



Bundanoon Public School

Safe Respectful Learners

February 2024

Guidelines for Parent-Teacher Communications

We value the strong home-school partnership that we have at Bundanoon Public School. Next to high quality instruction in the classroom, our partnership stands as one of the most significant factors in your child's education. We want to ensure that we have an open and highly collaborative relationship with parents and that our communication is strong. In addition, we want to address any concerns you may have over the course of the year in a positive, constructive and reasoned manner.

Parents have four direct ways to communicate with teachers: telephone, ClassDojo, e-mail and face-to-face meetings. ClassDojo and email (*electronic communication*) have become a preferred choice of communication in our school because they are fast and convenient.

However, this technology has its drawbacks, especially for our teaching staff. Electronic communications have added to everyone's workload and led to an expectation for a turn-around time that might not be possible. With this in mind, we would like to clarify the guidelines for what is effective and appropriate in terms of electronic communication.

The Realities

- The teachers' top priority during the school hours is working directly with the children. As such, the classroom environment does not allow teachers to check their e-mails regularly. In most cases, teachers check and respond to electronic communications before and after school.
- Teachers are sometimes unavailable because of meetings, playground supervision, professional learning, leave, conferences or training sessions, which will delay their response.
- Teachers devote a considerable time before and after school developing lesson plans, preparing for daily activities and reviewing the curriculum that must be taught.

Considerations

- Timing - Please remember the classroom environment and the complexity of a teacher's day. If you don't receive an immediate answer to your electronic communication, it doesn't mean you are being ignored. A teacher will generally respond within 24-48 hours.
- What is the goal? Please consider your goal in communicating with the teacher. If your purpose is to share information or give the teacher time to think about an issue, an e-mail is appropriate. However, if you would like two-way dialogue on a complex issue, ClassDojo/e-mail is not appropriate. Please request a face-to-face meeting.
- Volume - Each primary teacher has up to 25 students in their classroom. Please consider how many messages teachers could potentially receive throughout the day from parents.

Additional thoughts

- Teachers are very interested in communicating with parents, especially if a student is experiencing difficulty at home or at school.
- Communication, although important, needs to be controlled. Responding takes thought and reflection.
- Face-to-face contact with the teacher will lead to better communication and problem-solving. Unfortunately, electronic messages leave a lot of room for misunderstanding.

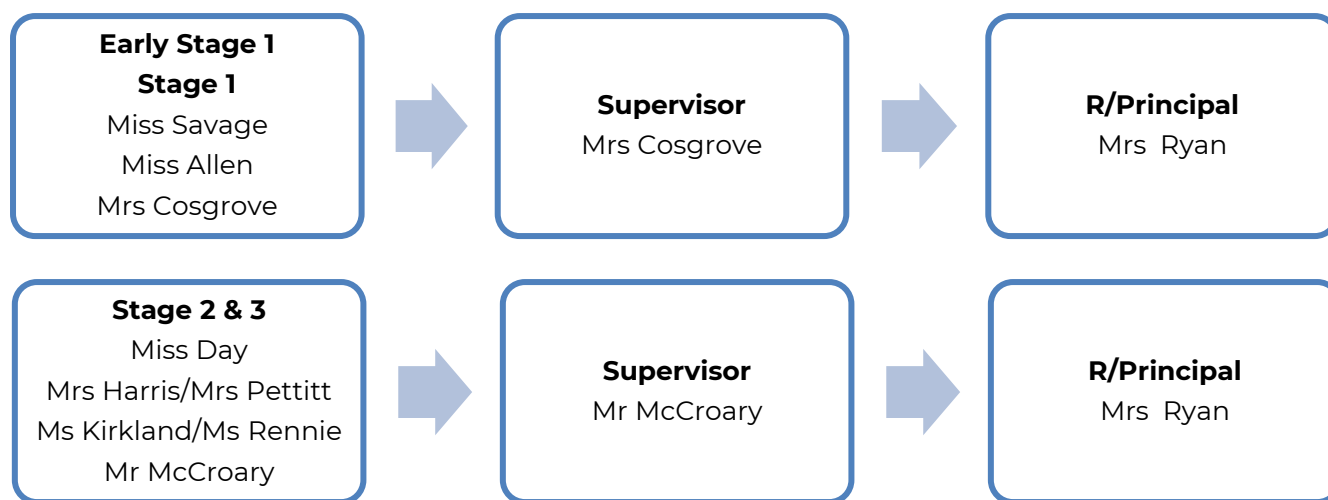


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Concern Management Process Four Steps

- Step 1**
- Contact the teacher via the school e-mail **bundanoon-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au** or phone the school office requesting an appointment. The teacher will attempt to respond within 24-48 hours.
- Step 2**
- If the concern can be resolved through electronic communication, the teacher will reply through the same method. However, if the concern is more involved, please state it without detailing all the specifics. We have found that that best way to resolve concerns is to discuss them, and not try to resolve them through electronic communication.
 - Electronic communication methods not adequate collaboration tools to address concerns, but they do serve to express the need to work on the issue.
- Step 3**
- The teacher will connect with you to understand and resolve the concern. If necessary, the teacher would offer a time for a face-to-face meeting.
- Step 4**
- If you and the teacher cannot resolve the concern, please ask that the Stage Supervisor participate in the problem-solving process. If the concern remains unresolved, the matter will be referred to the Principal. See flowchart below.



Electronic Etiquette Tips

These guidelines can help parents and teachers use electronic communications in ways that would be most beneficial.

1. Never use electronic communication for matters of controversy or distress. If you have a serious matter, please meet with the teacher directly.
2. Do not barrage a teacher or members of the school staff with multiple messages/e-mails on the same topic. Keep your comments to the point.
3. Never say anything in an e-mail that you wouldn't want published.
4. The rules for civility in electronic communication are the same as in face-to-face meetings. Convey a positive tone in your messages. That will set the stage for a cordial relationship with the teachers and other school personnel.

Thank you for following this process. We can best meet your needs by working together, face-to-face or on the phone as appropriate. We want to ensure that our decisions for your children are thoughtful, measured, and within our capacity to reasonably deliver. Our experience tells us that students benefit most when we work together to meet their needs in a culture of respect and collaboration.