

# PATTERSON LAKES PRIMARY SCHOOL



No. 5190

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P.O. Box 330, Patterson Lakes, 3197

Principal: Carole Mayes

Website: <http://www.patterson-lakes-ps.vic.edu.au>

## COMMUNICATION WITH SCHOOL STAFF POLICY

### RATIONALE

This policy explains how Patterson Lakes Primary School proposes to manage common enquiries from parents and carers. It is essential that staff members of the school communicate information in agreeance with established protocols to preserve the professionalism of the school, to protect the rights of individuals, to uphold our duty of care to students, and to comply with departmental and legal requirements.

### AIMS

- This policy applies to school staff, and all parents and carers in our community.
- To ensure that the communication of information is carried out correctly and in a manner that complies with school, departmental and legal requirements.

### IMPLEMENTATION

- It is important to note that consultation does not mean decision-making. Nor does it equate that decision-making will simply be based on popularity of ideas or weight of numbers.
- Department of Education employees are free to make public comment on issues relating to education, but in doing so, must be wary not to make comments that can be construed as negative criticism of our school, School Council, our community, staff or community members.
- The Information Privacy Act 2014 and the Health Records Act 2001 require that schools protect interests of individuals with regard to their personal information and respect the individual's right to control how their personal information is used, and for what purpose.
- The school will only collect consensual information that is required about individuals, and will only communicate and disclose information for the purposes for which it was collected.

### Staff:

- Our school has a policy of open and cooperative communication. This practice however recognises that staff members have legal, departmental, local, professional and social obligations with regards to the communication of information.
- As a matter of professional courtesy, and as a requirement of Section 3.6 of the Teaching Service (Conduct of Duties) Order 1998, staff will communicate with the Principal before making public comment or formal statement on educational issues or that effects the smooth running of the organisation or program of the school or work place. The Principal and School Council President will ensure that each other are informed.
- All staff have access to school policies via policy folders and newly ratified policies are distributed as a hard copy at staff meetings.

### Students:

- Years Foundation-2 communicate via written comments, class newsletters, school website, and face-to-face contact.
- Years 3-6 communicate via student diaries, written comments, class newsletters, school website, and face-to-face contact.

### Wider Community:

- Any person seeking information from the school that falls outside the school's previous practices must be directed to the Principal who may require that a formal written Freedom of Information request be made.
- All such Freedom of Information requests will be referred to the Department of Education and Training's Freedom of Information Unit.
- Information sought by police, including interviews of students must be directed to the Principal.
- Requests from Department of Health and Human Services child protection unit personnel regarding students or families will be complied with at all times.
- The school will comply with court subpoenas to provide information at all times, but will not respond to requests from lawyers seeking information without Department of Education and Training approval.
- Action may be taken by individuals, the Department or organisations against staff members, who choose to communicate information improperly.

- The school will table its Annual Report to the Community at an open meeting of School Council as soon as all components are finalised. This report will subsequently be made available to all in our community through the school's website. The content of the Annual Report will reflect the requirements of the Department of Education and Training.

Patterson Lakes Primary School understands the importance of providing helpful and timely responses to common enquiries from parents and carers. To ensure that members of our school community are directed to the most appropriate person to assist them, the information below outlines key contacts for common queries:

- to report a student absence, please use Compass or contact the school on 9772 4011
- to report any urgent issues relating to a student on a particular day, please contact the school on 9772 4011
- to discuss a student's academic progress, health or wellbeing, please contact the classroom teacher or the Year Level Learning Leader
- for enquiries regarding camps and excursions, please contact the classroom teacher or the Year Level Learning Leader
- to make a complaint, please contact the Principal, Assistant Principal or Student Welfare Coordinator on 9772 4011 or via email. Please also refer to our [Complaints policy](#).
- to report a potential hazard or incident on the school site, please contact the school on 9772 4011
- for parent payments, please contact the office on 9772 4011
- for all other enquiries, please contact our office on 9772 4011 or via email [patterson.lakes.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:patterson.lakes.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au)

School staff will do their best to respond to general queries as soon as possible and ask that you allow us 2 working days to provide you with a detailed response. We will endeavour to respond to urgent matters within 24 hours where possible.

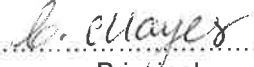
#### EVALUATION

Guidelines are updated every 3 - 4 years as per DET recommendations.

#### CERTIFICATION

This policy was ratified at the School Council Meeting held at Patterson Lakes Primary School, May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2019.

Signed  .....  
School Council President

Signed  .....  
Principal