

## COMMUNICATION – POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS

### Communication Guidelines

Quality Relationships are at the core of our Presentation and Franciscan Qualities and the importance of good communication cannot be underestimated. We have a large school community and good communication is essential to provide the best possible education for our students. This communication is not just about the school communicating, but requires parents, students and staff to feel able to communicate their aspirations, concerns and ideas. To minimise the risk of miscommunication, there are some basic principles that we ask parents, staff and students to follow.

One of the best ways that parents can help their children succeed in school is to be involved with their education. This starts with good communication between you and your child's teacher. This acknowledges the need for stakeholders to communicate in a courteous and respectful manner at appropriate times with timely feedback.

If a parent has a particular problem or complaint, the following steps are recognised as being appropriate in bringing the grievance to attention and in working constructively towards having the problem resolved.

#### ***Procedure:***

Should a parent wish to raise a concern or problem then:

1. If the matter is of a general nature in regard to school policy or practice, an appointment should be made with the Principal.
2. If the matter is concerned with the parents' child, an appointment should be made to see the child's teacher at a time most convenient to both parties to discuss the problem and resolve the matter.
3. If the issue has been unable to be resolved in step two, an appointment should then be made with the Principal to further explore the matter and to seek a resolution.
4. If a resolution cannot be found by the above steps, or if the problem or complaint is in regard to the Principal, then contact should be made with the Brisbane Catholic Education and an appointment made with the Supervisor of Schools – Northern Region to facilitate a resolution.

#### ***Resolution Process***

It is important that a sense of mutual respect, honesty and a willingness to search for an equitable resolution be uppermost in the minds of all who engage in seeking solutions to a problem. The following guidelines should be used when meeting to discuss a problem or complaint:

- ***Establish the facts of the matter and isolate the problem.***
- ***Focus on the facts and offer solutions to the problem.***
- ***Listen to answers and don't jump to conclusions. Remain calm and work to resolve the problem.***
- ***Decide on a solution.***
- ***Agree on the implementation and fix a review date.***

It is important that you commence communication as soon as possible so that the issue can be resolved at the earliest possible stage. It cannot be fixed if people do not know about it!

## **APPOINTMENTS**

To meet with the class teacher, other members of staff or a member of the administration team, please phone the office to arrange a mutually convenient time and provide details of the reason for the interview.

### **Concerns/Problems/Solving Procedures**

We have a proactive process when dealing with problems or concerns which are best solved when everyone involved is able to talk and discuss their concerns in a respectful and open manner. Teachers listen to all sides of the story to determine the facts.

### **Children**

If a student has a concern about the behaviour of another student, then the student is encouraged to talk to the other student to solve the problem. If the issue is not resolved, then the student meets with the class teacher. If the issue is still not resolved then, the teacher and children involved meet with the Principal. Parents may be contacted to help resolve the issue.

### **Adults**

Parents are encouraged to raise issues of concern firstly with the child's class teacher. If the issue is not resolved, then the parent meets with the Principal and the class teacher. If further action is needed, then Parent, Class Teacher and Principal meet with BCE Area Supervisor.

Please note that it is not helpful for parents to approach another child or family to resolve problems independently of the class teacher. This could confuse the resolution of the concern.

## **MISCOMMUNICATION IS USUALLY THE NUMBER ONE CAUSE OF CONFLICT**

Check before you react. Remember that the vast majority of people are good people and want the best for your child and other people. Often, children see things from their world and often don't understand what leads up to a situation and so only communicate **part of the story**.

## **GO TO THE STAFF MEMBER CLOSEST TO THE SITUATION**

Speak first to the most appropriate person, don't go "over someone's head" until you have spoken to them. Please do not discuss issues or people "in the public arena". We are about building community not destroying people and their reputations.

## **WHEN TO COMMUNICATE IS ALWAYS A HARD BALANCE**

At the beginning of the year when everything is new, sometimes it may be best to wait, but generally speaking, if it is worrying you, don't wait; talk to the staff member closest to the situation. We do not want to solve all our children's problems, but a quiet word to the teacher can alert them to an issue before it gets too big.

### **DON'T WAIT FOR A PARENT-TEACHER INTERVIEW**

If you want to know how your child is going, then make an appointment to see the teacher.

### **THE BIGGER THE ISSUE THE MORE TIME IT TAKES TO RESOLVE**

No matter who you see, make an appointment so the person is there and they can put aside enough time to deal with it thoroughly.

### **DON'T TRY TO SORT OUT A PROBLEM BETWEEN YOUR CHILD AND ANOTHER AT SCHOOL BY APPROACHING A CHILD OR HIS/HER PARENT – SPEAK TO YOUR CLASS TEACHER.**

No parent has the right to approach a child from another family about a school incident.

Don't speak on behalf of others – Delegations and speaking for others often ends up with the "others" not backing you up when the crunch comes. If you have a concern, please raise it with the most appropriate person. Supporting the school does not always mean agreeing with it, but using the communication channels and processes that respect all members of the community, will support us in community building and in what we are hoping to achieve.

Gossip is usually wrong and never resolves issues