

SACRED HEART PARISH PRIMARY SCHOOL POLICY

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Version Number: 2

Approval by: Education Board

Responsible Officers:

Education Board

Approval Date: 19 July 2017

Review Date: 2019

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define a consistent approach to be taken by Sacred Heart Parish Primary School when engaging with the school community. The objectives of the policy are to:

- Enable the school community to be better informed about school issues, processes and decisions which might affect them;
- Reduce misinformation and misconception;
- Develop a stronger school community;
- Develop trust and credibility;
- Nurture a spirit of respect and cooperation between parents/guardians/carers, staff, students and the school community; and
- Provide a customised approach to communications at the school.

2. CONTEXT

Currently there are a number of avenues that provide the Principal with the opportunity to engage with the wider school community. This policy consolidates these avenues in one central location to provide the Principal and Education Board with a streamlined approach to school communication.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to Sacred Heart Parish Primary School.

4. DEFINITIONS

In this policy:

School Community	is broadly defined as those who have an interest in or are affected by the business of Sacred Heart Parish Primary School and the way it operates and may include: parents/guardians/carers, students (pupils), teachers, support staff, Catholic Education Office and parishioners.
Principal	means the Spiritual and Educational Leader of a Primary School.
Education Board	means the members of the Board as defined in the Terms of Reference updated in February 2017 and includes ex-officio members, nominated members and elected representatives.
Sacred Heart Parish Primary School	means a Catholic school registered by the Registered Schools Board as a primary school and includes those schools so registered where classes are held for years up to but not beyond Year Eight.
Parish (Sacred Heart Parish)	in the Roman Catholic Church, each parish has at least one Parish Priest/Priest in Charge, who has responsibility and canonical authority over the parish
School Secretary	has the responsibility for maintaining all student records and being the resource person for the students, parents and visitors.

5. SACRED HEART PARISH PRIMARY SCHOOL POLICY

5.1 It is the Sacred Heart Parish Primary School policy that the Principal will annually (January – December) conduct formal communications with the school community in the following manner:

- a) Newsletters each week of the Victorian School Term;
- b) Print Media as required, including Leader Newspaper supplement on education and Catholic Education Week; and
- c) Other strategic tactic communication measures identified in the Communication Plan which include but are not limited to:
 - An informative and updated Website;
 - Information Sessions for existing and prospective parents/guardians/carers;
 - Facebook page administered by the Education Board in conjunction with the Principal; and
 - An App (Apple and Android) to be used for issuing reminders and information to parents about upcoming events.

5.2 Communication Plan

The Communication Plan will identify and assess existing communication channels and provide future options for how these can be optimised.

5.2.1 Form

The Communication Plan will allow the school to have a strategic approach to communications branding and marketing of the school.

5.2.2 Responsibilities

- The Education Board will, on an annual basis, review and update the Communication Plan. This will include seeking feedback from the school community on new and improved options for all forms of communication from the school.
- The Principal (or delegate) will have final editorial authority over the Communication Plan.

5.3 Newsletters

Newsletters provide a mechanism for the Principal to communicate relevant school wide issues.

5.3.1 Form

The Newsletter will take the following form:

- Full colour document, A4 size for the website and black and white copy for distribution;
- Designed using a standard template;
- Delivered either by:
 - A hard copy to the eldest sibling at the school;
 - Via email to those families registered to be on the email distribution list (the preferred distribution method);
 - Posted on the website by 4.00pm each Thursday of the Victorian School Term; and
- Will generally contain the following sections:
 - Report from the Principal;
 - Report from the Parents & Friends Association;
 - Report from the Education Board; and
 - Other relevant school wide topics as agreed with the Principal (or delegate).

5.3.2 Responsibilities

- The Principal will contact teachers with initial suggestions for school-specific articles and children's curriculum themes. Teachers will also be urged to suggest articles, ideas and topics they would like included in the School newsletter;
- The Education Board will also identify relevant school-wide articles for the Education Board pages;
- The Parents and Friends Association will also identify relevant schoolwide events for the Parents and Friends pages;
- The Principal (or delegate) will have final editorial authority over the newsletter.

5.3.3 Timeframes

- The final deadline for an article and photo revisions by the Education Board and Parents and Friends Association will be one week prior to the agreed publication date (Thursday each week of the Victorian School Term);
- Office staff from Sacred Heart Parish Primary School will arrange distribution of the newsletter within the School.

5.4 Information Sessions

Information sessions enable the Principal to:

- Provide the school community with an update of issues; and
- Receive feedback and information from the wider school community.

5.4.1 Information Session Form

- In order to provide a spread of hours that would enable maximum participation by the school community, consideration should be given to holding meetings as follows:
 - During school hours; and
 - In the Evenings.
- The Information Sessions are to be conducted on an instructive and educational basis. They can be used to provide detailed information to the school community on the progress of projects or upcoming projects.

5.4.2 Information Session Venue

- The venue for the information sessions will be conveniently located in the School Hall which is accessible by all.
- Where possible, furniture will be arranged to promote an informal atmosphere.
- Tea, coffee and biscuits will be available, where appropriate.

5.4.3 Information Sessions notification and support by Education Board Representatives and Parents & Friends Representatives

The Principal shall:

- Provide notification of information sessions by:
 - Placing a notice on the website;
 - Emailing a notice to those on the distribution list who receive a newsletter; and
 - Providing a hard copy to the eldest sibling in the school.
 - Placing a notice on the school App.
- Place reminders in the school newsletter in the lead up to the Information Sessions.
- Be responsible for keeping a record of issues arising from the Information Sessions that require any follow up.
- At least one Education Board member will be present at each Information Session to provide administrative assistance to the Principal.
- The Parents & Friends Association has the option to delegate a representative to attend an Information session if they choose.

5.5 Media

- Contact with the Media by members of the Board should not occur. Board Members should defer any media enquiries to the Principal and/or Chairperson in the first instance and should take care not to respond as a representative of the Board.

5.6 Facebook Page

- The official Sacred Heart Facebook page was created in June 2017 after recommendations from the broader parent body to increase communication between home and school.
- The purpose of this page is threefold:
 1. To promote Parish and Parish school events on a regular basis.
 2. To promote the celebration of learning and teaching.
 3. To increase exposure of the Sacred Heart Parish School within the wider community.

5.6.1 Moderation

- The Principal will be a member and oversee all communication on the Sacred Heart Facebook page.
- The Education Board Chair, in conjunction with two (2) other members of the Education Board, will occasionally meet with the Principal to ensure that communication postings are in accordance with the ethos of the Church and guidelines for Catholic Education.
- 'Insights' will be provided each Education Board meeting, depicting data on postings and provide general feedback.

5.6.2 Use of Photos

- During a school activity, any photographs taken of Sacred Heart children cannot be posted on social media. Activities include excursions, concerts, camps and sports days.
- As a courtesy, permission must be sought from other parents before posting any photos of Sacred Heart children taken in a social environment or during after school sports activities.
- This is to ensure that the privacy, location and safety of all students is in accordance with the Child Safe Standards.

5.7 Apple and Android App

- The "Sacred Heart Primary School Croydon" Apple and Android app is a platform for the communication of:
 - Special events.
 - Reminders.
 - Alerts.
 - Emergency procedures.
 - Calendar updates.
- Notifications can only be initiated by the school office and will be approved by the Principal prior to posting.

6. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every two years to take into account any new technologies, legislation, expectations or practices.