



**Belmayne Educate Together**

**Secondary School**

**Communications Policy**

**2021 - 2024**

## **Introduction**

This policy is informed by the vision for Belmayne ETSS coupled with the school's ethos which aims to enable students to reach their full potential both academically and socially. This is a whole school policy for students and staff in the school. It deals with communication within the school and between the school and our partners. Positive, appropriate and respectful communication is critical in every school as it establishes trust and confidence.

## **Rationale**

Good communications will ensure we maintain a positive, progressive learning environment where every student will reach their potential and be encouraged to open their minds and become life-long learners. A variety of channels of communication are used so as to ensure that the relevant people receive the necessary information and to allow all voices to be heard. Effective communications helps to create a safe, happy space where friendships are nurtured and leadership skills developed.

## **Overall Communication**

From the initial welcome at the front gate, school signage, the visual staff presence, the quality of visual displays, social media presence and interactions with other media forms, conduct of meetings, etc., there should be a sense of integrity, trustworthiness, confidence and professionalism, a warmth in interpersonal relationships. All staff members should model good communication, both verbal and written.

## **Board of Management**

The Board of Management (BOM) meets approximately every 6 weeks and is kept informed by the principal who is secretary to the BOM. The principal shall carry out the Board's instructions and assume responsibility for the implementation of the Board's decisions. An agreed report after every BOM meeting is published to the school's website and is available to all members of the school community. An email group has been set up so the BOM members can communicate easily along with a dedicated area on Google Drive where minutes, principal's reports and policies are at hand.

## **School Management Team**

The Principal shall keep the Deputy Principal informed of decisions of the Board. The smooth running of the school requires that the Principal and Deputy Principal continually exchange information and ideas. In addition to ongoing informal contact, a set time shall be set aside each week for discussion on major issues and for planning. The Principal and Deputy also have a brief planning meeting everyday.

## **Management – Staff Members**

The Principal operates an open-door policy in relation to the staff. Regular staff meetings shall be held to keep staff informed, to allow for proper consultation and to facilitate staff input into the decision-making process. The Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Leaders and Guidance Counsellor shall meet weekly to support the working of the Care Team, Positive Behaviour for Learning and Learning and Teaching. Day-to-day information shall be communicated to the staff by means of email during working hours 7:30am to 5pm Monday to Friday. Staff are asked to check their email every morning before the school day begins and are advised to switch off email notifications after 5pm. Phone or text message service should be used in case of emergencies if contact is needed outside of these hours. Exceptions may be made in exceptional circumstances (such as illness) where the essential running of the school is in question.

If a staff member wants to request a 1-1 meeting with the principal or deputy principal it can be done by email or in person and a suitable time will be arranged.

The Deputy Principal updates the calendar every Friday afternoon on the white board in the staff room with the events planned for the following week broken down by day and also sends out a staff bulletin every Friday with word of the week, weekly plan, a teaching and learning tip and also one item from the Ethical Education Resources on the Educate Together website. Urgent notices for a day are displayed in VSWare if needed.

Staff members who are going to be absent shall contact the Deputy Principal as soon as possible before 8am via phone or text to allow time for substitution arrangements to be put in place. Field-trips, outings and attendance at in-service shall be cleared with the Principal/Deputy Principal in advance. These events should be noted in the Google Calendar and we ask all staff to check the calendar daily.

### **Staff Members – Staff Members**

Regular subject meetings are to be encouraged and facilitated (where possible) as they allow for the exchange of ideas, the formulation of policies and the monitoring of developments in the different subject areas. The informal, relaxed and welcoming atmosphere of the staffroom encourages collaboration and communication on a daily basis. Staff can email each other daily Monday to Friday and all information relevant to staff is stored on a shared Google drive. The SEN department shall work closely together with subject teachers and shall share information with one another whenever this is in the best interests of a particular student. The SEN shared Google Drive shall be kept up to date and subject teachers should be made aware of any changes throughout the year. All communication should be carried out in a respectful and courteous manner paying attention to the tone and punctuation of the email. To minimise the volume of emails received daily, where possible, emails should only be sent to the relevant teachers.

### **Staff Members - Students**

All communication between teachers and students shall be carried on in a courteous and respectful manner. Students should not expect a reply from teachers via email outside of school hours (7:30am - 5pm). Teachers shall ensure that all instruction to students are clear and unambiguous. The School Committees/Teams shall serve as a very important two-way channel of communication. These committees/Teams allow the students in our school to have a voice and their ideas/concerns can be communicated at these meetings. All staff and students of the school are members of these committees. All communication between teachers and students shall be done via the journal, email (school email only), google classroom or the school Twitter account. There shall be no communication between staff and students via personal mobile phones, personal email accounts or any personal social media applications.

### **School – Home**

Parents/Guardians can email members of staff or call the school phone to leave a message for a member of staff. Staff email addresses are available on our school website however excessive use or abuse of the email system will result in the school removing the privilege of contacting all staff and communications will go through with the deputy principal or principal. communication VSWare is used to communicate attendance and behaviour on a daily basis to parents/guardians. All parents/guardians have their own login. Parents/guardians shall receive formal progress reports in October, December and May each year. All parents/guardians are encouraged to attend the annual Parent/Teacher meetings and other information nights hosted by the school. There is a parents council in the school that parents/guardians are encouraged to join and can be contacted by email. Subject teachers, class tutors, year leaders, Deputy Principals, and the Principal shall contact parent(s)/guardian(s) by phone, letter, email or note in the homework journal whenever such contact is warranted. They may also be contacted via text with regards to attendance, punctuality and general information. Parents/guardians are welcome to phone the office to make an appointment to meet a teacher, tutor, the Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal or Principal. All parents and visitors should check-in in the office upon arrival to the school. Parents should not ask to see a teacher unless a prior appointment has been made. Parents/guardians are required to furnish a note to explain any absence from school. Any change in the school calendar shall be notified by email.

The school shall update the school Twitter account with updates, photos and events on a regular basis. The school shall set up a News page on the school website which will be updated by students on events that have taken place in school to keep the parents/guardians informed. Students are not permitted to use their mobile phones during school hours and can use the school phone in case of illness or other emergencies. It should also be noted that staff and parents shall not usually communicate via personal mobile phones, personal devices, or through personal social media accounts.

**School – Local Community**

People and businesses in the local community are encouraged to participate in the various school events. The school shall avail of every opportunity to convey a positive image to the local community via the school website and school Twitter account. The school can be contacted by phone or email.

**Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be regularly reviewed to ensure that our communications are effective and up to date and are in line with our school ethos and ensure the health, safety and educational benefit of all students. Regular reviews will also ensure legal compliance and maintenance of best practice.

**Ratification:**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of the Board of Management