

# Communication Policy

Blaxland East Public School



Updated for 2025



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# Communication Policy

Blaxland East Public School

|              |      |                 |                |                   |                                |
|--------------|------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Year:</b> | 2025 | <b>Network:</b> | Blue Mountains | <b>Principal:</b> | Belinda Wraight<br>(Relieving) |
|--------------|------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|

## Rationale

At Blaxland East Public School, we are committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment with a positive and inclusive school culture that promotes the wellbeing and success of all. This requires that we promote open communication, fairness, and positive relationships where all members are respected and valued. We believe that the relationship between home and school is an important part of ensuring children are happy, secure, and ready to learn. As a school community, we are dedicated to working together to meet the various needs of our school community. Central to achieving this is trust and open, effective communication between all members of the school community, in line with the Department of Education's School Community Charter (see attached).

## Aims

This policy aims to provide procedures that will result in a harmonious school community with parents, carers, staff, and students all working together. The policy will ensure that:

- effective communication between all school community members takes place
- processes allow for open and honest communication amongst school community members
- confidential information is managed in a manner consistent with community expectations, professional standards, and legal obligations
- all stakeholders can confidently voice their opinions and concerns in an appropriate manner and have these acknowledged
- clear and fair processes and guidelines are provided that ensure the resolution of issues or concerns in a timely, effective, and respectful manner, in accordance with Department of Education guidelines
- open and respectful, two-way communication is available to all members of the community
- parents, carers, and school staff are assisted in organising a time to communicate safely and confidentially.

## Guidelines for Implementation

Blaxland East Public School will use various strategies to communicate effectively with the school community.

- The primary source of school community information is the Sentral Parent Portal, an integral tool for communicating the school events and procedures to the school community.
- It is the parents' and carers' expectation and responsibility to stay up to date with Sentral posts and the current happenings at the school.
- The primary source of direct parent-teacher communication is the Sentral Parent Portal. This is an integral tool for direct communication between teachers and parents or carers.
- It is acknowledged that teachers have time constraints during the school day, and issues or concerns are best dealt with when uninterrupted time and proper attention can be given to them. Wherever possible, appointments should be made in advance with the classroom teacher.

- In all cases, if the matter is urgent and/or relates to the possible risk or harm to a student or a staff member, someone within the school, particularly an Executive staff member, should be informed immediately, and the urgency of the matter conveyed.

## Curriculum and class Information

Classroom teachers and Assistant Principals will communicate curriculum information formally at:

- meet-the-teacher evening
- parent-teacher interviews
- stage information flyers
- semester 1 and 2 academic reports.

## Guidelines for Communication- appropriate use of Sentral Portal

Blaxland East Public School considers the Sentral Parent Portal to be a vital communication tool and recognises the importance of proper content and speedy replies.

Family Sentral Parent Portal access keys are available from the school office.

Nevertheless, the high volume of communication traffic and the resultant impact on workload issues necessitates some guidelines for all users of the school community.

When using the Sentral Parent Portal, seek to:

- facilitate a speedy response by limiting messages to less than 200 words
- write clearly to explain your question or concern
- acknowledge teachers are not always online, due to teaching and meeting responsibilities. Their response times may take from 1-2 days within the working week.

An exception to the 1-2 day response time may be found in the situation that a teacher works at a part-time capacity or is on leave.

Hours of contact for Sentral Parent Portal communication should be restricted to the hours of 8:30 am and 3:30 pm, Monday to Friday, in accordance with school hours.

## Guidelines for Communication- Phone

Blaxland East Public School encourages parents and staff to use the telephone as an important tool to communicate personal issues or concerns that cannot be discussed via the Sentral Parent Portal. It is also important that all conversations by all parties are respectful and courteous. Telephone communication is also useful for queries, urgent messages that need to be provided to students and teachers, and student absences. Staff may not always be able to return telephone calls during the normal school day and may take up to 2 working days to return the call. Sentral Parent Portal may be used to respond to your call to arrange a meeting time.

