Communication Policy

Communication is a vital part of everyday life at St Bede’s and all community members should be kept informed as required.

GUIDELINES:

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

1. Members of staff are committed to working in partnership with parents in the education of their children; therefore, teachers arrange interviews with parents when the need arises.

2. Each teacher conducts an Information Evening interview with parents within the first four weeks of Term One. The aims of the meeting are to:

   • meet the parents of the children;
   • present goals for the year;
   • present and discuss mutual expectations;
   • present class procedures and policies;
   • outline curriculum areas;
   • present the current Homework Policy; and
   • present and discuss proposed planned excursions.

3. During Term Two, parents are invited to a parent/teacher interview. The purpose of this interview is to discuss the child’s growth and development, and to help him/her set goals for future learning.

4. At the end of each semester, a detailed report is sent home covering academic and social progress throughout the semester. This is followed by an opportunity for parent/teacher interviews.

5. Parents who wish to talk with a teacher at other times during the school year are encouraged to do so. It is requested that they make an appointment either before or after school so that classes are not disturbed.

CONTACT PHONE NUMBERS

We ask parents to inform the office immediately if there is a change of contact number so that they can be reached in case of illness or accident. It is in the interest of the child that these numbers are kept up to date.
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**ABSENTEEISM**

All occasions of absence of a child from class require an explanation from parent/guardian. A written note is requested as all days of absence need be accounted for - the school roll being a legal document. However, it is especially important if the absence is going to be of an extended nature (e.g. overseas trip) that you ensure written notification to the Principal is made prior to any absence. Appropriate forms are available from the front office and also on the school website. Please assist us in this area of responsibility.

In the case of a child needing to attend an appointment during school hours a note is also necessary and requested. This note is directed via your child's teacher to the office on the day concerned. Parents are asked to come to the office in order to withdraw a child during the school day and similarly to return the child to the office on return to school. Children need to be signed in and out in the school register.

**SCHOOL NEWSLETTER**

The school newsletter is forwarded electronically every Thursday and is a vital form of communication between the school and families. School news, details of events and reminder dates are all contained in this publication. A limited number of hard copies are available from the front foyer each Thursday afternoon.

**NB:** An on-line calendar listing most school activities and special events is available on the school website. However, event dates are subject to change. Please check the on-line calendar and ‘Dates For Your Diary’ included in each newsletter.

**PRIVACY POLICY**

The St Bede’s Privacy Policy enables us to meet our obligations under the Privacy Legislation that came into effect on 21 December 2001.

We believe:
- the dignity of each person must be respected;
- schools are privy to information about students and their families that should be treated professionally;
- information about students should be disclosed only to those directly involved, in a professional manner, and according to government legislation;
- staff should model appropriate behaviours by only disclosing information about students in accordance with this policy;
- some information about students and their families may be passed on to the school community when it is in accordance with government legislation;
Communication Policy

- parents should be made aware of the school’s Privacy Policy which is aligned to government legislation.

