



SANDRINGHAM EAST PRIMARY SCHOOL COMMUNICATION POLICY

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

Rationale:

Effective communication is central to our everyday lives. The ability for our school community (students, parents and teachers) to communicate clearly in a wide range of settings and using diverse media is vital in today's world. Community building is the responsibility of all members of our community; communities working together towards a common purpose ultimately strengthen communities. Therefore it is essential that all members of the community consider and incorporate the school values and protocols when communicating information so as to:

- preserve the professionalism of the school,
- protect the rights of individuals,
- uphold our duty of care to students, and
- comply with departmental and legal requirements.

Community partnerships contribute significantly to the potential for parents and community groups to impact positively on the lives of our young people and enhance the ability of schools to provide for the needs of students.

Aims:

- To ensure that the communication of information is carried out in a manner that complies with school and departmental policies and legal requirements;
- To ensure that the whole school community has appropriate knowledge of and commitment to the school vision and values as approved by School Council;
- SEPS aims to communicate openly and transparently with the community, seeking input into school direction, priorities and decision making;
- SEPS forms a strong and integral part of our local community as well as globally with our sister schools in Japan and the Philippines;
- Privacy issues will always be maintained for community members; and
- Use of social media will reflect SEPS Social Media Policy.

Implementation:

- Our school has a policy of open, respectful and cooperative communication;
- This practice recognises that staff members have legal, departmental, local, professional and social obligations with regards the communication of information;
- Department of Education and Training employees are free to make public comment on issues relating to education, but in doing so, must be wary not to make comments that are unsupportive of our school, School Council, our community and staff;
- 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 a public comment or a formal statement on educational issues or that bears on the organisation or programs of the school or place of work. The Principal and School

Council President will ensure that each other are informed and will obtain advice from the DET Media Branch for any contentious or legal issues.

- 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.
- 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.
- Private information will be disposed of in accordance with DET requirements 'General Disposal Authority for School Records – Public Record Office Standard (PROS0 01/01)' and disposed of in a secure manner once its retention is no longer required.
- Any person seeking information from the school that falls outside the school's normal practices must be directed to the Principal who may require that a formal written Freedom of Information request be made.
- All such Freedom of Information requests will be referred to the Department of Education and Training Freedom of Information Unit.
- Information sought by police, including interviews of students must be directed to the Principal.
- Requests from Department of Human Services Child Protection Unit personnel regarding students or families will be referred to the Principal and complied with at all times.
- The school will comply with court subpoenas to provide information at all times, but will not respond to requests from lawyers seeking information without Department of Education and Training approval.
- Action may be taken by individuals, the department or organisations against staff members who choose to communicate information improperly.
- SEPS will provide a minimum of two written reports and two parent-teacher interviews about students per year. This includes an opportunity for a 3 way (Parent-Teacher-Student) conference in mid-year.
- Additional interviews will be arranged upon agreement with teachers and parents as required.
- Parents with students in the Disabilities Program will have a Program Support Group Meeting (PSG) once per term.
- Other communication strategies with parents will include:
 - School Council, School Council sub-committees twice per term;
 - PFA/Class Parent Representative meetings monthly;
 - A weekly electronic newsletter with links to important aspects of the school as well as wider school and local community announcements;
 - A level newsletter each term from level teachers about expectations of students and learning for the term;
 - Use of Compass to inform parents of all school communications, student learning, Reports and the reporting of student absences;
 - The website will display information and links which are helpful to parents;
 - Parent 'Morning Tea' Classroom level tours with the Principal and Assistant Principals;
 - Invitation to relevant information discussions led by staff or external presenters.
- Communication between staff will include :
 - Open door policy for staff with Principal and Assistant Principals;
 - Weekly area and staff meetings which are minuted;
 - Level meetings fortnightly with effective leadership by Leading teachers and Level leaders;
 - School Improvement Team meetings weekly;
 - Regular and ongoing liaison between Education Support Staff, Principal and Assistant Principals;
 - Strong connections and team work between Education Support Staff;

- Curriculum meetings and professional learning is ongoing;
- The Principal prepares a weekly Staff newsletter detailing the week's and term's events – Sandy East Informer for all staff on a Sunday to set up the week;
- Daily news is prepared by the Assistant Principals, published on Compass;
- Detailed planning documentation of the curriculum;
- Leadership and teacher planning days each term;
- Induction Program for new staff;
- Consultative Meetings scheduled regularly;
- Social events and celebrations planned by the Social Committee.

