

# Communication Policy



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the Administration Office on 84582811.

## Purpose

The Communication Policy focuses on the following:

- Building positive relationships between home and school and the community based on mutual respect and trust that results in successful outcomes for all students
- Ensuring the wellbeing of students and improvement of their learning outcomes.
- Providing a framework for social media use and College promotion to build connection with the College community.
- Aligning with the 'Right To Disconnect' legislation, August 2024

## Guiding Principles

The Communication Policy aims to:

- provide a framework for effective communication
- create co-operative teamwork and partnership between school, parents/carers and students and the community
- assist the best learning and wellbeing outcomes for students
- ensure that the college values are reflected through effective communication
- ensure that the Department of Education, College Leadership and staff are informed of their rights to disconnect outside of working hours

Effective communication encompasses the exchange of ideas, where people feel they have been heard and their opinions valued, and where information is clear and accurate. Communication needs to be related to student performance, wellbeing and behaviour, as well as school related issues. Communication should be respectful, timely and relevant, allowing for open and honest interaction. See Appendix A. Appendix B sets out 'Who to contact'.

## Definition

This policy refers to the following forms of communication:

- voicemail/ telephone conversations
- emails
- College website
- newsletter
- Compass
- Teams
- Social media

## Guidelines for communication

### School Approach

The College Administration team is the first point of contact in most situations for parent queries or in dealing with external providers. Reception is the crucial face-to-face presentation of the College.

For communication with parents, telephone or in-person meetings are the most effective forms of communication and reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation of message or tone.

- to report a student absence, please approve the absence on Compass.
- to report any urgent issues relating to a student on a particular day, please contact our front office on (03) 8458 2811.
- to discuss a student's academic progress, health or wellbeing, please contact your student's House Leader or Head of House via Compass messaging, our school email or via the College phone number on (03) 8458 2811.
- for enquiries regarding camps and excursions, please contact our front office on (03) 8458 2811.
- to make a complaint, please contact the appropriate Assistant Principal on (03) 8458 2811.  
[Please also refer to our Complaints policy, available: Complaints Policy - [Complaints and Concerns Policy 2022.pdf](#)]
- for parent payments, please contact the front office on (03) 8458 2811
- for all other enquiries, please contact our Office (03) 8458 2811

We will do our best to respond to general queries as soon as possible. The [right to disconnect](#) legislation makes explicit that all employees have the right to refuse to monitor, read, listen to or respond to contact that occurs outside their working hours from their employer or a third party (such as a student or a parent), unless that refusal is unreasonable.

We ask that you allow us 2 – 3 working days to provide you with a detailed response to general queries. We will endeavor to respond to urgent matters within 24 hours where possible.

### Parent/Carer – Teacher communication

As the purpose of email communication will differ in each case, it is expected that the guidelines will be adapted to individual needs and circumstances.

If a parent/carers wishes to email a teacher, then this should be done via the teacher's Compass email or a general enquiry can go to the college email (on the website). Any communications via email will be recorded by the staff member on Compass.

#### Guidelines

##### 1. Communication between teachers and parent/carers

###### 1.1 General

Teachers have a right to choose to disconnect after work hours. A parent should not expect a response to an email after 4.30 pm at night or before 8.30 am. Phone calls will take place during working hours.

It is expected that staff respond to an email or phone call from a parent within two working days. If a staff member is unable to respond in full to the query made, then it is expected that a short email explaining that the matter is being looked into or information required is gathered and sent within the two working days. Parents/carers should contact the relevant House Leader or Head of House if they have not heard back from a staff member.

## 1.2 Subject teacher

If a parent/carer sends an email requesting information about their child's progress, then a teacher is obliged to respond as it is the college's obligation to provide information when requested. If there are any concerns or uncertainty the teacher should seek advice from the relevant House Leader or Head of House. Any concerns or where a parent/carer wants information on their child's progress in all studies should be addressed to the relevant sub school who will respond.

