

# Foxfield Special School



## Home School Communication Policy September 2025

# Home-School Communication Policy

## St. Michael's House Special School Foxfield

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### Introduction

Foxfield Special School recognises the importance of clear and effective communications with parents and guardians and is committed to being open and accessible for all parents and guardians. Foxfield School welcomes parents to work in partnership with staff in the interests of their child's education. The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidelines to parents/guardians regarding Parent/teacher communication in Foxfield Special School.

The home is central to the development of the child. The school and the family strive to be mutually supportive of each other so that the student's education can be effective. This policy addresses the main ways in which the school ensures effective communication between home and school.

This policy was developed in consultation with staff, the Board of Management, and the Parents' Voice. Its purpose is to provide clear, inclusive, and respectful guidelines for communication between home and school within the context of a special educational setting.

### Aims

- Foster positive, consistent, and trusting relationships between families and school staff.
- Develop close links between home and school
- Affirm the professional role of all staff in the school
- Support all staff in maintaining a professional and understanding relationship with families.
- Enable parents and guardians to work in partnership with the school to support their child's holistic development.
- Outline the various forms of communication by which teachers and the school will communicate with parents/guardians.
- Promote open, respectful, and positive communication in parent/teacher communication and meetings.
- Share the responsibility of maintaining the school's ethos, values and distinctive character
- Encourage parental participation in school policy development, school activities, and community life.

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### Forms of Communication

- **Daily Home-School Communication Journals:** The Home-School journal is used daily to communicate with parents including a summary of the child's day. Parents use the diary to share news from home and any pertinent information with school staff

- **Emails:** Teachers may also communicate and send photos of events and daily activities via email from school email addresses
- **Written Communication and letters:** letters will be sent home in school bags periodically. These will include consent forms, notifications and letters of invitation to school events.
- **Newsletters:** Regular newsletters will outline events and achievements in the school
- **IEP Plan Meetings:** Held in October/November to collaboratively set goals and targets for each child and to review progress, and next steps.
- **Emails and text messaging:** sent via Aladdin to update parents on events and to highlight new policies available on the website
- **Open-door policy:** The school encourages approachable, scheduled conversations with staff.
- **School website/Instagram:** Used for general updates, events, notices, school news, class news, sharing of policies and newsletters
- **Parent's Voice WhatsApp Group.**
- **Individual School Progress Reports:** Issued annually, adapted to be meaningful and accessible for all families.
- **Phone call:** Parents will be contacted by the teacher, Principal or Deputy Principal if a child is unwell, has been injured or if there is any other urgent matter requiring information.

Where parents are separated, efforts will be made to ensure both parties receive relevant communications, based on agreed arrangements.

#### **Formal Parent/Teacher Meetings**

- Formal meetings take place once a year with additional meetings scheduled if needed in line with the child's IEP and specific support needs. Meetings are arranged in October/November and generally take place in the Principal or Deputy Principal's Office at a time agreed by the teacher and parent
- Meetings are child-centred, solution-focused, and strength-based.
- Reasonable accommodations (e.g., interpreter, communication supports) are provided where needed.

#### **Informal Meetings**

- Parents can request an informal meeting directly with the teacher or by emailing the office on the respective campus. Meetings will be arranged at a mutually agreeable time ensuring they do not impact classroom routines.
- Urgent concerns will be accommodated sensitively and promptly.
- A consistent communication channel is maintained through journals, emails, newsletters, the school website and Aladdin.

#### **What parents can expect in regard meetings and communication:**

- Parent communications responded to within a reasonable time;

- Requests for appointments responded to or scheduled within a reasonable time;
- Parent to be notified about any concerns or issues;
- Annual formal parent/teacher meetings, with other meetings and calls within reason.

#### **What parents should not expect**

- Teachers returning a call or email after work hours. Teachers working hours are 8:30 -2:45. In an emergency, please ring the school mobile phone
- Answering emails in the evening/weekends;
- Access to teacher's private phone number or email.

#### **When you should contact your child's teacher**

- Changes in family situation
- Medical issues that arise or change
- Illness
- Changes in behaviour at home
- Family emergencies
- Ongoing concerns at school or home;
- When you can't keep a scheduled appointment;

#### **Complaints Procedure**

While complaints are rare, the school believes they should be resolved informally, fairly, and quickly, prioritising the well-being of the child. Please refer to attached Revised Parental Complaint Procedures for the detailed procedure. Steps include:

1. Direct discussion with relevant staff.
2. Escalation to Principal if unresolved.
3. Formal submission to the Board of Management if necessary.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

- All members of the school community—staff, parents, children, and board members—are expected to engage respectfully and with understanding.
- Staff are trained in positive behaviour support, trauma-informed practice, and inclusive communication.
- Adults model respectful, calm behaviour in all school interactions.
- Confidentiality and dignity of every child are upheld.
- Meetings are solution-focused, time-managed, and child-centred.

#### **Health, Safety and Welfare**

In line with the **Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (2005)** and other relevant legislation, all staff have the right to a safe working environment. Aggression, threats, or inappropriate behaviour from any party will not be tolerated. The **school's Dignity at Work Policy** and **Health & Safety Policy** provide clear guidance in this regard.

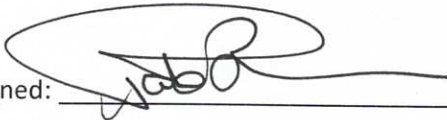
#### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if required due to changes in legislation or best practice.

#### **Ratification and Communication**

- The Board of Management ratified this revised policy at its meeting on 23.9.25 Copies of the policy will be circulated and communicated to all members of the staff, parents and guardians. A copy will be available on the school website.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_



Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

22/09/2025.