

Penong Primary School

Respect Community Achievement



Government of South Australia
Department for Education



Communication Policy

Rationale

A positive school culture of trust and care is built upon the effective partnership between home and school. Critical to this partnership is a commitment to open, honest and timely communication with shared expectations and responsibilities. In promoting respectful and constructive communication as a key element of conflict management, we strengthen this partnership further to value each other's contributions and work effectively together for the betterment of our students' wellbeing and learning outcomes.

Responsibilities of all staff, parents and caregivers

When communicating in relation to school and/or student matters, it is an expectation that all members of staff and parents/caregivers will:

- Maintain respectful and constructive communication that describes the concern, communicates the facts and is focussed on understanding the problem and finding a solution.
- Keep electronic communication brief and informative.
- Address issues that require a level of detailed discussion in person or over the phone.
- Respect the confidentiality of messages containing personal or sensitive information; and do not forward or pass on this information to a third party without permission.
- Remember that electronic messages are subject to Freedom of Information regulations.
- Refrain from connecting via social media in relation to the matter, so as to maintain the appropriate professional relationship.

Expectations of staff

When communicating with parents/caregivers, we will:

- Send or respond to work related messages at a time of convenience throughout the school day, and use personal discretion to respond outside of school hours (8:30am – 4:30pm Monday to Friday)
- Aim to reply to parent communication within 24 hours.
- Acknowledge receipt of parent communication as soon as practicable within school hours and if time is required to gather information and provide a suitable reply, indicate when an informed response will be provided.
- Address sensitive issues or matters in person at a mutually agreed time; and never raise or discuss matters of this nature in electronic communication.
- Notify parents/caregivers of any dates of extended leave, where direct communication will not be available.
- Not respond to offensive or abusive messages; and forward any such messages immediately to the Principal.

Expectations of parents and caregivers

When communicating about school matters, we will:

- Communicate in person, via email, approved school channels and platforms, and phone (including the approved Principal's mobile phone, as required).
- Contact the Front Office for urgent matters or matters that require an immediate response; and direct administrative correspondence to the school's email address:
dl.0338.info@schools.sa.edu.au.
- Keep the school administration and class teacher up-to-date with current contact details, including phone and email addresses.
- Convey messages with clear language, honesty and respect; upholding the school values and expected conduct at all times.
- Arrange a time to meet with staff face-to-face to discuss sensitive or complex issues (a request via email briefly outlining your concerns and to arrange a meeting is appropriate prior to a deeper discussion).
- Understand staff must prioritise teaching and building a positive learning environment during school hours, and will attend to emails and phone messages during the school day (8:30am – 4:30pm).
- Consider school hours when expecting a response and understand that depending on the nature of the message, the staff member will determine the best method for reply and respond accordingly (ideally, within 24 hours, as required by this policy).

Responsibilities of Students

In line with the school values, students will communicate with peers, staff and their family in relation to school and learning, in a manner that is timely, clear, respectful and honest. They will:

- Convey information accurately, through the telling of facts.
- Pass school correspondence to their parents/caregivers on the day of issue (including flyers, notes, newsletters).
- Use communication channels and devices for the intended purpose, and as permitted by school policies (for example, mobile phone and personal device policy; technology user agreement etc.).
- Report any worries, incidents or concerns to an adult at school as soon as possible throughout the school day; particularly, in order to seek support to manage grievances.

Reviewed August 2025

Signed *Karen Murray*
Principal

Signed: *Allison Shipard*
Chairperson Governing Council

Next Review August 2028