

VILLAGE SCHOOL COMMUNICATION PLAN

1. Policy Statement

Village School is an independent, non-sectarian, and non-denominational primary school having no specific affiliations with any other educational establishment or educational system. Our mission is to delight and inspire children to become resourceful, independent learners. Our educational philosophy is underpinned by the concept of liberalism and tolerance, promoting humanitarian concerns such as inclusiveness, equity and universal rights.

We provide a supportive, caring environment in which children can discover and learn. We celebrate individual differences whilst at the same time encouraging children to develop an awareness of their place in society, to grow to understand their role in supporting and caring for each other, other living creatures and the environment. Core academic subjects are top priority, and we foster each child's special talents whilst discovering their own path to success.

We support a differentiated curriculum which provides a variety of teaching approaches and classroom structures. Emotional and intellectual growth are fostered through drama, horse riding, music, camps and sleepovers. Fostering responsibility, reliability, resourcefulness and the growth of independence are central to our approach to the individual and planning for them.

1.1 AIMS

- That effective and respectful communication between all school community members takes place.
- That processes are in place which allow for two way, open and honest communication amongst all school community members to ensure that each perspective is understood and appreciated and that common, achievable goals can be set and reviewed.
- That confidential information is managed in a manner consistent with community expectations, professional standards and legal obligations.
- That clear, positive and fair processes and guidelines are provided which allow issues or concerns to be aired and resolved in a timely, effective and respectful manner.
- That a positive, productive and harmonious school environment is maintained at all times.

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2. Application

This policy applies to all staff, students, parents, school board, volunteers, contractors and all members of Village School community.

3. Definition of Terms

Communication – the process of using words, sounds, or behaviours to express or exchange information. The two-way process of reaching mutual understanding, in which, participants exchange information, news, ideas and feelings.

4. Responsibility

4.1 BOARD

The Board is responsible for ensuring the appropriate communication plans are in place.

4.2 PRINCIPAL

The principal is responsible for ensuring that all staff, students and volunteers are aware of the relevant communication.

4.3 STAFF, VOLUNTEERS

The staff and volunteers are responsible for familiarising themselves with the relevant communication sources.

5. Authorisation

The board is responsible for authorising the school's communication plan.

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6. Procedures

6.1 COMMUNICATION BASICS

We all want a strong and positive sense of school community where staff, parents and students feel they belong. One where we all feel we can share ideas and knowledge in an accepting environment. This provides a strong foundation upon which to deliver the best possible learning outcomes for our children.

Village School good communication basics are:

- we are always respectful, polite and honest.
- We strive always to be clear, accurate, timely, relevant, targeted, open, reciprocal and interactive.
- We strive for open, positive and meaningful communication in everything we do.
- We support each other to be involved in the exchange of ideas and in maintaining an environment where people feel their views are valued and respected and where they feel they have been heard.
- Our school leaders lead by example.

6.2 PROCEDURE FOR CONTACTING A CLASSROOM TEACHER

When a parent wishes to contact a member of staff to discuss matters relating to their child, the procedure is to contact the teacher involved, giving a brief outline of the issue. Contact should be made using one of the following approaches:

- Contact the teacher by phone. Teachers are not usually available to answer phone calls or come to the office during teaching time or whilst on yard duty.
- Contact the appropriate teacher in writing or via email, asking them to organise a suitable meeting time.
- Speak briefly with the appropriate teacher, either before or after school hours (not at a time when they are teaching or on yard duty) and ask them to arrange a suitable meeting time.

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6.3 PROCEDURE FOR CONTACTING OTHER SCHOOL PERSONNEL

- When a parent has a concern or wishes to discuss an issue regarding a situation which they consider affects the whole school, their child's wellbeing or relates to a school policy or matter, the procedure is to:
 - Contact the Principal or a relevant School Leader, using one of the three approaches outlined above in 6.2
- When parents have a concern or wish to discuss an issue relating to a member of staff or of a sensitive nature, they should make an appointment with the Principal by contacting the school office, either by phone or coming to the office personally, and asking the School Registrar or the Business Manager to arrange a suitable meeting time.
- In all cases if the matter is urgent and / or relates to the possible risk or harm to a student, a member of staff or another member of the school community, the Principal should be informed immediately and the urgency of the matter conveyed. The Principal will determine who is the most appropriate person to deal with the issue and the process to work towards a resolution, as well as ensuring that contact is made as soon as possible.

