Communication

Policy

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Policy Title	Student Personal Responsibility Policy
Ratified by Leadership and College Council	Leanne Carr
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1. Preamble

At St Columba College we seek to treat all people with dignity and respect. We seek to live as a community founded on love. It is in this context that we work to ensure that all communication practices within the College focus on building positive relationships. In doing this we believe that we foster an environment that is conducive to staff supporting one another, to building positive student learning outcomes and to work in positive partnership with parents. We acknowledge that technology plays an important role in our communication and the importance of clear expectations for our interactions.

2. Aims

- Create a College environment where a lived reality of the Gospel message, *'To love your neighbour as yourself'*, is experienced.
- For all College members to recognise that the positive use of communication lies at the heart of building good relationships.
- Provide clear guidelines in relation to communication expectations.
- Highlight the appropriate use of ICT in relation to communications.

3. Roles

Role of the Principal
- Ensure that the Communication Policy and procedures are implemented appropriately within the College.
- Provide information to students, staff and parents in relation to the procedures contained within the Communications Policy.
- Review the Policy and procedures from time to time with the Leadership Team providing direction to the College Council.
- Ensure that all written communication from the College is of an excellent standard.

Role of Staff
- Ensure that the Communication Policy and procedures are understood and implemented where appropriate.
- Provide information to students in relation to the Communication Policy and procedures.

Role of Students
- Actively engage in positive communication with staff and peers.
- Promote positive relationships when using the various modes of communication.
- Act responsibly in relation to enhancing communication between the College and home.

Role of Parents/Caregivers
- Actively engage in promoting a positive environment by seeking to communicate with the College on a regular basis.
- Communicate in a manner which is conducive to the building of relationships.
- Seek to engage in reading all communication from the College, i.e., emails, newsletters, student diaries, letters etc.

4. Staff Responsibilities

General Expectations
- Communicate with one another in a manner that is considered professional and support our Christian ethos.
- Read all official communication from the email groups/individual and respond as required within given time frames.
- Seek to speak with colleagues in a personal manner wherever possible.

Use of Email
- Emails must not contain any offensive material/language.
- Emails are to be checked daily, appropriately responded to and deleted as soon as possible – including clearing the 'Deleted' and 'Sent' Items folders.
- Staff members are asked to use normal letter writing conventions appropriate to the professional context when addressing one another via email i.e., using the person's name (Dear/Good Morning), signing off in an appropriate manner, standard grammar etc.

Communication with Parents/Caregivers
- Contact with parents via email, *SEQTA Engage,* student homework diaries to support student learning and wellbeing.
- In all dealings with parents, staff are expected to relate in a respectful and professional manner and encouraged to make face to face contact with students wherever possible.
- Staff members are not to engage with parents in any personal websites or streaming media. i.e. 'Facebook; personal blogs etc.

Communication with Students
- In all dealings with students, staff are expected to relate in a respectful and professional manner and encouraged to make face to face contact with students wherever possible.
- Staff need to be aware that their contact with students must be consistent, transparent and fair to all students within the class group and undertaken with an understanding of normal staff professional standards.
- Students are only to be emailed by staff for professional purposes that directly relate to the teaching and learning environment.
- Emails to students are never to be of a personal nature.
- Staff members are not to engage with students in any personal websites or streaming media. i.e. 'Facebook; personal blogs etc.
- All forms and other official College letters should be discussed with students so that the students are aware of the content and expectations of the document.

5. Student Responsibilities

St Columba seeks to encourage students to use a variety of skills successfully when communicating with one another and with the staff of the College. We believe that communication needs to be positive and respectful at all times. Jesus' command to 'love our neighbour as yourself' lies at the heart of our desire to communicate with one another in a loving manner.

Communicating with Staff
- Students are expected to relate to staff in a respectful manner at all times.
- Students are asked to say a polite, 'good morning/good afternoon' when passing a staff member during the course of the day.
- Using positive non-verbal communication is a powerful tool to develop relationships.