General information:

- Parents should be aware that in the interest of protecting privacy, no teacher can provide private or home telephone numbers to parents/carers.
- There is a clear expectation that all members of the college community act in a respectful and calm manner. At all times the language and tone used should be respectful. While a parent/carer may be upset or angry about an issue, communication still needs to be carried out in a calm and courteous manner.

**No written communication will be constructed with the assistance of generative AI, as outlined in Department policy**

## 2. Guidelines for students writing to teachers

Students are encouraged to communicate with individual staff members via the staff members Compass or Teams platforms. Students can communicate to clarify outstanding work, ask questions, or seek advice.

All communication via email from student to teacher/staff member must meet these guidelines.

Please note that staff will not be required to respond to messages and emails after 4.30 pm and on weekend.

## 3. Student Management/Student Wellbeing communications

There are many occasions where a House Leader, a member of the wellbeing team, or Head of House will need to communicate with parents/carers for a range of reasons. Wherever possible, parents/carers will be contacted in a timely manner particularly if there has been a major breach of the Student Code of Behavior.

Compass is used in the college and includes a parent portal. It is vital that parents/carers continually check this to keep up with news, programs, activities and for feedback on learning tasks. The college website also has information for parents/carers

### Note

It is important that the college has current and correct details, phone numbers and email addresses to ensure there is timely communication. Parents/carers should contact the college if there are any changes to ensure communication can occur in a timely manner or use the form on the college website ['Change of student's Personal Details'](#).

## Social Media and Website

### Website

The Viewbank College website, located at [www.viewbank.vic.edu.au](http://www.viewbank.vic.edu.au), is a useful source of information for current and prospective families. It is generally the first place people will look for information on the school.

The Viewbank College website provides an overview of our school values, curriculum and student life. It provides access to Middle and Senior Handbooks and our school policies.

It is a static communications platform and content is updated as required.

### Social Media

At the College, social media is used as part of our communications and promotions strategy. Our approved platforms is Instagram. Where a member of staff or parent group wish to use the platform for any purpose, Principal class consent must be provided.

Any additional platforms, such as the VC Art show, are still managed by the College.

All social media posts must align with the school values. They should:

- Promote events
- Celebrate student achievement
- Involve student voice

Our Social Media and Website Coordinator will be responsible for moderating any comments or communications. Any messages of concern should be escalated to the Principal team.

Any general use of social media outside of the official Viewbank College platforms that misrepresent the College or provide inappropriate content should be directed to the College Principal team.

### Use of Student Images and consent for photographing, filming and recording students

During the school year there are many events and opportunities where the College may film, photograph or record students participating in these events. The aim is to capture the vibrant program at the College and to celebrate participation, achievement.

Students participate in a wide range of learning programs, camps, sports and excursions. We capture and share these experiences on social media, through newsletters and other promotions.

Parent/Carer consent must be provided for the use of student images. This consent is obtained annually, generally at the start of the school year. For students new to the College, this is provided as part of our enrollment process.

Some Parents/Carers who do not consent to the use of their student's images. This information will be provided to our communications team to ensure this guidance is followed.

## Requests for information

Parents and carers are generally entitled to information ordinarily provided to parents, including school reports and newsletters.

Parents and carers seeking information that is not ordinarily provided to parents are encouraged to apply for access through the Freedom of Information process, or, if the information is sought for use in court proceedings, by issuing a subpoena.

Freedom of Information requests should be directed to:

Manager – Freedom of Information Unit  
 Department of Education and Training  
 2 Treasury Place  
 EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002  
 03 9637 3134  
[foi@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:foi@education.vic.gov.au)

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	2021
Consultation	Staff, AEU Branch term 3 College Council December 4, 2024
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	2027

## Related Documents

[\*The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct\*](#)

[\*Student Wellbeing and Inclusion Guidelines\*](#)

*Viewbank College Student Code of Behaviour*