IMPLEMENTATION

- St Bede’s Primary School collects personal information, including sensitive information, about students and parents or guardians before and during the course of a student’s enrolment at St Bede’s Primary School. The primary purpose of collecting this information is to enable schooling to be provided for your son/daughter.
- Some of the information collected is to satisfy our legal obligations, particularly to enable the discharge of our duty of care.
- Certain laws governing or relating to the operation of schools require that certain information be collected. These include Public Health and Child Protection Laws.
- Health information about students is sensitive information within the terms of the National Privacy Principles under the Privacy Act. We require medical reports about students at times.
- At times we are required to disclose personal and sensitive information to others for administrative and educational purposes. This includes disclosure to government departments, Catholic Education Offices and schools, the Catholic Education Commission, your local Archdiocese and the parish, medical practitioners, Centacare and people providing services to the School, including specialist visiting teachers, coaches and volunteers.
- If we do not obtain the information referred to above, enrolment or continued enrolment of your son/daughter may not be able to continue.
- Personal information collected from students is regularly disclosed to their parents or guardians. On occasions information such as academic and sporting achievements, pupil activities and other news is published in St Bede’s newsletters and Archdiocesan newspapers.
- Parents may seek access to personal information collected about them and their son / daughter by contacting us. Students may also seek access to personal information about them. However, there will be occasions when access is denied. Such occasions would include where access would have an unreasonable impact on the privacy of others, where access may result in a breach of St Bede’s duty of care to the student, or where pupils have provided information in confidence.
- As you know, at times, Catholic Schools within the Archdiocese engage in fundraising activities. Information received from you may be used to make an appeal to you. It may also be disclosed to organisations that assist in the School’s and the Archdiocese’s fundraising activities. We will not disclose your personal information to third parties for their own marketing purposes without your consent.
- We may include your contact details in St Bede’s School contact lists and directories. If you do not agree to this you must advise us now.
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• If you provide us with the personal information of others, such as doctors or emergency contacts, we encourage you to inform them that you are disclosing that information to us and why, that they can access that information if they wish and that we do not usually disclose the information to third parties.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

SCHOOL BOARD

The inaugural St Bede’s School Board was established in late 1988, in response to a CEC directive, “in order to provide the members of the faith community with the opportunity to exercise their responsibilities in shared decision making.” The areas of shared decision making encompass the following functions: financial management and accountability; planning; pastoral care; maintenance of facilities; and public relations.

The School Board is the policy making body of the school, working with the Principal to ensure that the formulation of all policies flow from the spirit of our school's Vision and Mission Statement. It meets regularly and you are encouraged to make yourself known to the parent representatives of the School Board, informing them of any concerns or suggestions you may have pertaining to school life.

PARENTS AND FRIENDS

The Committee of the P&F Association operates on a basis of close cooperation with the Board, Principal and school staff in the belief that only through this mutual cooperation and friendship can we grow spiritually, as well as practically, as a school community. The P&F Committee endeavours to do this by supporting the Vision and Mission Statement of St Bede’s and the objectives of the P&F's constitution. The Association is vital to the life of the school and exists to support the school in the following ways:

• providing a meeting ground for parents and friends;
• providing an educational forum for parents; and
• providing an opportunity for:
  ▪ the Principal to report on the school’s activities;
  ▪ social activities; and
  ▪ fundraising.

The P&F Committee actively raise funds throughout the year and this is part of the service to the school. Every family at St Bede’s is automatically a member of the P&F Association. Your active participation is encouraged and welcomed.
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At least one General Meeting per term is held at school, offering you the opportunity to participate in the decision making process. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) is held in November each year to elect the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and up to six committee members (ten members in total).

The P&F assists at Open (May) and Orientation Days (November) with general school information and clothing sales. On the first day of school for the Kindergarten class, morning tea is offered in the school hall to welcome all new families into school life and to provide an opportunity to meet other community members.

CLASS CONTACTS
Each class has two parent representatives who provide a contact point for new families. Their aim is to promote a sense of community within our school and to coordinate pastoral care. During the year they organise gatherings for parents to get together socially at a class level.

In their pastoral care role they aim to be aware of, and respond to, family needs. A network of pastoral care volunteers can be called on to provide support and practical aid to families in times of stress. A pastoral care contact person is able to arrange a meal, childcare or shopping as needed.

STAFF COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS
There is a weekly school newsletter with important details of upcoming events as well as reports on activities that have taken place.

The school has a website which is kept up to date with access to details of current events including a comprehensive calendar.

Teachers communicate details of students’ progress through parent interviews as requested. Reports are sent home three (including an interim report) times a year. Please ensure you reply to any parent queries received via email within a reasonable period of time. A ‘holding’ reply may be required if the matter raised needs to be investigated.

NOTES TO PARENTS
General notes to class families should be dated and signed. These notes should be shown to the Principal or Assistant Principal before distribution and a copy filed in the Front Office. Individual letters to parents/guardians should be written professionally and proof read by the Principal or the Assistant Principal.