

Parent Communication Policy

Rationale

Mercedes College offers young women an outstanding Catholic education based on the Mercy values of compassion, justice, excellence, integrity and service. The College recognises it educates young women in partnership with families and open, honest and transparent communications are the foundation of building and maintaining positive relationships between home and school to maximise learning outcomes for all girls.

This commitment is reflected in the College's 2016-2019 Future Plan and the following excerpts from the College's Vision Statement.

*Education is seen as a shared responsibility between family and the College.
A high level of mutual respect, support and communication between parents and staff play an essential role in the education of all our students.*

Aims of the Policy

This policy aims to clarify the parameters within which we operate to ensure communication is carried out with all stakeholders and interested parties effectively and clearly.

Communication Principles

1. To communicate effectively with all members of its community of students, staff, families, Alumni, Mercy Education Ltd., Sisters of Mercy, Clergy, and the wider community using a range of traditional and emerging information and communication technologies (ICT).
2. The College will at all times communicate in an open, honest and transparent manner in line with the Vision, Mission and Values of the College and in adherence with Australian Privacy Principles (2014).
3. Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a challenge in a school, where teachers may teach full time and participate in other learning activities with students at lunchtime, or out of school. For this reason, the College is proactive in encouraging the use of modern communication methods with key staff members' email contacts publicised at Parent Information sessions, in the newsletter and the College Handbook (available on the College website). College Staff will endeavour to respond to communication requests from parents as soon as possible.

Communication

Mercedes College communicates with its parent community on a regular basis through several avenues, many of which are listed below:

1. SEQTA

This is a platform where course information, teaching resources and academic results can be accessed by parents and students. This is a major communication feature of an education at Mercedes College. Academic Reports are completed at the end of

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each Semester (July and December) and are made available through the Parent Portal via SEQTA. They provide a summary of the academic progress of each student.

2. Enrolment Interview

Every family entering the School has an enrolment interview with the Principal or nominee. At this interview the Principal outlines to the family the main policies to which they are consenting when signing the enrolment application form, drawing particular attention to the Student Enrolment Policy. A copy of the record of the interview is kept on the student's file.

3. Policy Information

Key policies applicable to the parent community are made available on the College's website. Others are available on request.

4. Parent Information Nights

At appropriate times throughout the year the College holds information nights for year groups. These events provide information for new and/or existing families and will include introductions to key staff, information about the expectations, procedures and routines of the College and the year group's curriculum. These events are typically communicated to families by letter or through the newsletter.

5. Parent/Teacher Interviews

Parents are encouraged to speak with their daughter's teacher (s) both at formal parent-teacher interview times, and informally throughout the year, as required. An appointment should be made to allow time for discussion of more significant or complex matters.

6. Student Diary

A student diary is used as a vehicle for communication between teachers and parents. The use of the diary is explained to all new students when they commence at the College.

7. Course Counselling

Meetings are held with Year 10 students and parents, and Year 11 students, at a calendared time each year.

8. *Sorelle* (Newsletter)

A fortnightly newsletter is published and emailed to families during term time. A copy is available on the College website and a hard copy is available on request.

9. Website

The College's website contains extensive information about the operation of the College. It also contains a calendar which outlines significant events and term dates.

10. Mobile Phone Device

A mobile application will soon be available to parents to access communication through their iPhone or iPad (2017).

11. *Alegria* (bi-annual magazine)

A bi-annual magazine is distributed to all families providing the latest news, information and events relating to the College and its' Alumni.

12. *Laudate* (Yearbook)

The College yearbook is a celebration of student life and achievements throughout the year. It is distributed to the eldest student in each family at the commencement of the

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following school year. Year 12 families need to collect their yearbook from the College the following year (if they do not have a younger sibling at the College).

13. Parents and Friends

The P&F meet once a term to discuss and plan fundraising events.

14. Friends of Mercedes

The College has a number of parent groups (Dads of Mercedes, Moms of Mercedes) who organise events to strengthen community relationships, or assist with College events.

15. SMS Messages

Messages are sent via Student Services to report on absences or emergency notifications.

16. Emails

Emails are used to communicate with parents when a telephone conversation may be difficult to facilitate; documents are to be provided to parents when a regular communication plan between a teacher and parent has been established; or to provide information on College events.

Concerns and Complaints

Academic concerns should be discussed with the class or subject teacher. Pastoral Care concerns should be raised with the Year Coordinator. The Pastoral Care Policy also provides further information (please refer to the College website).

There is also a system in place through the Catholic Education WA for handling queries relating to school protocols. For more information, please contact the Employment and Community Relations Office on 6380 5231.

Scope

The key stakeholders for a school are parents, students and staff. This policy addresses the main ways in which the College ensures effective two-way communication between the home and the College.

Associated Policies and Procedures

- Student Enrolment Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Promotion & Graduation Policy
- Information & Communication Technology Policy
- MEL Privacy Policy

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