



Nulkaba Public School

COMMUNICATION POLICY

Our school's vision and moral purpose, built on community relationships and on our NPS values, is critical in developing effective communication and engagement of the school community that is collaborative and sustainable.

RATIONALE

At Nulkaba Public School we are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment which promotes open communication, fairness and positive relationships where all members are respected and valued. We believe that the relationship between home and school is a very important part of ensuring that children are happy, secure and open to learning. As a school community, we are committed to working together to meet the various needs of our school community. Central to achieving this is trust and open, effective communication between all members of the school community.

AIM

- That effective communication between all school community members takes place.
- That processes are in place which allow for open and honest communication amongst all school community members.
- That confidential information is managed in a manner consistent with community expectations, professional standards and legal obligations.
- That clear, positive and fair processes and guidelines are provided which allow issues or concerns to be aired and resolved in a timely, effective and respectful manner.
- That open and respectful, two-way communication is available to all members of the community.
- That all stakeholders can confidently voice their opinions and concerns and have these acknowledged.

ACTIONS

1. GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Nulkaba Public School will use a range of strategies to communicate effectively with the school community. These are listed in the Appendix- Mechanisms for Communication.

- The main source of school community information is the Seesaw app, NPS Facebook page and the school website, which acts as an integral tool for communicating the school events and procedures to the school community.
- It is the responsibility of parents/carers to read the newsletter to stay abreast of the current happenings at the school.
- It is also the parents/carers responsibility to ensure that their current email is up to date so that communication is ongoing and available to use as required.
- The Mechanisms for Communication (see appendix) will be reviewed annually to reflect and update the current operational communication processes at work in the school.
- It is acknowledged that teachers have time constraints during the school day and issues or concerns are best dealt with when uninterrupted time and proper attention can be given to them. Wherever possible, appointments should be made in advance with the classroom teacher.
- In all cases, if the matter is urgent and/or relates to the possible risk or harm to a student, a member of staff or another member of the school community, the Principal should be informed immediately and the urgency of the matter conveyed.

1.1 CURRICULUM AND CLASS INFORMATION

Teachers will communicate curriculum information at the beginning of each term, via a stage term overview.

1.2 GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNICATION- APPROPRIATE USE OF EMAIL/SEESAW

Nulkaba Public School considers email and messages through Seesaw vital communication tools and recognises the importance of proper content and speedy replies. Nevertheless, the high volume of email/Seesaw message traffic and the resultant impact on workload issues necessitates some guidelines for all users of the school's email/Seesaw system. When using email/Seesaw, seek to:

- Facilitate a speedy response, try to limit the message to less than 200 words.
- Clearly and concisely explain your issue or question.
- Direct the enquiry to the most relevant person.
- School Administration will forward emails to relevant staff at the earliest possible convenience.
- Acknowledge teachers are not always online due to teaching and meeting responsibilities, their response times may take up to 24 hour and will not respond over the weekend or school holidays.

1.3 GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNICATION- PHONE

Nulkaba Public School encourages parents and staff to use the telephone as an important tool to communicate personal concerns and issues that cannot be discussed via email. It is also important that all conversations by all parties are respectful and courteous.

Telephone communication is also useful for queries, urgent messages that need to be relayed to students and teachers and student absences.

Staff may not always be able to return telephone calls during the normal school day and may take up to 24 hours to return the call. Email or a Seesaw message may then be used to respond to the call and arrange a meeting time. Staff will not respond on the weekend or school holidays.

Please listen to messages if you receive a phone call from the school. The staff member will leave their name and a time that suits them for you to call back or information regarding their call back.

2. CONTACT PROCEDURES

2.1 CONTACTING A CLASSROOM OR SPECIALIST TEACHER:

When a parent wishes to contact a member of staff to discuss matters relating to their child, the procedure is to contact the teacher involved, giving a brief outline of the issue. Contact should be made using one of the following approaches:

- Contact the school, either by phone or coming to the office personally, and ask a school administration officer to arrange for the teacher to contact you to arrange a suitable

meeting time. Teachers are not usually available to answer phone calls or come to the office during teaching time or whilst on playground duty.

