



# LOWER PLENTY PRIMARY SCHOOL

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## COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

### PURPOSE

At Lower Plenty Primary School we are committed to open, respectful, constructive and timely communication. In upholding these principles, we aim to strengthen the positive partnership and goodwill between parents and the school, in order to enhance the wellbeing and learning opportunities for our students.

### POLICY

Lower Plenty Primary School provides ongoing communication of events, processes and curriculum using the following methods:

- Compass is the primary platform used to communicate ongoing school news and information between school and parents/care-givers.
- Fortnightly newsletters will be sent to all families.
- Parent/Teacher Interviews are held during Term 1 and Three-Way Conferences are held during Term 3 after the Semester One reporting cycle.
- Semester Reports are distributed at the end of Term 2 and Term 4.
- Weekly whole-school assemblies are held for students and parents/care-givers to attend.
- Parent Information sessions are run throughout the year in an interactive atmosphere, e.g. 'Family STEM Night' and 'Maths Night'.
- Open Mornings are held each year giving parents and carers the opportunity to come into the classroom.
- Compass may be used to communicate with your child's classroom teacher. Please see the section below on 'Email Communication'.
- School Council meetings are held twice per term throughout the school year.
- General information, such as school policies, notices and forms and programs offered at the school, is available on our school website ([www.lowerplenty.vic.edu.au](http://www.lowerplenty.vic.edu.au)).
- Foundation parents/care-givers are encouraged to attend the information sessions held during the transition sessions at the end of the year prior to their child's first year of school.
- Appointments can be made with class teachers to discuss individual student issues as required.

## Email Communication

We acknowledge the potential benefits of staff and parents communicating via email, but also understand its shortcomings. This policy is designed to establish clear expectations for both staff and parents in the use of email as a communication tool.

Email is an environmentally friendly way of communicating that can save time when used effectively. We acknowledge that email is very convenient for parents who are working and find it difficult to catch up with school staff during work hours. Having said that, our school community values face to face and phone conversations and understands that these forms of communication are preferred in many situations.

Please be aware that staff read emails at different times of the day. For this reason, please remember if you choose to send a message via Compass to a member of our staff, you may not get an immediate reply as teachers do not necessarily work at their computers during class time. Staff members will determine how best to contact you: by email, phone, or to schedule a personal conference. Staff members will endeavour to respond within 2 business days of receiving the message.

When communicating via email or Compass, staff and parents are expected to adhere to email etiquette, including:

- Emails are at their best when they are brief and informative. Issues that require a level of detailed discussion should be dealt with in person or over the phone.
- Avoid sending negative or confrontational emails. If you are unsure whether or not an email is appropriate to send, we recommend waiting 24 hours before sending it to the staff member.
- Never write about or seek personal information regarding third parties (staff, students or parents). Likewise, emails containing personal or sensitive information should not be passed on to a third party without permission of the sender. Confidential information should not be sent via email or Compass.
- Staff and parents are not expected to respond to emails that are contentious. A face to face meeting should be arranged in this circumstance.
- Make sure the purpose of your email is clear - do you require specific action or if the email for information only.
- Staff and parents must be careful not to disclose the email addresses of others without permission to do so.

### Expectations of Staff

- Email should not be used to discuss a sensitive issue which was not initiated by the parent or had not been previously discussed with the parent.
- When an email is received from a parent that requires some time to gather information and reply properly, the staff member should respond acknowledging that the email has been received and (a) indicate when an informed response will be sent, or (b) schedule a personal conference.
- When on extended leave, staff will activate an auto-reply message detailing relevant leave dates.
- Staff will not respond to abusive emails and will forward them to the school principal.

### Expectations of Parents

- It is the parents' responsibility to actively engage in the Compass platform.
- Please remember that email is not necessarily confidential and can be subject to Freedom of Information (FOI) regulations. Confidential information should be conveyed by phone or in person.
- For all medical or health concerns, please contact the school office by phone on 9435 2585.
- Email is not an appropriate medium for time-critical information as there is no guarantee that the message will be seen within the necessary timeframe. For example, instructions to administer medication at specific times should be given to the school office on the appropriate form, rather than to classroom teachers.
- Remember to respect staff personal time. Parents should not send emails outside of work hours and expect an immediate response. We request that emails are sent to staff members between the hours of 7:30am-5:30pm on weekdays.
- Please do not seek to discuss in detail your child's academic progress, learning expectations, or behavioural issues via email. These are best addressed over the phone or in person.

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

### Communication Process

Below is a flowchart to help direct your enquiries to the relevant parties.

### Communication Flowchart for School Enquiries