Communicating with Staff via email
- Students are asked to use normal letter writing conventions appropriate to the professional context when addressing members of staff via email i.e., using the person's name (Dear/Good Morning), signing off in an appropriate manner, standard grammar. Emails must not contain any offensive material/language.
- Emails are to be checked daily, appropriately responded to and deleted as soon as possible – including clearing the 'Deleted' and 'Sent' Items folders.

Communicating with Peers
Students are always to:
- Treat other students with respect.
- Use ICT in an appropriate manner to build positive relationships.
- Adhere to the College Mobile Phone Policy.

Supporting Communication between the College and Home
Students will:
- Ensure that general written/oral communication from the College is taken home to the family and any documents/forms returned as appropriate.
- Use SEQTA and the College diary appropriately.

6. Parents and Caregivers Responsibilities

General Expectations
We ask that parents always seek to work in partnership with staff of the College and in doing so commit to communicating in a positive and respectful manner.

Reporting Student Absenteeism

The College takes seriously its responsibility to ensure that students arrive at school safely. Part of this process is the need to ascertain why a student is absent and to work with parents to establish a clear process for informing the College if a child is absent on any given day. It is vital that parents always advise the College when a student is absent from school for one or more days This policy links to our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy in so much as the College wishes to work with parents to ensure that students who should be at school actually attend.

To assist in this process the College has a dedicated phone line for parents to call. Parents are asked to phone the College Absentee Line **(8254 0636)** by 8:50am if a student will be absent. Parents must provide the school with an appropriate explanation for the student's non-attendance. A diary note, letter, phone call or medical certificate is required for each day of absence. A written explanation is required after 3 days' absence.

Emergency Forms/Medical Information

Every year the College requests, via Consent2Go, an update of emergency details and medical plans. We ask parents to update information which requires alteration by the date requested. If any information changes during the course of the year, it is vital that parents communicate the required changes to the College immediately.

Excursions and Camps

Prior to any student being able to attend an excursion or camp, a range of documentation is sent home for parents to complete and return to the College by the date stated. This documentation includes an up-to-date statement of medical requirements. This may be communicated via Consent2Go if appropriate.

7. Methods of Communication

There are various channels of communication between staff and families.

SEQTA Engage App

Parents are encouraged to download *SEQTA Engage*, a free App that allows parents to track their child's learning, reports and class activities as well as communicate directly with teachers using Direqt Message. Access to *SEQTA Engage* is by a username and password which is set up on the receipt of an invitation to parents from the College.

Telephone

If you would like to speak with a teacher or Head of School, contacting the appropriate College campus will provide you with a team of education support staff who will help with your request.

SMS

SMS (short message service) via mobile phone is used to contact the primary carer for absenteeism and important notifications requiring attention.

Email Correspondence

When communicating via email, staff and parents are expected to adhere to email etiquette.

At the commencement of the school year, class teachers (Junior School) or kinship teachers (Middle / Senior Schools) will provide families with their College email address. This channel of communication will be used for reminders and notices by teachers.

Issues that require a level of detailed discussion require a different channel of communication. The responsible parent/s will be contacted by phone or the issue dealt with in person.

Junior School Communication Diary

Students in the Junior School are provided with a communication diary for parent-teacher correspondence and notices.

Middle School College Diary

Middle School students use the College diary for the recording of homework tasks, lesson times and for parent-teacher correspondence.

Teaching and Learning Online Portal
Students engage with an approved collaborative teaching and learning online portal.

Middle and Senior School students access SEQTA Learn online portal for the recording of homework tasks, lesson times and for student-teacher correspondence.

Families have access to the portal to be informed about their child's learning and for parent-teacher correspondence.

Email Notices and Letters
The College uses a digital platform for delivering College notices, letters, announcements and statement of fees. Email contact is implemented on a regular basis. If a family does not have access to email, another channel for communication will be established.

Printed Material
While the College is delivering digital information to families, at times printed forms, letters and notifications will be sent home with students.

Newsletter
The College produces The Coracle digital newsletter three times each term, for families to stay informed of news and events. Families receive an email notification with a link to view the newsletter. New families receive an automatic subscription to the newsletter.

Social Media
The College has an official Facebook page - @StColumbaCollegeSouthAustralia and Instagram @stcolumbacollege. These platforms are used to showcase events and activities within the College and to promote our College to the wider community.