- Contact the appropriate teacher in writing, via the school email or message through Seesaw, asking them to organise a suitable meeting time.
- Speak briefly with the appropriate teacher, either before or after school hours (not at a time when they are teaching or on playground duty), and ask them to arrange a suitable meeting time

3 DEALING WITH CONCERNS, ISSUES, COMPLIMENTS, SUGGESTIONS

3.1 CONCERNS OR ISSUES

There may be times, despite ongoing communication, where members of the school community are unsure, disagree or believe there is a problem or issue concerning their child or other elements. Parents should not wait for a small issue to grow into a large one:

- If the matter involves your child or is an issue of everyday class operation, parents need to make an appointment to see their classroom teacher, detailing the reasons for the appointment. The classroom teacher should be the first point of contact **NOT** the School Learning Support Officer (SLSO).
- No parent should approach the children of other families or their parents/carers with a school related or non-school related issue on the school grounds. Such matters must be addressed to the Principal as soon as possible.

When communication breaks down and/or an issue is unable to be resolved, the Department of Education has a site whereby you can do just that. The URL is as follows:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/rights-and-accountability/complaints-compliments-and-suggestions>

3.2 COMPLIMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Often throughout the school day teachers are going above and beyond for the students that they teach or come into contact with. At times, parents/carers become aware of this and want to make the Principal, their supervisor and/or the personnel within the Department of Education also aware.

At the same time, a parent/carer may also have a suggestion to make our school better and they have not been able to voice this through a survey. There are a number of ways that this can be brought to light.

- Email the school and let us know. This will be forwarded to the Principal
- Write a note to the Principal informing them.
- Call the Principal to let them know.
- Or use the link below to inform the appropriate personnel at DoE.

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/rights-and-accountability/complaints-compliments-and-suggestions>

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every year as part of the NPS review cycle.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

This policy is to be read in conjunction with:

- Wellbeing Policy
- Complaint Policy

Email/Seesaw Message Protocols for Teacher and Parent Communication

Protocols for Parent/Carers email/Seesaw message use:

Email/Seesaw message may be a fast and convenient way for you to send messages, however, this may not be the case for many of our teachers. Teachers read these at different times of the day and so an immediate reply is not possible. In fact, you may not receive a reply at all, since the staff member will determine how best to contact you: by email, Seesaw message, phone call or to schedule a personal conference.

TO USE EMAIL/SEESAW MESSAGE EFFECTIVELY IN A SCHOOL SETTING, WE HAVE DEVELOPED THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS/CARERS:

Email/Seesaw message is appropriate for:

- Brief enquiries about general school matters.
- School related issues only.
- Passing on relevant information to the appropriate personnel e.g. classroom teacher, specialist teachers etc.

EMAIL/SEESAW MESSAGE IS NOT APPROPRIATE FOR:

- Your child's academic progress. This is best addressed through a telephone conversation or a personal conference with your child's teacher.
- In depth discussions about your child, however, can be used to raise a topic to be discussed at a face-to-face meeting.
- Submitting their child's homework; this should be the responsibility of the student.
- Sending non-vital messages. For example, do not use to inform the school that your child is to meet you somewhere when the day ends. Instead, use the telephone to contact the office to be sure that the message is received and clearly understood.
- Threatening or offensive language.
- Sensitive information about the child or an incident that has occurred- which is better communicated in a more confidential way (e.g. phone conversation or face to face meeting).

WHEN SENDING EMAIL:

- If the email is for a specific teacher - In the subject line of your email – child's name, class and teacher's name.
- It should only be addressed to the intended recipient .
- The use of 'cc' (Carbon copy) is to be used if you would like another recipient to be aware of your email as a secondary recipient but not as an invitation to respond.
- The use of 'bcc' (Blind carbon copy) is to be used for tertiary recipients as a privacy measure or if sending to recipients who do not know each other, such as in a mailing list so that email addresses are hidden.
- Ensure emails are respectfully written as meaning can be misinterpreted.
- Response to emails received by staff should be given within 24 hours upon receipt .
- Staff are only required to respond to emails between the hours of 8:30am and 4:30pm, Monday to Friday during the school term.
- Staff are not required to respond to emails during weekends or school holiday periods.

