



Montmorency Primary School

COMMUNICATION WITH SCHOOL STAFF POLICY

PURPOSE

This policy explains how Montmorency Primary School proposes to manage common enquiries from parents and carers. At Montmorency Primary School, we are committed to open, honest and timely communication. We are also committed to communication being respectful, measured, sensitive and constructive. 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.

SCOPE

This policy applies to school staff, and all parents and carers in our community.

POLICY

Montmorency Primary School understands the importance of providing helpful and timely responses to common enquiries from parents and carers. For information on the best person to contact, please contact the school office.

School staff will do our best to respond to general queries as soon as possible and ask that you allow us 2 – 3 working days to provide you with a detailed response. We will endeavour to respond to urgent matters within 24 hours where possible.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

General School Information

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

- Fortnightly newsletters will be sent to all families every second Thursday.
- Curriculum newsletters for each year level will be distributed at the beginning of each term.
- Parent/Teacher Interviews are held in the beginning of Term 1, and Three-Way Conferences are held in the beginning of Term 3 after the Semester One reporting cycle.
- Semester Reports are distributed at the end of Term 1 and Term 4.
- Weekly whole-school assemblies are held every Monday morning at 9:00am for students and parents to attend.
- Class Representatives communicate parent-helper rosters and upcoming social events via the email contact list collated at the beginning of the year.
- Open Mornings are held during Education Week 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'.

- Compass is used as our everyday means of communicating with families. Every Friday a “What’s on” Compass notification will be sent out to all families as a reminder of upcoming events.
- School Council meetings are held 2-3 times per term throughout the school year. Anyone is able to attend.
- General information, such as school policies, notices and forms and programs offered at the school, is available on our school website (www.montmorencyyps.vic.edu.au).
- Parents can stay up to date with regular events and curriculum news via Compass and on social media our Facebook page ([Montmorency Primary School](#)), Instagram ([montmorencyprimary](#))
- Foundation parents 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.

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. The Principal reserves the right to decide if teachers can use email as a means of communication with parents.

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 work at their computers. Consequently, you may not receive an email reply at all. 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 48 hours of receiving the message except on weekends and during holiday periods.

Expectations of Both Staff and Parents

For senior students (Grades 3-6), the student diary and Edmodo should be the primary means of communication between the parent and the teacher. As well as recording homework and important events, the student diary can be used to notify the teacher of an absence, early departure, late arrival or special circumstances. The student takes responsibility for ensuring that the diary is brought to school and its daily use is good preparation for secondary school.

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. Email is not to be used to vent. We never say in an email what we wouldn’t say to the recipient’s face. 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.
- The tone or intent of emails can easily be misunderstood, especially where humour or sarcasm is involved. Be conscious of this and pick up the phone rather than send an email in this instance.
- Staff and parents are not expected to respond to emails that are contentious. A face to face meeting should be arranged in this circumstance.

- Group emails have the potential to waste the time of many, so avoid sending emails to anyone for whom it is not relevant. We actively discourage sending emails that contain jokes, chain letters and commercial solicitations.
- 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. Please send group emails using the Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) function.

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.
- Staff are not to respond to abusive emails and should forward them to the Principal.

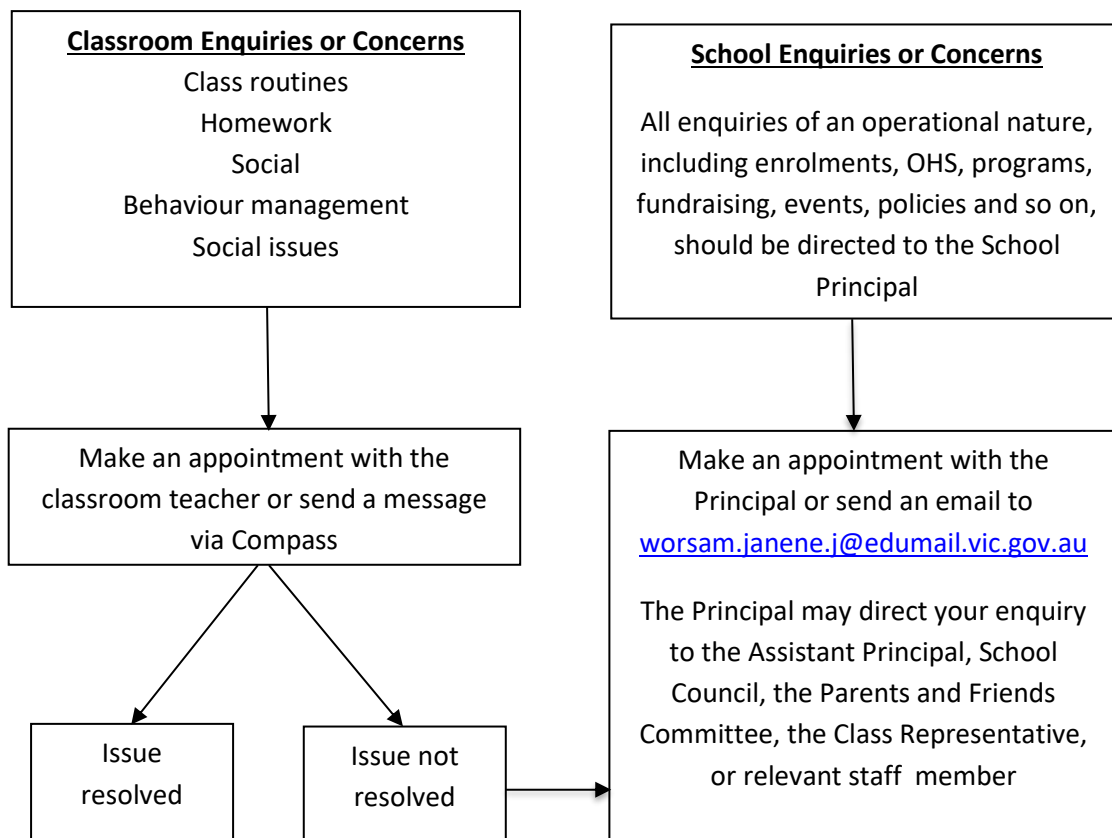
Expectations of Parents

- Please send email messages from an authorised email account which can be assessed as originating from you (i.e. not containing a 'nickname' which cannot be linked to your surname).
- 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 9434 5944. Certain health conditions, such as school sores, gastroenteritis and head lice, need to be reported to the school office so that measures can be taken to prevent their transmission to other students. All medical disclosures will be treated confidentially.
- 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 send emails on the weekend.
- Please only send non-vital messages by this medium. For example, do not use email to inform a teacher that your child is not to go home on the bus that afternoon, as the teacher may not see the message in time. Remember that, given work demands, teachers may not get to read emails until late in the day.
- Please don't 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.
- Emails that are intended for the office staff should be sent directly to the school's email address, that being: montmorency.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au

Communication Process

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

COMMUNICATION FLOWCHART FOR SCHOOL ENQUIRIES



IMPLEMENTATION

The school maintains email accounts for teachers to facilitate parent/teacher communication and internal as well as system-wide staff communication. The school reserves the right to block or filter email messages to staff that are not directly related to school business or to the school's educational mission.

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on November 2018 and is scheduled for review in October 2021.