



Parent Communication Policy and Charter & Communication Guidelines for Staff

Ratified by	Date available	Date approved
Leadership Team	14/10/24	21/11/24
Staff	14/10/24	21/11/24
School Board	17/10/24	21/11/24
Review Date	Term 4 2025	

PREAMBLE

Riverside Education Support Centre values positive relationships and recognises that our communication is of vital importance in strengthening and maintaining these positive relationships.

At Riverside Education Support Centre, we encourage open communication where staff, students and parents/carers share good news, discuss issues and maintain an ongoing positive dialogue. Our intention is to work in partnership with families to support inclusivity, the health and wellbeing of all parties and promote respectful relationships.

POLICY STATEMENT

Communication will be conducted in a professional and respectful manner to inform and communicate with parents, carers, educators and all parties that support the education and well-being of students.

COMMUNICATION CHARTER

At Riverside Education Support Centre, we believe that education is a partnership between our team of professional educators and a child's most important teachers – their parents. When parents and school staff share information, model respect and give consistent messages, children are inspired to grow, learn and achieve to their full potential.

This charter outlines the standards that Riverside Education Support Centre expects when parents and school staff communicate. It also outlines the most appropriate and effective methods for parents to communicate with the school.

Respectful, open and timely communication is at the heart of the parent-school relationship. The protocols in this charter will ensure that all community members work together in a positive and respectful manner to ensure the growth and learning of all students.

What parents can expect

- Regular communication from the school (such as emails, newsletters).
- Updates and permission slips regarding incursion and excursions.
- Scheduled opportunities to meet with the classroom teacher (Learning Journey, bi-annual student progress meetings (IEP meetings)).
- Other opportunities to meet with the classroom teacher by appointment.
- Updates and information about important developments in the child's class, as may be necessary from time to time.
- Formal reports on their child's academic achievement at the end of each semester.

- Notification of unexplained absences, any serious single issue or ongoing issues concerning your child.
- Opportunities to provide feedback (such as the biennial Parent Survey and other surveys on single topics).
- Correspondence acknowledged within 24 hours and replied to within three working days.

Urgent matters must be communicated through the school office. Teachers generally do not have time to check emails during class learning time.

What parents cannot expect

- School staff returning calls after work hours or during public and school holidays.
- Messages to be answered in the evenings, weekends or school holidays; or
- Access to teachers' private phone numbers or emails.
- Access to teachers for in-depth discussions during class learning time.
- Daily or weekly updates regarding their child's progress (other than of a general nature via face to face or communication books system).

Who should I communicate with?

Parents and carers should contact the class teacher when:

- There are good stories to share or positive feedback about something at school
- Behavioural changes occur at home
- Safety issues arise
- Concerns are held for your child's academic or social progress
- While the school will not endorse holidays during school term, advance notification will be appreciated.

Parents and carers MUST communicate the following to the school office:

- Changes in family circumstances, including change of address or contact details
- Changes to custody or access
- Changes to emergency contacts
- Medical conditions arise or change that may impact the child's learning. The teacher may also ask you to communicate this change directly to the school office.
- Changes to prescribed medicines that are consumed at school.
- If your child has a communicable disease (e.g., gastroenteritis, head lice, chicken pox).
- If you can't keep a scheduled appointment

When you have last minute information for the teacher:

- Speak to the teacher with any brief messages between 8:30 am and 8:40 am or briefly after school. Once the teacher has begun teaching, please convey messages

through the office. Sometimes teachers have meetings after school and may need to leave promptly.

- Send a note; or
- Call the office and leave a message for the teacher.

Communication that interferes with teaching and learning

- Visiting the classroom during the teacher's preparation time before 8:30 am or during the school day without an appointment.
- Speaking to the teacher disrespectfully or angrily, especially in front of your child or other students.
- Using social media to make negative comments about the school or contact staff members. The school welcomes feedback but requests this be made through the appropriate channels; and
- Talking to other parents rather than discussing issues directly with staff members. Remember that you are the primary model of how you want your child to communicate.

Electronic communication

Electronic communication, such as email, is highly convenient and can be used for short, non-urgent and positive forms of communication. Respectful language is the key to good communication.

When is a face-to-face meeting appropriate?

Electronic communication is not appropriate for more complex or emotional situations. In these cases, parents should request a face-to-face meeting so that your issues can be given the time and attention they deserve. If in doubt, schedule a meeting.

Generally speaking, it is appropriate for your child not to be present when the discussion involves sensitive and complex matters. This enables all parties to speak freely and openly explore all possible solutions.

When should the Deputy Principal or Principal be contacted?

For most discussions, the classroom teacher will be parents' first point of contact. However, where conversations involve conflict, other families, or dissatisfaction with any aspect of the school, a member of the school leadership team should be involved.

A staff member or a parent may request the involvement of the school leadership team at any time.