Please note that it is inappropriate to share correspondence received from staff with students or others.



PRIVACY:

- Please remember that email is not necessarily confidential and can be subject to FOI (Freedom of Information) regulations. Confidential information should be conveyed by phone or personal contact.
- Due to privacy, Distribution Lists will not be available to parents and the general community.

Protocols for Staff email use:

The school maintains email accounts for teachers to facilitate parent/teacher communication and internal, as well as system wide staff communication. The school reserves the right to block or filter email messages to staff that are not directly related to school business or to the school's educational mission.

1.3 STAFF USING EMAIL TO CORRESPOND WITH PARENTS MUST ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING:

- Staff must use a school provided email account for all staff/parent communications.
- Email must never be used to discuss contentious, emotional or highly confidential issues - these issues should be dealt with face to face or by telephone.
- Email parents only when they have agreed that email is an appropriate form of communication.
- The use of cc and bcc may be used by all parties to notify others of the conversation only if relevant.

1.4 WHEN SENDING AN EMAIL:

- Emails should be short and directional in nature and only include facts.
- Care should be given when using student names. Refer to students by first name, initials or 'your son/daughter' depending on the content. Do not discuss non-related students or issues to parents.
- Email messages to parents should be consistent with professional practices for other correspondence. This includes grammar, format and salutation.
- If you wish to make a complaint, it is recommended that you do not write a lengthy email, in the first instance.
- The use of cc and bcc may be used by all parties to include others in the conversation only if relevant.

1.5 PRIVACY

- All emails that reside on the DoE servers may not be confidential. Email messages may be requested by the public under FOI (Freedom of Information) laws and may, unless they are exempt under the law, be open to public inspection
- When sending an email to all parents that have given permission at one time, the bcc facility must be used to list addresses to ensure that privacy is maintained

