



# COMMUNICATION – EMAIL /COMPASS POLICY

## **RATIONALE**

At Pleasant Street Primary School we are committed to open, honest and timely communication. We are also committed to communication that is respectful, measured, sensitive and constructive. In adhering to these principles, we aim to strengthen the goodwill and the positive partnership between parents and the school and thus enhance the wellbeing and learning opportunities for our students.

We acknowledge the potential benefits of staff and parents communicating via email, and 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.

## **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

Email/COMPASS is an environmentally friendly way of communicating that can save time when used effectively. Our school community values face to face and phone conversations, however we also acknowledge that email is very convenient for many parents who find it difficult to catch up with school staff during regular work hours.

### **Expectations of Staff and Parents**

When communicating via email/COMPASS, staff and parents are expected to adhere to email etiquette.

☑ Emails are at their best when they are brief and informative. Issues that require a level of detailed discussion are better dealt with in person or over the phone.

☑ Emails should always be respectful and constructive. If the email relates to a concern or problem, the goal should be to understand the problem and be solution focussed.

☑ 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.

☑ Never write about or seek personal information regarding third parties (staff, students or parents). Emails containing personal or sensitive information should not be passed on to a third party without permission of the sender.

☑ Be conscious that the tone or intent of emails can easily be misunderstood, especially where humour or sarcasm is involved. It may be more appropriate to speak to the person involved.

## **PROTOCOLS FOR THE USE OF EMAIL AS A COMMUNICATION TOOL**

☑ Staff and parents are not expected to respond to emails that are contentious. A face-to-face meeting will be arranged in these circumstances.

☑ Group e-mails have the potential to waste the time of many, so avoid sending emails to anyone for whom it is not relevant. It is also courteous to avoid time wasting emails, including jokes, chain letters and commercial solicitations.

☑ Make sure the purpose of your email is clear - do you require specific action or is the email for information only.

☑ Staff and parents must not to disclose the email addresses of others without permission to do so, apart from members of school committees.

## **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 in order to gather information the staff member should respond acknowledging that the email has been received and indicate when an informed response will be sent.

☒ Staff will aim to reply to parent emails within 2/3 working days.

☒ When on leave, staff will activate an auto-reply message detailing relevant leave dates.

☒ Staff will not respond to abusive emails and will forward them to the school principal.

## **Expectations of Parents**

☒ Please be respectful of staff personal time and do not expect immediate responses outside of work hours.

☒ 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 make an appointment to discuss in detail your child's academic progress, learning expectations, or behavioural issues.

☒ Emails that are intended for the office staff can be sent directly to the school's email address,; [pleasant.ps.ballarat@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:pleasant.ps.ballarat@edumail.vic.gov.au)

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Parents will be able to email all teachers through COMPASS via the application or via the COMPASS website. This will send an email to the teacher's edumail email address.

Teachers will be able to reply to the email if there is the correct email registered with COMPASS.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

All staff and parents are responsible for using email in accordance with this policy.

The school principal will ensure this policy is brought to the attention of:

☒ Parents on enrolment of their child.

☒ The whole school community annually.

If there are any breaches in this policy by parents, it may result in the loss of privileges of being able to contact via this service.

Policy Review – This policy will be reviewed in 2021.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in Aug 2018