## Contacting Procedures: Contacting a classroom, Intervention, or RFF teacher

When a parent wishes to contact a member of staff to discuss matters relating to their child, the procedure is to contact the teacher involved, giving a brief outline of the issue. Contact should be made using one of the following approaches:

- Contact the school, either by phone or coming to the front office, and ask a school administration officer to arrange for the teacher to contact you to arrange a suitable meeting time. Teachers are not usually available to answer phone calls or come to the office during teaching hours or whilst on playground duty.
- Contact the appropriate teachers in writing via the Sentral Parent Portal, asking them to organise a suitable meeting time.
- Speak briefly with the appropriate teacher, either before or after school hours (not at a time when they are teaching, leading students, or on playground duty), and ask them to arrange a suitable meeting time.

## Contacting Procedures: Contacting other school personnel

When a parent has a concern or wishes to discuss an issue regarding a situation that they consider affects the whole school, their child's wellbeing, or relates to a school policy or matter, the procedure is to either:

- send a message to the class teacher through the Sentral Parent Portal, which will be forwarded to the most appropriate staff member
- email the school, where the office will triage the email and forward it to the most appropriate staff member
- call the school, where the office will ask some questions to clarify the purpose of the call. They will then triage it and provide the details to the most appropriate staff member.

When parents have a concern or wish to discuss an issue relating to a member of staff or of a sensitive nature, they should make an appointment with an executive staff member by contacting the school office, either by phone or coming into the office personally, and asking the office staff to arrange a suitable meeting time.

In all cases, if the matter is urgent and/or relates to the possible risk or harm to a student, staff member, or school community member, the principal should be informed immediately, and the urgency of the matter conveyed. The principal may determine it is appropriate for someone else to resolve the issue and redirect it accordingly.

In relation to any complaints made, the principal will adhere to the Department of Education's Complaints Policy and procedures.

## Sentral Parent Portal Protocols for Teacher and Parent Communication

Sentral Parent Portal may be a fast and convenient way for you to send messages, but this may not be the case for many of our teachers. Teachers read messages at different times of the day, and so an immediate reply is not possible. In fact, you may not receive a message reply at all, since the staff member will determine how best to contact you: by the email, phone call, or to schedule a face-to-face meeting.

To use the Sentral Parent Portal effectively in a school setting, we have developed the following guidelines for parents/carers.

### **Sentral Parent Portal is appropriate for:**

1. Brief enquiries about general school matters
2. School-related issues only
3. Passing on relevant information to the appropriate personnel (e.g., classroom or Intervention teacher)
4. General communication between teachers and parents
5. Requests for a phone call or parent/teacher meeting.

### **Sentral Parent Portal NOT appropriate for:**

1. Your child's academic progress. This is best addressed through a telephone conversation or a face-to-face meeting
2. In depth discussion about your child
3. Sending time-sensitive messages throughout the day. As teachers are in class, they generally will not see any messages until after the school day has finished. (e.g. changes to how your child will be going home)
4. Sending non-vital messages (e.g. child has no crunch and sip for the day)
5. Threatening or offensive language
6. Sensitive information about your child or an incident that has occurred. This is better communicated in a more confidential way (e.g. - phone conversations or face-to-face meeting).

## When sending a message on Sentral Parent Portal

### When sending a message on Sentral Parent Portal:

- identify yourself during first contact, and if appropriate state your relationship to your child
- ensure that messages are respectfully written as meaning can be misinterpreted
- response to Parent Portal messages received by staff can take up to 1-2 working days
- staff are only expected to respond to messages on the Sentral Parent Portal between the hours of 8:30am and 3.30pm, Monday to Friday
- staff are not required to respond to messages on the Sentral Parent Portal on weekends, school holidays or when on leave.

*\*Please note: It is not appropriate to share correspondence received from staff with students.*

Please remember that while we will maintain confidentiality, some documents retained within schools can be subpoenaed or subject to the Government Information Public Access Act (GIPA).

## Facebook

Our school's social media channels provide a great way for our community to stay updated on activities and build school spirit. We encourage everyone to focus on the positives and highlight the little things that make our school special.