APPENDIX B

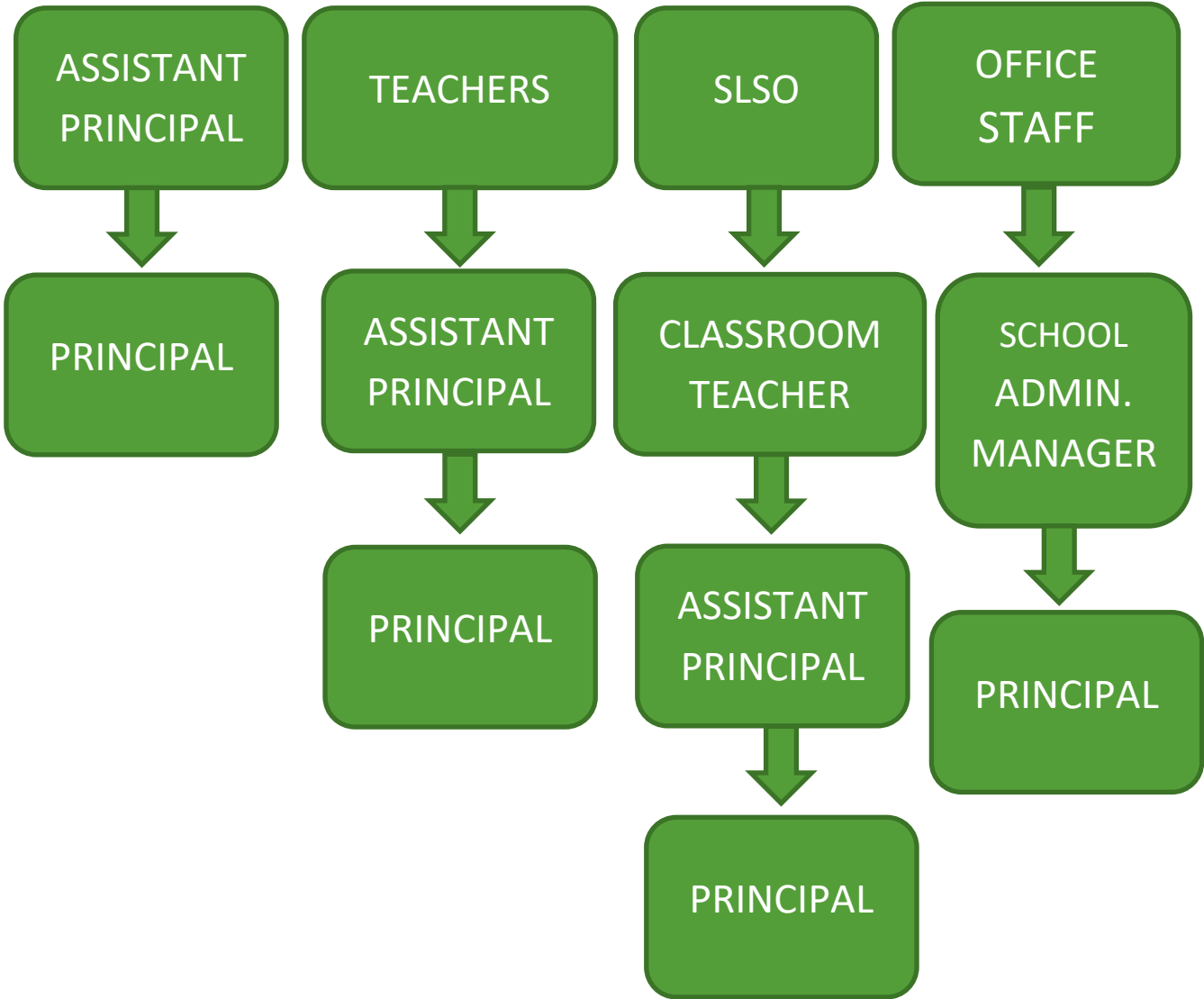
STAFF TO STAFF COMMUNICATION			
MECHANISM	PURPOSE	ACTION	FREQUENCY
School Improvement Plan	To review current school practice and performance. Set goals for strategic planning	School improvement Process- review current goals on an annual basis to set direction of AIP and develop future goals every 4 years	4 year review cycle Parent, staff and student survey annually
School Server PD for all new staff	Introduce all new staff members to the school server Show staff where all policies and procedures are located on the server	New staff to access in their own time and familiarise themselves with the documents, policies and procedures	Once
Performance and Development reviews	To implement whole school goals Annual review to identify professional learning needs/opportunities Career path planning	Leadership team supports staff through formal and informal meetings to plan/support and evaluate their progress. Staff prepare documentation prior to formal meeting times Principal advises the Department when the processes are completed	Ongoing throughout the year Formal meetings at the Planning Stage, Mid Cycle Review End of cycle review
Leadership meetings	To ensure whole school cohesion, strategic planning and management	Principal, Assistant Principals raise issues, share information and plan at whole school level	Weekly

STAFF TO STAFF COMMUNICATION cont...

MECHANISM	PURPOSE	ACTION	FREQUENCY
Staff meetings	To provide information, raise issues and discuss school management activities and programs	Whole staff meetings held weekly	weekly
Professional Learning meetings	To provide professional development in key learning areas as identified	Staff to build capacity in teacher professional knowledge and skills in Key areas	Approximately 8 per term
Team meetings and planning sessions	To share information, raise issues, plan and discuss team and class management To plan collaboratively in teams to improve student outcomes	All staff are members of a collaborative teaching team	Fortnightly team meetings before/after school (in line with consultative/ leadership meetings)
Communication whiteboard	To provide daily information, timetable changes and staff absences	Open to all staff for input and notices.	Ongoing
Staff Emails	To effectively communicate information and day to day changes between staff	Staff to use Distribution List for information only pertaining to whole staff issues Teams to send minutes and information pertaining to relevant staff when required	Ongoing
School calendar	To provide an overview of school events, excursions and professional development	Upcoming events are entered on the Sentral calendar by all staff Website Coordinator to be informed of planned event	Ongoing and updated throughout the year