6.4 PROCESS FOR GREIVANCES AND COMPLAINTS

Village School will deal with all complaints and issues sensitively, promptly and confidentially. Matters will be investigated and dealt with in a timely manner. In working through any issues raised by students, parents/carers, or other school community members, a resolution which treats all parties with dignity and respect will be sought. Issues and matters which have been raised will be kept in the strictest of confidence and not discussed with any other persons, excepting those directly involved.

- Anonymous complaints will not be accepted or acted upon.

Resolving matters of concern are best achieved through face-to-face contact with the appropriate person.

Emails and letters should be brief, alerting the person to the issue; they should not be used as a forum for in-depth discussion.

Formal meetings will be minuted, and all persons involved will receive a copy of the minutes. Any correspondence received by the school will be kept in a secure file.

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In the event that the school cannot resolve a grievance or complaint issue, community members are advised to contact ISV (98257200 or <https://is.vic.edu.au/>) as an external level of support to discuss the matter further.

6.5 PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS

Village School is committed to providing procedural fairness when there is a complaint or grievance.

What does this mean?

- The process must be safe and fair to all parties.
- The views of all parties are listened to.
- The views of adults are not prioritised over those of children and young people simply because they are not adults.
- Conflicts of interest are identified and managed to ensure a fair process and outcome.
- Decisions are based on evidence.
- The process is sensitive to cultural, linguistic, gender, identity and religious differences.

6.6 ISSUES ARISING BETWEEN STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

No parent should approach the children of other families or their parents with a school related or non-school related issue on the school grounds. Such matters must be addressed to the Principal or teaching staff.

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6.7 COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE SCHOOL AND WIDER COMMUNITY

Communication methods available are described in 6.8 Communication Table.

6.8 COMMUNICATION TABLE

People who want to find out information relating to Village school can, and should be able to do so, quickly and easily. We maintain a table that contains our main communication mechanisms, what we communicate through those mechanisms, who is responsible for them and how often we can expect to receive them. That way anyone looking for information can easily access it.

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6.8 COMMUNICATION TABLE

6.8.1 Staff Communication

MECHANISM	PURPOSE	ACTION	FREQUENCY
School Philosophy Process	To review current school practice and performance and set goals for strategic planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey and workshop of teachers, parents Preparation of issues paper and development of School Strategic Plan and Annual Operational Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4-year review cycle Parent and staff satisfaction surveys bi-annually
Operational Plan	To articulate the actions to be taken towards the 4 year priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal and staff to formulate plan at the beginning of each year <i>Operational plan reviewed at end of each year</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually
Internal drive for all new staff	To introduce new staff to all policies and procedures in a digital form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New staff to access in their own time 	Once
Professional Pathways and Performance Management Process (Annual Professional Discussions)	To implement whole school goals and provide professional support and dialogue for staff Career path planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal supports team through formal and informal meetings to plan/support and evaluate the pathways process. Staff prepare documentation prior to formal meeting times 	Ongoing throughout the year. Formal meetings at the Planning Stage, Mid Cycle Review and Summative end of year

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal advises the Board when the processes are completed 	
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MECHANISM	PURPOSE	ACTION	FREQUENCY
Staff meetings	To provide information, raise issues, plan and discuss school management, activities and programs	Whole staff meetings held each week	Weekly
Staff email on staff network	To share information and documents	Open to all staff	Ongoing
Break/Lunch notices	To share day to day information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open to all staff Information put on whiteboard and announced at recess 	Ongoing
Communication Whiteboards in Kitchen area	To provide daily information, timetable changes and staff absences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open to all staff for input and notices are entered before 9.00am Staff responsibility to check and to follow up as appropriate 	•Daily
Term Calendar	To provide an overview of school events, excursions and professional development	Upcoming events are written on the calendar	Ongoing/updated throughout the year

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6.8.2 Community Communication

