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| **BLAKEHURST****PUBLIC SCHOOL** |
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| COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES Parents and Carers |
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Rationale

## Strong communication between the school and home provides a foundation on which school success and student achievement are built. Following the recent learning from home period (where our communication procedures reflected online teaching and learning), the school has reviewed and updated its communication procedures to reflect a return to the face to face teaching and learning environment.

# How should I communicate with the school if I need to discuss a matter?

You can contact the school by using any of the following methods:

* **Call the school office** on **9546 1555** between **8:30am and 3:30pm** to speak to your child’s teacher. Where the teacher is not available, he/she will call you back as soon as possible.
* **Send an email** to the school account at blakehurst-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au. The email should be addressed to your child’s class teacher in the first instance or to the coordinator of the school program that the matter relates to. Where you are unsure, the office staff will send your email on to the appropriate staff member.
* Participate in a **face to face meeting with your child’s teacher.** Please call the school to arrange a suitable time. Please consider that our teachers are involved in a variety of meetings, professional learning sessions and personal appointments before and after school and may not always be able to accommodate an immediate meeting. Staff will do all that they can to meet with a parent/carer as soon as possible, especially where there is a significant matter that needs to be discussed.

# Which methods of communication are not supported by the school?

We value your communication but respectfully ask that you refrain from communicating with staff in the following ways:

* Emails that are sent directly to a teacher’s Department of Education or personal email account
* Emails that are sent to executive staff or the Principal in the first instance. Matters should be communicated to your child’s teacher or a program coordinator in the first instance, either by emailing or phoning the school.
* Communication that is sent directly to a staff member’s mobile phone number.

On occasions, special arrangements may need to be put in place that allow for the school and parents to communicate through one of the above methods. This will only apply under special arrangement and only for an agreed period of time. Reasons for the above forms of communication to be in place may include:

* Communication between families and staff when students are on school business but outside the school grounds, including sporting events, excursions or camps
* Communication related to medical support/interventions for a student

# When can I expect a response from the teacher?

The school will acknowledge receipt of your communication as soon as possible but please allow **up to 2 working days** for the matter to be followed up. Teachers will also only be checking and responding to emails sent to the school during the hours of **8:30am-4:30pm (Monday to Friday).**

Where a matter takes longer to follow up, the staff member responsible will communicate with the family so that you are aware that the matter is being addressed. The nature and complexity of the matter will determine the time taken to follow up. Reasons that may impact the time taken to follow up on a matter may include any of the following:

* Time required to speak to the student/s involved.
* Time required to speak to staff members who may be able to provide additional information.
* Staff are unable to speak immediately to a student due to he/she being absent from school.
* Staff are unable to speak immediately with a colleague due to he/she not being on the school site (ie, absent, part time employee not working that day, at a school event, etc).
* Time required to consult with Department of Education staff from outside the school or specialists and/or support agencies working with students and families where required.

What does the school expect in regards to communication?

The school understands that on occasions, information may come home to you from your child which has you concerned or upset. The school’s commitment is to always listen to any matters raised by a parent/carer, as our priority is to ensure a safe, productive and happy learning environment for all students at all times.

If a matter does come to your attention that has you concerned, I respectfully ask that you please do the following:

* Raise the question with the school so that the matter can be investigated.
* Avoid communication that blames the school for an incident or is accusatory towards the school or staff. The information that comes home from a child does not always reflect the full extent of what happened and further investigation is often required.
* Give the school an opportunity to address the matter and find a solution. For complex matters, this may take some time and plans/strategies will be reviewed and changed as required. Parents will always be made aware of how the school is addressing an issue that they have raised.

When is it appropriate to communicate matters directly to the executive staff or the principal?

Parents and carers can email or directly speak to a member of the executive staff or Principal in the following cases:

* A matter has been previously communicated to the teacher but you feel that the same matter is ongoing – **contact the stage supervisor (Assistant Principal)**
* A matter has been previously communicated to the stage supervisor but you feel that the same matter is ongoing – **contact the Principal**
* A matter relates to whole school programs or procedures – **contact the Principal**

Will the school respond to matters that occur outside the school environment?

Staff are only able to directly respond to matters that occur during school hours or while the child is attending a school event such as a camp, excursion or sporting event. The school is not in a position to respond to matters that occur between students or families outside school hours or on the weekend. This also applies to the inappropriate use of technology by students when accessing devices at home while under the care and supervision of a parent/carer.

You are always welcome to make the school aware of any issues that you feel may impact on student interactions at school. Staff will monitor the situation and always keep families updated where concerns arise for their child/children while at school.

How can I provide feedback to the school?

The school values parent feedback and will always take the time to consider ‘parent voice’ when designing and implementing whole school programs and events. Parents and carers are also welcome to provide written communication to the school at any time, by emailing the school at blakehurst-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au and directing the email to the relevant staff member.

Parent feedback is collected in the following ways:

* Parent surveys (Department of Education and internal)
* Parent forums
* P&C meetings
* Parent Engagement Committee meetings
* Accepting feedback through parent emails and/or phone calls

The school asks that constructive feedback is not communicated to teachers while they are leading an event. This is not the most appropriate time to communicate feedback and the teacher/coordinator is not able to hear your concerns or give them full consideration while they are in the middle of running an event or program. Feedback should be directed to the school using one of the above methods.

How can I become more engaged with the school?

As we return to having parents and carers back on the school grounds, we will look to lead as many events and activities as possible that encourage input and participation from our parents. The school’s P&C meeting is a great way for parents/carers to become engaged with the school.

Meetings are usually held on the 2nd Thursday of each month and are held as a combination of face to face and Zoom meetings and at various times, in order to try and fit in with our busy community. Meeting information is always updated in the Bush Telegraph each fortnight or you can access updates on the P&C Facebook page.

If you are seeking additional information on the P&C, you can also email the committee directly at blakehurstpandc@gmail.com

### Communication with/from external agencies

The school will do all that it can to support students and families and on occasions, this will involve facilitating support from external providers on the school site. If you wish for your child to access support during school hours, please contact the school office so that your request can be considered. Given that providers coming in and out of classrooms can become a challenge for staff and other students, the school will generally only support providers coming onto the school grounds for one of the following reasons:

* The provider is supporting the student through 1:1 consultation outside the classroom
* The provider needs to observe the child in the classroom or playground setting
* The child has a diagnosed disability and the interventions being offered through external providers is part of the child’s ongoing support plan
* The only way for the child to access necessary support is during school hours due to the availability of the provider or an inability for parents to get their child to the provider outside school hours

The Principal will ultimately approve any agency involvement with students/families on school grounds during school hours.

If you have any questions about the school’s communication procedures or wish to share important information about your child or family circumstances, please contact the school office on 9546 1555 or email the school at Blakehurst-p.schools@det.nsw.edu.au

Additional resources:

**Department of Education – School Community Charter:**

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/public-schools/going-to-a-public-school/media/documents/school-community-charter.pdf>

**School Community and Consumer Complaint Procedures:**

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/policy-library/associated-documents/School-complaint-procedure_AC.pdf>

*The Department of Education are currently establishing an updated Parent and Carer Engagement Framework. Our school procedures will be reviewed and updated to reflect the key focus areas of the framework once it is established and implemented across schools.*

Most recent review: March 2022

Next review date: March 2023

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