STAFF TO STAFF COMMUNICATION cont...			
MECHANISM	PURPOSE	ACTION	FREQUENCY
Meeting Schedule	To outline all PL, staff and team meetings		Sent out beginning of each term
Tell Them From Me Survey	To collate feedback on the school processes, procedures and policies		Term 3

STAFF TO STAFF COMMUNICATION PROCESSES



SCHOOL TO COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION

MECHANISM	PURPOSE	ACTION	FREQUENCY
Seesaw	To notify parents of events, activities and reminders	Principal/Admin staff/teachers to coordinate items	ongoing
School website	To provide information about the school and its programs	The website is updated weekly and includes notes, the newsletter	Ongoing updates
Facebook – school Facebook – P & C	To provide links to notes, newsletters and information from the school and the Department of Education	Updated regularly by school admin staff and P & C secretary	Ongoing updates
Weekly Spotlight	To communicate events/activities that are happening in your child's classroom	Teacher/Assistant Principal	Weekly on Seesaw
Term Calendar	Communicate key events and activities throughout the term	Principal/Admin staff to coordinate items	Beginning of every term Modifications/ additions if required
Parents and Citizens	To represent the school community of the school, including the development of the strategic plan and policies, raising funds,	Elections held annually. Meeting times and articles are published in the school newsletter, P & C Facebook Page	Meetings held third Tuesday of every month

SCHOOL TO COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION cont..

MECHANISM	PURPOSE	ACTION	FREQUENCY
Parents and Citizens cont...		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School council and sub committees reformed each year 	
Student contact details	To ensure all student information, health issues and contact details are up to date	Printout of student information sent home with each student for review by parents/carers to ensure contact details are accurate	Early Term One
Stage Overviews	To communicate key events, curriculum focus and reminders for the term	Assistant Principals in consultation with team members, writes and distributes the overview via SeeSaw	Overview distributed on the first week of each term
Sentral Parent Portal	Admin staff to notify child absence to parents and for parents to report absences to the school	Teachers use Sentral for electronic roll marking at the commencement of school	Every day-roll marking As required for events

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS cont...

MECHANISM	PURPOSE	ACTION	FREQUENCY
Meet the Teacher	To share relevant information regarding organization, learning and expectations of child's class	Teachers to set dates	At beginning of term 1
Informal meetings with parents/carers and teacher (phone call or face-to-face)	To share relevant information to support individual students	Parent/carer or teacher initiates meeting	As required
Parent/Teacher Interviews	Parents and teachers discuss child's academic progress	Parents use booking system to organise a time to be involved	End of Term 2
Best Start	To assess students in Kindergarten in Literacy and Numeracy	Beginning of term 1 Reports to be sent out during term 1	Beginning of term 1
NAPLAN National Assessment Program Literacy & Numeracy	To assess student performance in Years 3 and 5 in Language Conventions, Writing, Reading and Numeracy against national benchmarks	One week of testing in Term One Reports are issued to parents at the end of Term Three	Term One

