



Sydney Catholic Schools

Communicating with School Staff – Information Sheet for Parents

Sydney Catholic Schools (SCS) are warm and welcoming local communities and parents are encouraged to engage with school staff to get to know them.

Open parent communication is vital in establishing a working partnership with your child's school. There are ways however, that parents can prepare for discussions with their teachers and schools that will assist in achieving the best possible educational outcome for their child.

It is important that parents and carers follow appropriate communication protocols to ensure a collaborative dialogue.

Face-to-face meetings

Parents are encouraged to chat to school staff and get to know them. Sydney Catholic Schools (SCS) are warm and welcoming local communities.

However, if you wish to discuss anything specific in relation to your child, it is important to make an appointment and have this conversation confidentially.

Teachers are available to meet with parents and guardians at scheduled parent/teacher afternoons or evenings to discuss your child's progress. Your child's teacher or school leader may also contact you to arrange a face-to-face meeting to discuss a particular issue regarding your child. If you wish to speak to your child's teacher or a school leader outside of those occasions about a particular issue, please contact the school office to arrange a meeting time with reasonable notice.

Due to obligations for teaching, supervision, meetings and extra-curricular activities, it will be rarely possible for a staff member to meet with you immediately if you attend the school site without notice. If there is an urgent matter you need to discuss with a member of school staff, please contact the school office directly.

Please do not attempt to meet with your child's teacher or a school leader about your child at morning drop off, afternoon pick up or another school event. During drop off, pick up and at school events, teachers and school leaders are often on duty supervising students. If they were to engage in one-on-one conversation of any length with a particular parent this may cause them to neglect their supervision duties to all students.

Phone calls

All phone calls to school staff should be via the school main reception line. Each school reception is generally open for phone calls between the hours of 8 am and 4 pm.

Teachers and school leaders will ordinarily be teaching or meeting during that time and will rarely be available to speak with you immediately, but the school reception will take a message and alert the class teacher as soon as practical.

If a matter is urgent, please alert the school support officer in reception accordingly. Urgent matters include urgent health issues impacting students (eg. forgotten medication), police issues or serious issues impacting student wellbeing.

For non-urgent matters, school staff, including teachers, will return your call or enquiry within three days.

If you become aware that your child or another parent has a teacher's mobile number please inform the school office. Please ensure that you do not communicate with your child's teacher by mobile phone.

Emails

Emails are a helpful way to communicate with your child's school.

For non-urgent matters school staff including teachers will return your email or enquiry within three working days during school term time. School staff are not required to return emails at night or on weekends and ordinarily will not be checking emails during those hours.

We would encourage parents and carers to phone the school directly regarding any urgent matters as there may be a delay in receiving emails.

Social Media

School staff are not able to connect with students, parents or guardians via social media for child protection reasons. Please do not attempt to contact school staff via social media.

While parent involvement is crucial to every aspect of school life, school names and logos are trade registered. Parents/guardians are therefore asked to seek permission from their local school principal before setting up groups in the school name or using the school's logo on social media.

Written notes

Primary school parents/guardians should feel free to communicate with their child's school by sending them to class with a note for the office or their teacher.

Secondary school parents/guardians may communicate with school staff via the student diary, or electronically via an online parent portal, so please ensure that you check and sign your child's diary, or refer to the online parent portal, at least once a week to show that any messages from your child's teacher will also be communicated via the student diary, so please ensure that you check and sign your child's diary at least once a week to show you have read these messages.

Online Parent Portals

Where available, parents may communicate with the school electronically via online Parent Portals, such as those provided by Compass and other systems.

Parents may use the online portal for tasks such as,

- Entering absences notes. Please add your child's note within 7 days of their absence. Extended leave applications (10 or more days) must be submitted in writing and approved by the Principal or their delegate.
- Updating your email and mobile phone contact details.
- Receiving communications from the school or class teacher.