Aspects of Communication

Focus	Implementation
School Council	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School Council meetings twice per term advertised in school newsletter and open to community. 2. Following each School Council meeting, the SC President will write a summary for school newsletter. 3. School Council will consult with parents on issues where they require opinions such as strategy plans, school vision / values or about specific issues such as before school care, uniform, canteen. 4. Consultation tools may include surveys, questionnaires, meetings or open forums. 5. Decisions made after open consultation will be communicated with reasons supporting the decision.
School Council Sub-Committees	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monthly School Council sub-committee meetings are advertised in the school calendar, available on the website and in the weekly newsletter. These meetings are open to community members. 2. School Council actively targets parent/staff members who have expertise and interest in particular areas. 3. Each SC sub-committee records discussions, circulates minutes and makes recommendations for approval by School Council. 4. The sub-committee Chairperson presents a yearly report at the AGM in March of each year.
Newsletter	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Weekly SEPS newsletter is produced on a Thursday and uploaded to the school website and Compass. 2. Principal/ AP proof reads before the newsletter is published. 3. A summary of current dates / reminders located on front page. 4. Principal's section to focus on current school events and educational aspects. 5. A term calendar is produced at the beginning of each term with all activities planned and updated throughout the term if necessary. 6. Parenting tips included in inserts. 7. Community news and events are encouraged, either as paid advertisements or community inserts. 8. Hardcopies of the newsletter will be available in office foyer. 9. It is the responsibility of all parents to access and read the newsletter each week.
Website	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Newsletter and inserts are placed on website weekly. Previous newsletters of the current year are located in the notices section of the website.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Enrolment information is placed on website for prospective parents including a Parent Information Book updated annually. 3. Policies are uploaded on website – Policy & Planning committee monitors. 4. NO surnames of students are added to website. Student privacy is maintained at all times as requested by parents. 5. Presentations by guest speakers for parent curriculum meetings/information nights are placed on the website if permission is given by the speaker. 6. The Compass Parent Portal is located on the school website.
SMS text messaging	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parents are notified by Compass in the event of extraordinary circumstances as directed by Principal.
Class Parent Representative	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Class Parents are appointed by Principal in consultation with teachers and PFA President at beginning of each year as the liaison between teachers/school parents. 2. Email group for each class is set up by Class parent/s after permission to publish contacts has been obtained. 3. This Email group is to be used for social business only – not private/class business, and needs approval by the Principal. All social business to be placed in the Principal diary. 4. PFA/Class Parent meetings are held each month with all school parents invited.
Class Parents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parents are responsible to ensure access to Compass and to ensure push notification is turned on. 2. Parents are responsible to keep up to date about school news/events through Compass, newsletter, emails and website.
Teachers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A term level newsletter is produced at the beginning of each term and uploaded to Compass. 2. Notices are available well in advance of each event. All excursion notices are distributed on Compass, hard copies are provided on request. 3. Use of student diaries is emphasised as a communication between students, teachers and parents. 4. Twice-yearly formal parent/teacher meetings including a three-way conference are offered. 5. Other Parent/Teacher Interviews made by appointment at any time there is a discussion required with teachers, Principal, AP.
Social Networking Facebook	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School Council Fundraising Committee operates a Facebook page. This page is managed by the SEPS parent community in order to communicate the SEPS social and fundraising events. It is open to all SEPS parents in an attempt to create a welcoming and inclusive parent community.

Summary

SMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emergency messages to parents
Website
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current and updated school information• Policies• Newsletter• Calendar• Access to Compass portal
Compass
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reporting of student learning tasks• Twice Yearly student reports• School related messages/communication• Parental report of student absence• Absence reported to parents• School newsletter• Payment of school contributions• Classroom organisation from teachers• Excursion notices online, including permissions
Class Parent Email Tree for:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All class social functions for parents
Hardcopy for:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Newsletter - available in the office foyer• Priority school information approved by the Principal.• Excursion notices distributed by teachers.
Social Networking: eg Facebook PFA
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive promotion of SEPS community and school events

Evaluation:

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Approved by School Council February 2018