Respect is important

To increase mutual respect, remember:

- Teachers will make mistakes; they're human, too.

- Teachers have their own families and lives; please respect their privacy.
- We're all on the same team - your child's support team! Let's work together.
- Use age-appropriate language around children during drop-off and pick-up times.
- Recognise that we won't always agree, but we will listen.
- Speak positively in front of your child and other children.
- Speaking and/or writing to staff members disrespectfully is not acceptable.

Guidelines for contact if you have concerns that haven't been resolved

We will do our best to ensure that your child's educational needs are being met. We aim to create a supportive, motivating and safe learning environment. However, if you feel that a concern regarding your child's progress or learning environment has not been resolved to your satisfaction, we'd like the opportunity to investigate further to ensure that we are meeting and supporting your child's learning needs and goals.

If you have any concerns that haven't been resolved by the teacher, we request that you contact the school office.

Issues arising between students and families

Parents should refrain from approaching the children of other families or their parents with a school related or non-school related issue on the school grounds.

These matters must be addressed to the Principal (in the first instance) or Deputy Principal and not be discussed with others.

Communication Strategy with the Wider Community

Riverside Education Support Centre primarily uses a variety of means to communicate with the wider community. Primarily, we use our website, email and assemblies to promote the achievements of our school and promote a positive public image that inspires confidence. We also use banners, brochures, leaflets and information packs.

Riverside Education Support Centre also submits items to the Department of Education for promotion and also endeavours to use local newspapers to communicate with the wider community. Articles are submitted to external agencies to promote the school's activities and to highlight the benefits of attending Riverside Education Support Centre.

Communication on behalf of the school with any external bodies, including the media, must be approved by the principal.

CONCLUSION

Riverside Education Support Centre community believes that the strong relationships formed with the parents/carers of students is essential for every child's success. By working together in active partnership with each other we provide students with the best environment to *Thrive and Learn*.

Communication Mode Guideline – Parents

Communication Type/Mode	What information is here?	Frequency/Description/Details	Audience	Staff responsible
Email <i>(The primary form of communication)</i>	Teacher – Parent communication Communication with Office Staff Informing parents of awards or merit certificates Communication with professional support services (e.g. therapists)	As required	Parents and guardians	Email Author
Phone	Child specific information Accident/emergency Appointment organisation	As required	Parents and guardians	School Office Team Teachers
Website	Comprehensive information about our school; Policy documents; Enrolment information; And more...	24/7 www.riversideesc.wa.edu.au	All staff, parents, guardians, wider community	School Office Staff
Newsletter	Key information and upcoming dates Celebrations and innovations Stories/Achievements Significant events Staffing changes	2 per term Key information for parents Distributed via – email and the website	School Community	School Staff
Schools Online	School details, Annual reports, generalised student results and details of enrolment local intake area.	Ongoing	School community, Wider community	Admin Team
Connect Community (Staff)	Staff and departmental communications	As needed	Professional community	All staff

Paper	Planned events – Letters to inform and permission slips	As required – only when written signature is required or message is very important. Electronic messaging is preferred to support our sustainability focus.	Parents and guardians	Admin Team
Face to Face	Term 1 Classroom Meeting Term 3 Open Night School tours Kindergarten Information sessions	Some events are held regularly Some events are held as needed	School community, Wider community	Teachers School Admin Team
Assemblies	Each class presents an item and runs the assembly Merit certificates awarded	Each class (PP-6) will have 1 assembly per year. Kindergarten classes attend assemblies (from term 2) but are not required to host an assembly	School community and families	Classes School Admin Team
FUTURE DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS				
Connect Community (Parents)	Communication of whole-school information	As needed	Parent-Carer community	School Office Staff
Facebook Pages	Riverside ESC	Celebrations of school events Celebrations of achievements	School community, Wider community	Marketing Manager Principal
SMS	Unexplained absences School emergency notification	Mass communication for Incident Notification, delays, cancellations	Parents and guardians	School Office Staff
Class DOJO	Communication avenue between home and school about student DOJOs and positive behaviour	As required Please note, this is NOT a primary communication method. Messages sent to	Students, parents, guardians.	Class teachers

		teachers using the platform may not receive a response.		
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Communication Mode Guideline – Staff				
Communication Type/Mode	What information is here?	Frequency/Description/Details	Audience	Staff responsible
Staff Meeting	Celebrations Reminders Everything about the coming week that we know Principal and Deputy comms WHS	Weekly “Communication Meeting” on Wednesdays, 3pm. Minutes are distributed via Connect the next day. REQUIRED READING FOR ALL STAFF	Staff	School Admin Team

