



Communication Policy

Policy Document Information

Policy Name:	Communication Policy
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Compliance	
Board of Studies	Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual Section 3.6.2 (Safe and Supportive Environment) Section 3.10.1 (Reporting on changes made to policies)
Department of Education Science and Technology	Safe Schools Framework Guiding Principles Key elements of good practice.
Legislative requirements	
Other Policy Relationships	Code of Conduct Complaints and Grievances (Conflict Resolution) Policy
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1 Introduction

Student **Welfare** refers to the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual well being of the student. Accordingly, the provision of student welfare policies and programs is essential in developing a sense of self-worth and fostering personal development. Because of the comprehensive nature of the school curriculum, student welfare will be affected by a range of matters.

It is noted that some school-based activities will be subject to a variety of 'policy areas'. It is also noted that each policy is not mutually exclusive, that is, there are implicit and explicit interrelationships between many policies.

2 Safe and Supportive Environment

All staff members must ensure students have a safe and supportive environment. A safe environment for students is one where the risk of harm is minimised and students feel secure. Harm relates not only to dangers in the built environment, involving such matters as architecture and construction, lighting, space, facilities and safety plans, but also refers to violence, physical threats, verbal abuse, threatening gestures, sexual harassment and racial vilification. A supportive environment facilitates and enhances the social, academic, physical and emotional development of students. (*Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual Section 3.6.2*)

3 Communication Policy

Kuyper Christian School, having established an authority structure, recognises the importance of communication within the Association and its organisations.

The following policy should be read in conjunction with the Complaints and Grievances (Conflict Resolution) Policy.

It is not desirable, nor possible to legislate for every conceivable occurrence of communication arising as a result of school-related activities. The smooth and effective operation of the school will depend upon the willingness of all parties to consult and communicate on a two-way basis. That is, all parties must be willing to both listen and speak. This will facilitate informed decision making, early correction of problems and correct establishment of priorities. Communication strategies and procedures in the school community will be developed as occasion demands.

The Board of Directors of Kuyper Christian School gives an undertaking that all community members will be listened to and thanked for their input. Board and staff members will be particularly wary of conveying a perception of defensiveness, pride or aloofness.

The Board of Directors of Kuyper Christian School recognises that effective communication is premised on the goodwill of all parties.

Neither the Board, nor the Principal will respond to anonymous correspondence unless it is a reportable matter (see Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Procedures) and is supported by evidence, which can be verified by the Principal.

4 Operational Communication – Board of Directors

Board members are vitally concerned with the well being of parents and staff and will often make themselves available to listen. However staff and parents must note that taking a Board member into your confidence does not short circuit the normal procedures for addressing issues. Informal submissions to the Board either on personal or organisational matters will be referred to the appropriate person without comment.

Staff members who are spouses of Board Members need to be particular as to the use of correct procedures in addressing issues or advising others on procedure.

Similarly spouses of staff members or Board Members who spend significant amounts of time in the school in honorary capacities also need to give heed to procedure. The guidelines contained in this policy should be made available to such persons as early in their roles as is practicable. The functions of the Board and the management of the school can be compromised by departure from appropriate procedures by persons in these privileged positions.

5 Operational Communication – Executive Staff

All 'official' correspondence to and from the school will be via the Principal or the Principal's delegate. Executive staff exercise delegated responsibilities in their area or areas of responsibility.

All communication with the Media will be through the Principal (or as required, the Chairman of the Board).

6 Operational Communication – Staff

The Board of Kuyper Christian School recognises that suggestions, compliments and complaints are part of the daily adventure of living in an educational community. To this end, staff members should not be deterred from making constructive suggestions to executive staff or the Board in any appropriate manner.

6.1 Operational matters

Generally, staff members are requested to observe a hierarchical procedure in addressing their requests for information or wishing to air a grievance.

Child protection, criminal and other serious matters should be raised with the Principal in the first instance.

6.2 Communication with the Media

Staff members are not permitted to make any comment whatsoever regarding the affairs of any student or employee of the Association, the Board or Kuyper Christian School to any television, radio, print, Internet or other media journalist without prior approval from the Principal.

6.3 Relational difficulties

In cases of relational difficulties with another staff member, irrespective of their position within the school, all staff members are directed to the Complaints and Grievances (Conflict Resolution) Policy. Notwithstanding the relational difficulties, you should continue to deal with day-to-day issues pending resolution of the relational difficulty.

There may be issues, which may need to be brought formally to the attention of the Principal for resolution or decision if you are not satisfied with previous attempts. However, it is expected that you will have already addressed your concerns with your immediate supervisor.

6.4 Communication with the Board

Staff members are entitled to address correspondence to the Board for consideration or resolution. Such correspondence could be for consideration of special requests beyond your terms of engagement or award conditions and entitlements.

Serious unresolved concerns with the performance of the Principal could also give rise to correspondence to the Board.

Correspondence to the Board should be addressed to the Board Secretary via the school administration office. Correspondence should not be addressed to individual Board members.

6.5 Communication - Union Representation

Kuyper Christian School recognises the role of the Independent Education Union in establishing and monitoring the conditions of employment of the staff of non-government schools. Accordingly the school views the Union as a legitimate and appropriate source of information and support to staff members.

Staff members should bear in mind that the conditions of the relevant award under which they work govern the intercourse between the school as employer and the Union acting on behalf of employees.

Irrespective of how personal an issue may seem an employee it must be borne in mind that the school is only one of a number of respondents to the Award(s) [through the Association of Independent Schools] and the Union is acting not on your behalf alone but on behalf of all current and future members.

Therefore the school has to rely on the conditions of the Award in any matter in which the Union becomes involved.

7 Operational Communication – Students

The Board of Kuyper Christian School recognises that suggestions, compliments and complaints are part of the daily adventure of living in an educational community. This is especially the case for students who may not have developed the expertise or maturity to communicate effectively. All staff members are charged with the responsibility for ensuring all students in their care are able to address requests for information or concerns to the appropriate person or authority.

7.1 Relational difficulties

In cases of relational difficulties, either with other students or staff members, students should first address the principles outlined in the Bible in Matthew 8: 15 - 17. Class teachers and Core teachers will provide assistance in this area. If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, students may elect to seek assistance from the Principal or another staff member.

7.2 Communication with the Principal

There may be issues, which may need to be brought formally to the attention of the Principal for resolution or decision if a student is not satisfied with previous attempts. However, it is expected that a student will have already addressed his/her concerns with his/her class teacher, homeroom teacher, or year coordinator.

7.3 Communication with the Board

Students are not entitled to address correspondence to the Board of Directors. Should a student wish to communicate a matter to the Board, this must be communicated through their parent(s) or guardian. Parents and Association members are entitled to address correspondence to the Board for consideration and resolution.

8 Pastoral Communication

The Principal has over-all responsibility for pastoral care, this includes working with students, parents and staff. However there will be cases where the Principal may refer a member of the school community to another mentor who may or may not be part of the school community. This may be in order to provide an appropriate source of support or to avoid a conflict of interest, which may arise from the exercise of their other responsibilities.

Irrespective of the above, it is worth considering seriously the following.

8.1 Appropriate Pastoral Communication

Staff must be careful / attentive when students approach them in relation to a pastoral matter. In particular, staff must determine if they have spiritual maturity and skills and experience, which would make them effective and credible.

Staff must demonstrate appropriate confidentiality at all times. In this context, confidentiality, respect for privacy, peacemaking and right motives that issue from the guiding principles in scripture (Ephesians 4:2-3; Matthew 18: 15-17; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8) are vital.