MECHANISM	PURPOSE	ACTION	FREQUENCY
Village School Handbook	To introduce and provide information to new families and staff about the school	Handed to all new families and staff members	Once
School Board Meetings	To participate in school based management decision making and activities	Meetings are advised in the school newsletter	A minimum of 4 meetings a year
P n F Meetings	To provide ongoing opportunities for parents/carers to be involved in and informed of school activities	Meeting times and articles are published in the school newsletter	Meetings are held at least twice a <i>term</i>
Newsletter	To communicate key events, policies, ideas and achievements to the School Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admin staff to co-ordinate items • Teachers and students contribute items 	Newsletter is distributed each Monday in digital form, Newsletter in hard copy to those families who request it
Parent Information Sessions and Forums	To inform and consult with parents about school initiatives and programs e.g. School Improvement, Report Formats, School and Parent Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosted by teachers or Principal as required to provide opportunities for consultation with parents 	Scheduled as required

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All forums and sessions are advertised in the school newsletter 	
Parent Workshops	To provide parents with information and strategies to be able to support their children at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepared and provided by classroom teachers. 	Terms 1 and 3 and as needed
Student Contact details	To ensure all student information, health issues and contact details are up to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Printout of student information held on school intranet sent home with each student for review by parents to ensure contact details are accurate 	Early in Term 1
School Website	To provide information about the school, and its programs and achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The website is updated and includes the weekly newsletter 	Ongoing updates
Dates to Remember Calendar	To keep parents/ carers informed of school activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School calendar is kept up to date Relevant dates and activities are included in the weekly newsletter 	Every Term
Term Overviews to Parent/Carers	To inform parents/carers of class organisation, activities planned for the term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class teachers write the overview and distribute it to all students 	Week 3 of each term

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School Correspondence including excursion notes	To provide parents/carers with details of school programs and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sent home with students as required • Notes posted on school website 	As required
Front Office Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A point of contact for parents/carers if they are unable to access a teacher • A point of contact to set up appointments with school staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information from parents/carers passed on to the staff notice board or personally as necessary • Appointments booked 	Ongoing/as required
School Notice Board (near the gazebo)	To keep parents/ carers informed of school activities	Updated with upcoming events or information	Weekly

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6.8.3 Student Communication

MECHANISM	PURPOSE	ACTION	FREQUENCY
Informal meetings with student and teacher	To share relevant information to support student	Student or teacher initiates meeting	As required
Class Meetings	To promote positive social development and raise issues for class discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers schedule class meetings into the weekly program, utilising the opportunity for social skill development 	Weekly
Assemblies: WSM (Whole School Meetings)	To recognise and share achievements and information with students and parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WSM each term detailing whole school Parents advised of special presentations WSM prepared by students and teachers and hosted by students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WSM are held weekly alternating Notified in newsletter and on main noticeboard

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6.8.4 Reporting To and From Parents

MECHANISM	PURPOSE	ACTION	FREQUENCY
Informal meetings with parents/carers and teacher	To share relevant information to support individual students	Parent/carer or teacher initiates meeting	As required
Assessment and Reporting Guide for Parents	To outline the assessment and reporting practices and schedule	Printed pamphlet distributed with the first newsletter each year	Early Term 1 each year
Student Information Sheet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable parents to articulate their child's strengths and areas of concern, • To provide any information that may assist the class teacher To articulate goals that they might have for their child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proforma sent home with 3 Way Conference invitation • Proforma brought to conference for discussion • Teachers to keep information with student records 	Mid Term 1 in conjunction with 3 Way Conferences
National Assessment Program – Literacy & Numeracy (NAPLAN)	To assess student performance in Language Conventions, Writing, Reading and Numeracy against National benchmarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One week of testing in Term 2 • Reports are issued to parents by the beginning of Term 4 	Week 2 Term 2– Testing
Semester Written Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a comprehensive report about students' academic progress, achievements, social development and work habits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers complete assessment and moderation, and prepare written reports • Reports are submitted to Principal for review and comment 	Week 9 Term 2 Week 9 Term 4

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		Reports issued to parents.	
Student Portfolios	To provide students, teachers and parents with an opportunity to reflect upon student learning and support written reports	Students and teachers compile portfolios	Sent home twice a year with Semester Written Reports and as requested
School events. E.g., school concerts and performances	To foster a sense of school community through shared experiences and activities	Notes to advise as required	Throughout the year

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7. Additional Provisions

N/A

8. Reference Documents

Village School Policies	Agreements, Acts & Regulations
Privacy Policy	Department of Education "commstoolkit"
Confidentiality Policy	Fair Work Act 2009
Social Media Policy	Sex Discrimination Act
IT Policy	Racial Discrimination Act
Code of Conduct Policy	
Recruitment Policy	
Induction Policy	