Communication Procedures and Guidelines – Staff			
Communication Type/Mode	Guidelines and Procedures	Frequency/Description	Audience
Connect – Staff messages	Staff are encouraged to collaborate when writing Connect messages. Messages must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undergo a spell check; • Be worded positively; and • be previewed to review formatting 	As needed	Various
Any communication with a School Logo	Any communication with a school logo must be authorised by the principal. Messages must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undergo a spell check; • Be worded positively; and 	As needed	Various

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be previewed to review formatting <p>Please consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concise, single-issue messages are easier for parents to read; • Consider adding photos if useful for the recipient; • Celebrate achievements; and • Don't communicate when you are tired, grumpy, etc. Reflect and come back to it later. 		
Paper notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All paper notes must be authorised by the principal. • Excursion/Incursion notes are authorised as part of the excursion approval process; • Paper notes must use the correct school letterhead and logo; and • A copy of every paper note MUST be given to the front office staff. 	Only when a signature is required or a message is of high importance	Parents
Letters to outside organisations	<p>Must be authorised by the Principal</p> <p>Present the principal with your draft letter for approval.</p>	As needed	Various
Emails to/from parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff should ensure emails are worded professionally and respectfully, with positive wording; • Emails from parents should be acknowledged within 24 hours; • If you need time to provide a full answer, let them know the expected time frame (3 days listed as expected); • Any emails containing harassment or abuse should be forwarded to the Principal; • Please CC or forward a copy of anything relevant to the Admin team; • Teachers are encouraged to address 'tricky' issues in a face-to-face meeting rather than over email. Email should only be used for less complex issues; • There is no requirement to answer emails received after hours, on weekends or during holidays; and • Teachers are encouraged to use out-of-office notifications to advise when emails will be attended to. 	As required	Parents
Emails to / from outside organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff should ensure emails are worded professionally and respectfully, with positive wording; 	As required	Various

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff should not represent their personal views as the view of the school; • Please CC someone in the admin team or send a copy afterwards; and • If in doubt, seek guidance from the Admin Team. 		
All Staff Emails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only send an email to All-staff when all staff need the information. • All-staff can be used if you are contacting all teachers or all EAs; • If you are contacting a group of less than 10 staff, please use individual email addresses; and • Be careful not to reply to all staff unless it is needed – this clogs up Inboxes! 	As needed	All staff
If you are CCd into an email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a general rule, staff should not reply to an email they are cc'd into. • The reply should come from the person the email was addressed to. 	As needed	All staff
Telephone calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff should conduct all telephone calls in a professional manner. • Teachers are encouraged to log any telephone calls made to parents (date, parent name, topic). • If a teacher makes / receives a telephone call from a parent that becomes abusive, please ask the parent to speak respectfully. If the parent continues to be abusive, inform the parent that you will be stopping the phone call and arranging a face-to-face meeting with the school admin present. Please make a written record of the detail of any abusive call and provide this to the school admin team; • Teachers are encouraged to address 'tricky' issues in a face-to-face meeting rather than over the telephone. Calls should only be used for less complex issues. 	As needed	All staff
Face-to-Face meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers should conduct all face-to-face meetings with parents in a professional manner. • Teachers should use the RESC Meeting template to record notes about every meeting. A copy should be provided to all parties in attendance (can be emailed afterwards if access to a photocopier is difficult) and a copy put in the child's file. • Teachers are encouraged to address 'tricky' issues in a face-to-face meeting rather than over the telephone/email. • Teachers can ask the Admin Team for support if needed; 	As needed	Parents

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The conference room is a neutral space available for parent/teacher meetings. Bookings must be made in advance through the library. The DOTT Room is also available but is not private and is at time a busy environment. If a face-to-face meeting becomes abusive in any way, please remind all parties to speak respectfully. If the behaviour continues, let all parties know that the meeting would be best conducted with someone from the Admin Team present and terminate the meeting. Please make a written record of the meeting and provide this to the school admin team. 		
Student emails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are not allocated email addresses. Very simple email skills are included lessons for MIS Technology. 	As needed	Various
Facebook Posts (Future development)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We use Facebook to promote our school, as a marketing tool; Staff are encouraged to add positive comments and 'like' posts on RESC Facebook posts; Staff are encouraged to 'share' RESC Facebook posts in situations where this will bring positive feedback for our school; Staff are asked not to share RESC Facebook posts to sites that may bring our school into disrepute; and Staff are discouraged from exchanging private messages with others on the RESC Facebook page – please use private messaging to do this 	As needed	Community
Personal Social Media accounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff should ensure their privacy by regularly reviewing their privacy settings. Staff are prohibited from having students in their personal social media accounts (DoE Regulations). Staff are discouraged from having parents in their personal social media accounts. All contact with parents should be conducted in your professional capacity. When you are personal friends with parents, please ensure you have appropriate personal/professional boundaries in place. Staff are encouraged to complete the Accountable and Ethical Decision Making PL module for guidance on matters of personal/ professional boundaries. 	Caution required	Personal