### Information Shared on Our Facebook Page:

- student work showcases
- successful programs in cohorts
- promotion of Positive Behaviours for Learning
- highlights of special visitors and events
- general announcements (e.g., holidays, public notices)
- reminders for community events and parent information sessions

### Facebook Administrator Responsibilities:

- two elected staff members will promptly share news about activities and events
- responses to posts and comments will be made within two working days
- the page will be regularly monitored to ensure it remains active
- only posts from administrators will be published; comments from "fans" can be made on those posts
- private messaging will not be enabled; questions will be addressed using a "Traffic Light System" (see below) to maintain community engagement
- content that violates guidelines will be deleted
- at the end of each month, share any out-of-school extracurricular student shout-outs for which details have been provided.

## Traffic Light System for Comment Management:

**Green:** General enquiries or positive comments

Questions about events or school activities will be answered in the comments.

*Example: "Thanks for sharing! The students did great work!"*

**Orange:** Individual enquiries needing administrative attention

Questions about payments, student details, or school notes will be acknowledged and directed to the front office.

*Example: "Please contact the front office for assistance with this."*

**Red:** Sensitive or high-profile enquiries

Questions that require executive team input or involve sensitive topics will be directed to appropriate staff.

*Example: "For assistance with this, please contact our front office."*

Comments that express opinions or concerns will not be removed unless they violate guidelines. We believe in the right to voice opinions while maintaining a respectful dialogue.

## When Completed

The following are published on:

- School's website
- School's Drive

### School Communication Policy

|   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>Date Completed:</b>                        | 10/2/2025                     |
| <b>Completed by:</b>                          | Belinda Wraight               |
| <b>Position(s):</b>                           | Relieving Assistant Principal |
| <b>Next Review date:</b>                      | 31/10/2025                    |
| <b>Next Review date with community input:</b> | November P&C                  |
| <b>Principal Name:</b>                        | Belinda Wraight               |
| <b>Principal Approval date:</b>               | 10/2/2025                     |





We create **collaborative** learning environments

We all play **our part**

We work **in partnership** to promote student learning

### Communicating with our schools

Our staff will find a time to talk to you when they can give you their full attention. Please remember that while our staff are in class or dealing with other matters, they may not be available to answer your questions immediately.

Our schools and communities will make sure that written communication is appropriate, fair and easy to read. We encourage you to use email and social media appropriately to connect with your school and stay up-to-date with up-coming events in the school community.

Our guide for parents, carers and students provides useful information about the complaints process: [education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/rights-and-accountability/complaints-compliments-and-suggestions/guide-for-parents-carers-and-students](http://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/rights-and-accountability/complaints-compliments-and-suggestions/guide-for-parents-carers-and-students).

### Respectful communication is a right

In all workplaces people have the right to feel respected. Unacceptable and offensive behaviour has no place in our school communities.

To ensure the wellbeing of students, staff and the community in our schools, steps will be taken to address unacceptable behaviour. This may include restricting contact with the school community or, in more serious cases, referral to NSW Police.

### Unacceptable behaviour may include but is not limited to:

- Aggressive or intimidating actions, such as violence, threatening gestures or physical proximity.
- Aggressive or intimidating language, including the use of obscenities, making sexist, racist or derogatory comments or using a rude tone.
- Treating members of the school community differently due to aspects such as their religion or disability.
- Inappropriate and time wasting communication.



School Community Charter

[education.nsw.gov.au](http://education.nsw.gov.au)



# School Community Charter

**Collaborative. Respectful. Communication.**

The following School Community Charter outlines the responsibilities of parents, carers, educators and school staff in NSW public schools to ensure our learning environments are collaborative, supportive and cohesive.

### What our schools provide

NSW public schools work to create positive environments for students, staff and the entire school community that support student learning. We strive to ensure that every student is known, valued and cared for.

### The best education happens when parents and schools work together.

The School Community Charter aligns with the NSW Department of Education Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022.



### Positive environments

It is important that our NSW public schools are positive environments and that parents and carers are kept informed of students' progress and school announcements.

Parents and carers can expect:

- To be welcomed into our schools to work in partnership to promote student learning.
- Communication from school staff will be timely, polite and informative.
- Professional relationships with school staff are based on transparency, honesty and mutual respect.
- To be treated fairly. Tolerance and understanding are promoted as we respect diversity.

**Ensuring respectful learning environments for all members of NSW Public Schools communities.**

We treat each other with **respect**

We **prioritise** the wellbeing of all students and staff

**Unsafe behaviour** is not acceptable in our schools

We work **together** with the school