



## **Lindfield Public School – Communication Protocol**

Lindfield PS is committed to a partnership with parents in the education of their children. Lindfield Public School will meet its commitment to engaging in successful communication through providing open and transparent information about all our programs and procedures. These protocols outline the communication responsibilities for teachers, students and parents to share information relating to both the education of students and our school community.

### **Principles of Communication at Lindfield Public School**

The objective of communication between parents and the school is always to arrive at an outcome which enhances the learning opportunities of our students. At Lindfield Public School we expect and understand that everyone will, in any form of communication, always adhere to a respectful and dignified manner as per the School Community Charter.

Parents have several direct ways to communicate with teachers including: the telephone, face-to-face meetings and school e-mail. The latter has become a helpful form of communication in our society because it is fast and convenient.

However, this technology has its drawbacks, especially for our teaching staff. It has significantly increased workload and has led to an expectation for a turn-around time that might not be possible. With this in mind, we would like to clarify the guidelines for what is effective and appropriate in terms of home/school communication.

### **The Realities**

The teachers' top priority during school hours is working directly with the children. As such, the classroom environment does not allow teachers to check their e-mails regularly. In most cases, teachers respond to e-mails before and after school.

Teachers are sometimes unavailable due to meetings, illness, conferences/training and personal/family responsibilities, which will delay their response.

Teachers devote considerable time before and after school developing lesson plans, preparing for daily activities, marking work, and reviewing the curriculum that must be taught.

### **Considerations**

Timing - Please remember the classroom environment and the complexity of a teacher's day. If you don't receive an immediate answer to your e-mail, it doesn't mean you are being ignored. A teacher will generally respond within 24-48 hours between the hours of 8am and 4.30pm.

What is the goal? Please consider your goal in communicating with the teacher. If your purpose is to share information or give the teacher time to think about an issue, an e-

mail is appropriate. However, if you would like two-way dialogue on a complex issue, e-mail or messaging is not always appropriate. Please consider a request for a face-to-face meeting.

Volume - Each primary teacher has at least 20-30 students in their classroom. Please consider how many e-mails and messages teachers could potentially receive throughout the day from parents.

### **Additional thoughts**

Teachers are very interested in communicating with parents, especially if a student is experiencing difficulty at home or at school.

Communication, although important, needs to be controlled. Responding to emails takes thought and reflection.

Unfortunately, emails leave a lot of room for misunderstanding. Face-to-face contact with the teacher will lead to better communication and problem-solving.

### **Communication Channels at LPS**

**Weekly Newsletter:** Published weekly on Microsoft Sway to every family.

**Audiri & School Bytes App:** Alerts and notices sent out for event reminders and special events. (Audiri App will be replaced by the School Bytes App in Term 3)

**School Website:** Regularly updated with calendar events, download versions of permission notes and the school newsletter. Maintained to ensure current information from the P&C and school events is available.

**SeeSaw:** Three posts a term will be sent giving information on class activities and learning.

**Permission Notes:** Permission and information notes are distributed to families via the School Bytes Parent Portal. Payments are also made via this platform.

**Email contact:** All staff are accessible by email by sending correspondence to the school email account. Please clearly identify which staff member you wish the correspondence forwarded to.

### **Staff Responsibilities in Communicating with Parents**

Staff will:

- Respond to parental enquiries by phone or email. This should be prompt – usually within twenty-four to forty-eight hours (school days) between the hours of 8am and 4.30pm.
- Contact parents if they have concerns for a student's welfare.
- Distribute notices and information to parents or upload information to the School Bytes parent portal within a reasonable timeframe.
- When a concern arises, teachers will seek advice from the appropriate supervisor and contact parents as appropriate.
- If needed, a teacher will ask parents to attend a meeting with the student and supervisor to seek clarification or resolution or to establish a plan of support for the student.
- If the matter needs further discussion or resolution the assistance of a member of the Senior Executive will be sought.

## **Parents and Guardians' Responsibilities in Communicating with the School**

Parents are encouraged to:

- Access our weekly newsletter via our school website each week.
- Download the SchoolBytes App to receive relevant notifications for their child/children and to access notes and the newsletter.
- Support their child/children to establish routines around daily procedures for their communication between home and school.
- Sign in at the office when they visit.

Parents are asked to:

- Inform the school of the reason for their child's absence through School Bytes.
- Communicate with the classroom teacher in the first instance by phoning or emailing the school should a concern or query arise.
- Seek a mutually convenient time with the relevant teacher should a meeting be required.
- Advise the teacher if they would like a further meeting on the matter with the appropriate supervisor.
- Discuss matters with the class teacher, not a SLSO (School Learning Support Officer) working with the class. Parents should not address concerns regarding their children to SLSOs they should contact the supervising teacher.
- Seek assistance from a Senior Executive if the matter needs further resolution.

Parents are urged to regularly seek information from the established channels of communication:

- School Bytes Parent Portal
- The Lindfield Public School Website
- The School Newsletter
- Audiri App (being replaced in Term 3 with School Bytes App)
- Parent-Teacher interviews (T2, or as required)
- P&C Facebook Page

## **Students' Responsibilities in Communication**

- Speak with teachers if experiencing any problems at home or school.
- Hand in or give notices promptly to either their parent or teacher.
- Speak to a playground duty teacher if experiencing difficulties in the playground or if they witness somebody having problems or notice damage in the playground.

## **Concern Management Process**

1. Contact the teacher via the school e-mail [lindfield-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:lindfield-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au) or phone the school office requesting an appointment. The teacher will respond within 24-48 hours.
2. If you send an e-mail to the teacher via the school email, please state the general concern. If the concern can be resolved through e-mail, the teacher will address it through e-mail. However, if the concern is more involved, please state it without detailing all the specifics. We have found that that best way to resolve concerns is to discuss them, and not try to resolve them through e-mail.

E-mail and messaging are not always an adequate collaboration tool to address concerns, but it does serve to express the need to work on the issue.

3. The teacher will connect with you to understand and resolve the concern. If necessary, the teacher would offer a time for a face-to-face meeting.

4. If you and the teacher cannot resolve the concern, please ask that the Stage Supervisor participate in the problem-solving process. If the concern remains unresolved, the matter will be referred to the Deputy Principal or Principal.

### **Email Etiquette Tips**

1. Avoid using e-mail or messaging for matters of controversy or distress. If you have a serious matter, please meet with the teacher directly.

2. Do not barrage a teacher or members of the school staff with multiple e-mails on the same topic. Keep your comments to the point.

3. It is not advisable to say anything in an e-mail or message that you wouldn't want published.

4. The rules for civility in e-mails and messages are the same as in face-to-face meetings. Conveying a positive tone will set the stage for a cordial relationship with the teachers and other school personnel.

We thank you in advance for following this process. We can best meet your needs by working together, face-to-face or on the phone as appropriate. We want to ensure that our decisions for your children are thoughtful, measured, and within our capacity to reasonably deliver. Our experience tells us that students benefit most when we work together to meet their needs in a culture of respect and collaboration.