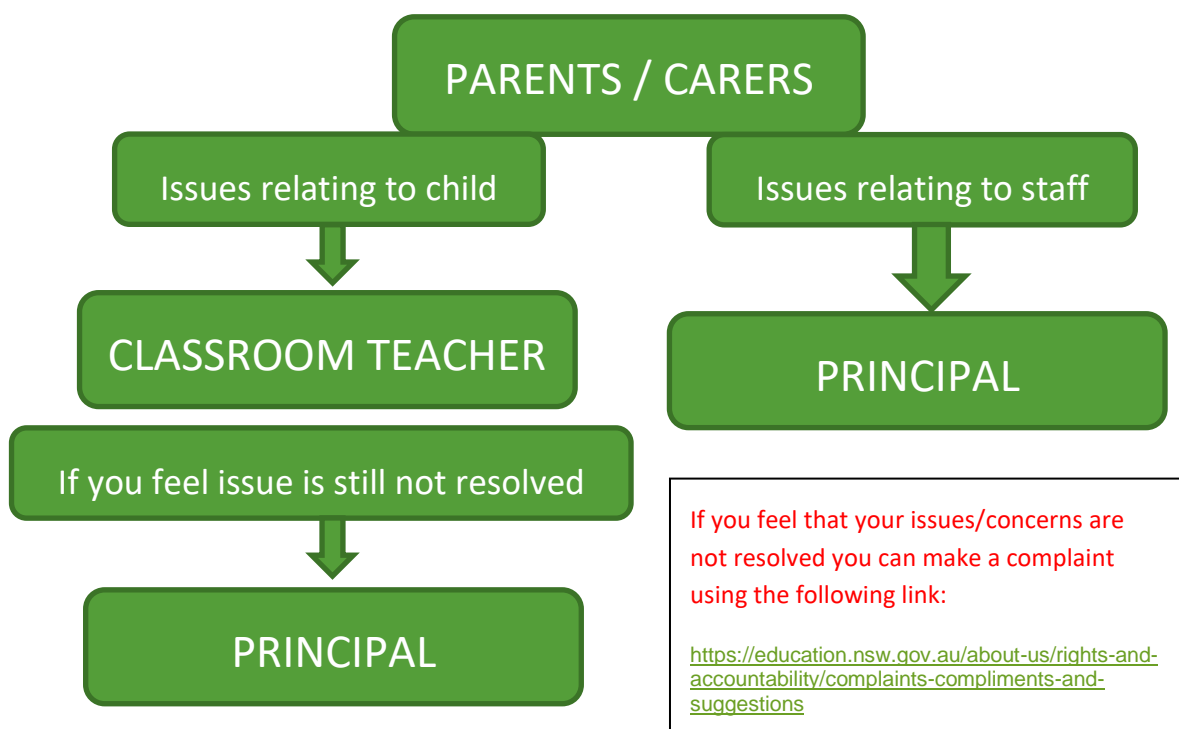
COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS cont...

MECHANISM	PURPOSE	ACTION	FREQUENCY
DoE Check-in Assessment	To assess student performance in Years 4 and 6 in Language Conventions, Writing, Reading and Numeracy against national benchmarks	One week of testing in Term One	Once a year
Semester written reports	To provide a comprehensive report about students' progress, achievements, social development and work habits	<p>Teachers complete assessment and moderation and prepare written reports</p> <p>Reports are submitted to the leadership team for review</p> <p>Data is collected electronically and stored for data analysis</p> <p>Reports issued to parents at the end of Term Two and Four</p>	<p>Last week of Term Two</p> <p>Last week of Term Four</p>
Tell Them From Me Survey	To collate/gather feedback on the school processes, procedures and policies		Term 3

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS cont...

MECHANISM	PURPOSE	ACTION	FREQUENCY
Student Learning Diary (Stage 3)	To provide students, teachers and parents with an opportunity to reflect upon student learning To support written reports and as a body of evidence to demonstrate student achievement	Students and teachers compile portfolios Used during the Parent/Teacher interviews as the vehicle for demonstrating learning	ongoing
Whole School Assembly	To recognise and share achievements	Assembly conducted weekly by student leaders	K-2 3-6 fortnightly

PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION PROCESSES



STUDENT VOICE			
MECHANISM	PURPOSE	ACTION	FREQUENCY
Informal meetings with student and teacher	To share relevant information to support students Feedback mechanism for students	Students or teacher initiates meetings on informal needs basis and discusses learning goals	As required
Student Representative Council	To allow students to make positive contributions to the school environment and wider community	Staff member coordinates representatives elected from Stage 1 to 3	Annual elections and regular meetings
Aboriginal Education Team	To allow Aboriginal students to make positive contributions to the school environment and wider community	Staff member coordinates representatives elected from K-6	Annual elections and regular meetings
School Assembly	To recognise and share achievements and information with parents and students	Assembly conducted weekly by student leaders Opportunity for sharing of skills and achievements with students, teachers and parents	Fortnightly