (i.e. password protected and in accord with DEECD guidelines)
- 2.5 Social media such as Face Book and Twitter, Instagram etc. is not to be used to communicate with parents.

### IMPLEMENTATION

- 3.1 Our school has a policy of open and cooperative communication.
- 3.2 Surrey Hills Primary School communication to parents will be through publications on the school website, meetings (face to face/phone call), school assembly and informal school gatherings.
- 3.3 All electronic communication e.g. email sent via the school email address will then be forwarded in a timely manner to the relevant staff member.
- 3.4 Principal class members will support staff and members of the community when communications do not meet the expectations as outlined in this policy.
- 3.5 Staff members have legal, departmental, local, professional and social obligations with regards to the communication of information.
- 3.6 Department of Education employees are free to make public comment on issues relating to education, but in doing so, must be wary not to make comments that can be construed as negative criticism of our school, School Council, our community, staff or community members.
- 3.7 As a matter of professional courtesy, and as a requirement of Section 3.6 of the Teaching Services (Conduct of Duties) Order 1998, staff will communicate with the principal before making public comment or a formal statement on educational issues that bears on the organisation or program of the school or place of work. The principal and School Council president will ensure that each other are informed.
- 3.8 The Information Privacy Act and the Health Records Act require that schools protect the interests of individuals with regard to their personal information and respect the individual's right to control how their personal information is used, and for what purpose.
- 3.9 The school will only collect consensual information that it requires about individuals, and will only communicate and disclose information for the purposes for which it was collected.

- 3.10 Any person seeking information from the school that falls outside the school's previous practices must be directed to the principal who may require that a formal written Freedom of Information request be made.
- 3.11 All such Freedom of Information requests will be referred to the Department of Education's Freedom of Information Unit.
- 3.12 Information sought by police, including interviews of students must be directed to the principal.
- 3.13 Requests from Department of Human Services child protection unit personnel regarding students or families will be complied with at all times.
- 3.14 The school will comply with court subpoenas to provide information at all times, but will not respond to requests from lawyers seeking information without Education Department approval.
- 3.15 Action may be taken by individuals, the Department or organisations, against staff members who choose to improperly communicate information.
- 3.16 We provide to parents each year, two written reports, two Individual Student Learning Plans and a Student Learning Journal, as well as offering two parent-teacher interviews per school year with additional interviews upon mutual agreement.

***EVALUATED***

August 2014