



Guidelines for Effective Communication within the School Community

**Loreto Secondary School, St Michael's
64370T**

1.Aim

The aim of this document is to foster positive, appropriate and respectful communication between all members of the school community. It deals with communications within the school and between the school and our partners ensuring that each member of the school community understands his/her own role in ensuring appropriate communication. This policy will refer to non face to face communication only.

2. Rationale

Loreto St Micheals' mission statement states that '*Within a positive environment based on Christian values, and with a strong social justice focus, St. Michael's students are encouraged to avail of all opportunities to develop to their true creative, academic, personal and spiritual potential*'. Good communication with our school community is seen as fundamental to ensuring positive relationships which are at the heart of our goal to help students reach their full potential.

This document aims to promote positive, appropriate and respectful communication within the school community. Effective communication is a critical component of school life as it establishes trust and confidence. This policy will ensure that each member of the school community understands his/her own role in ensuring appropriate communications.

3. Background Documents

- NAPD Guidelines for Communication
- Acceptable use policy for staff and students
- GDPR

4. Methods of Communication within the school community

- Email
- Text messages
- Phone calls
- Video Conferencing
- VSware

5. Communication channels used by the school

	Website	VsWare	G-Suite Guardian Reports	Email	Video Meeting	Text Message	Phone Call
Information to staff regarding general day to day school activities, cpd etc.		✓		✓	✓		
Emergency Alerts to Staff (outside school hours)						✓	✓
Updates to parents on students progress		✓	✓				
Emergency Alerts to Parents		✓				✓	✓
Important reminders to parents	✓						
Forms/Document s/Policies	✓						
Communication regarding attendance		✓					

General guidelines regarding internal school communication

Email

1. Priority: Non urgent emails should not be sent to arrive before 8am or after 6pm. Emails should instead be saved as drafts and sent during work hours or scheduled to send at the appropriate time. Emails regarding school business should not be sent at the weekends.
2. Expectations: Replies to or actions should not be expected to emails sent outside school hours.
3. Audience: To minimise the volume of emails received daily, where possible, emails should only be sent to the relevant teachers.
4. Subject line and privacy: To maintain the privacy of those within the school community identifiers such as names or initials should not be used in the subject line. No personal student information is to be sent by email. Consideration should be given to the use of confidential mode on emails containing any student identifiers.
5. When communicating with parents or students, teachers should not use their personal email.

Text messages and phone calls

1. If deemed appropriate members of staff may be contacted by text message service or a private phone call regarding school business. This should be used in case of emergencies or by prior agreement.
2. Staff should not respond by text to a text message received from a parent/carer (but should respond using an alternative means of communication such as email or telephone if appropriate). A note of phone calls made and received should be recorded on the VShare system in 'notes'.

Social media platforms

1. Teachers should not use their personal social media accounts to communicate with students or parents.

Exceptions to the above include communications related to staff social activities and exceptional circumstances (such as illness) where the essential running of the school is in question.

Communication between staff and parents

Emails from parents will be treated in the same way as letters: acknowledged within 3 working days and responded to within 5 working days. A student's yearhead should be cc'd on emails sent to teachers from parents. Replies to or actions should not be expected to emails sent outside school hours.

It is important to acknowledge that telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school, where teachers who are teaching full-time may have had no available opportunity to return a call. In a non-emergency a return call will be made within 2 working days. Staff will make a record of a telephone conversation with a parent/carer on the school's VShare system.

Automated texts from VShare are sent to parents (including in the event of an emergency closure of the school) but are not used for general communications from members of staff.

Communication between staff and students

1. Students should always send emails from their @loretonavan G-Suite account.
2. Correspondence is to remain professional at all times.
3. Emails should be scheduled to arrive between 8am and 6pm
4. Replies to or actions are not expected to emails sent outside school hours.
5. Students are expected to check their email at least once a day on school days.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Loreto Secondary School, St Michael's,
Navan on _____

It will be reviewed every year or less should the Board of Management think it necessary in light of
changed or amended legislation. Any review will continue to be guided by the school's characteristic
spirit and commitment to its responsibilities under data protection legislation.

Signed _____
Liz Cogan (Chairperson)

Maria Harney (Acting Principal)

Date _____
