



## **PARENT COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

### **RAISING CONCERNS, ISSUES, COMPLAINTS**

#### ***BUILDING ON OUR VALUES OF RESPECT. INITIATIVE AND LEARNING***

Rosehill Secondary College recognises the importance of the partnership between schools and parents to support student learning, engagement and wellbeing. We share a commitment to, and a responsibility for, ensuring inclusive, safe and orderly environments for children and young people.

Discrimination, sexual and other forms of harassment, bullying, violence, aggression and threatening behaviour are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

We acknowledge that parents and school staff are strongly motivated to do their best for every child. Everyone has the right to differing opinions and views and to raise concerns, as long as we do this respectfully as a community working together.

The Department of Education and Training provides support, advice and guidance to support schools to manage and respond to challenging behaviour of students, parents and staff.

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

##### **PRINCIPAL CLASS, TEACHERS AND SUPPORT STAFF ARE EXPECTED TO:**

- Work collaboratively to create a school environment where respectful and safe conduct is expected of everyone, behave in a manner consistent with the standards of our profession and implement arrangements to ensure the care, safety, and general wellbeing of our students and staff.
- Model positive behaviour to students consistent with the standards of our profession.
- Proactively engage with parents about student outcomes.
- Communicate with the Principal and school leaders in the event we anticipate or face any tension or challenging behaviours from parents.
- Treat all members of the school community with respect.

##### **PARENTS ARE EXPECTED TO**

- Model positive behaviour to your children.
- Ensure your child attends school on time, every day the school is open for instruction.
- Take an interest in your child's school and learning.
- Work with the school to achieve the best outcomes for your child.
- Support the school by being positive in conversations about the school with your child.
- Communicate constructively with the school and use expected processes and protocols when raising concerns.
- Follow the school's complaints processes if there are complaints.
- Treat all school leaders, staff, students, and other members of the school community with respect.

##### **PHONE PROTOCOLS**

Parents at times may find it necessary to contact a teacher by phone. Please take note of the following guidelines for phone communications.

- All phone calls need to be made through the General Office unless other arrangements have been made with a teacher, coordinator or Principal Class person.
- Rosehill is a school with a large student population and sometimes distant classrooms. It is unreasonable, unless in emergencies, to expect our office staff to relay messages to students during class time.
- Parents should not text or call students during class time as this interrupts the learning process. In emergencies, please go through the General Office.
- As teachers work to a timetable instant responses cannot be expected even if a voice message has been left.
- Rude, aggressive or threatening phone calls are not acceptable and a teacher, coordinator or Principal Class person will have the right to terminate the conversation if this is not adhered to. The person making the call will be warned that "if the tone of the conversation continues this call will be terminated".

## EMAIL PROTOCOLS

From time to time parents may find it necessary to email a teacher. Please take note of the following guidelines for email communication to ensure it is the most effective and appropriate form of communication.

- Instant responses must not be expected. Teachers have many students and classes and need time to prepare, deliver and assess student work, as well as collaborate with colleagues and attend meetings.
- Teachers will generally deal with emails whilst they are at school – it is not reasonable to expect them to respond while they are at home, or outside of school hours, or on the weekend or holidays.
- Emails are subject to the same requirements of courtesy and consideration as would apply to other forms of communication, such as a letter, phone call or face-to-face conversation.
- Emails are not private and must be written with the understanding that other teachers, coordinators or wellbeing staff may see them.

## UNREASONABLE BEHAVIOURS

Behaviours that are considered inappropriate on and adjacent to school grounds or in relation to school business and that do not uphold the principles of this Statement include when a person:

- is rude, aggressive or harasses others
- sends rude, confronting or threatening letters, emails or text messages
- is manipulative or threatening
- speaks in an aggressive tone, either in person or over the telephone
- makes sexist, racist or derogatory comments
- inappropriately uses social media as a forum to raise concerns/make complaints against the school
- is physically intimidating, e.g. standing very close, raising the voice or gesturing aggressively.

## CONSEQUENCES

Principals are responsible for determining what constitutes reasonable and unreasonable behaviour.

Unreasonable behaviour may lead to further investigation and the implementation of appropriate consequences. This may include:

- utilising mediation and counselling services
- alternative communication strategies being applied
- formal notice preventing entry onto school premises or attendance at school activities. Written notice will follow any verbal notice given.
- an intervention order being sought
- informing the police which may result in a charge of trespass or assault

By agreeing to meet specified standards of positive behaviour, everyone in our school community can be assured that they will be treated with fairness and respect. In turn, this will help to create a school that is safe and orderly, where everyone has the opportunity to participate, learn and share a sense of belonging.

## COMPLAINTS/CONCERNS PROCESSES

This policy follows the requirements of DET in the management of Complaints and Concerns.

### Definitions

For the purposes of the policy:

A **'concern'** is an issue of interest which is raised informally in order to improve or change a situation.

A **'complaint'** is an expression of grievance or resentment where the complainant is seeking redress or justice.

### Implementation

At Rosehill Secondary College, complaints and concerns will be handled in a timely manner and with the intention to resolve with a positive outcome. The School will address complaints as follows:

- It is our aim to respond to complaints within 24 hours, but no longer than 48 business hours.
- Efficiently and fairly with a timeline for investigation and resolution communicated to the person raising the concern or complaint.
- In accordance with due process, the principles of natural justice and relevant regulatory frameworks.
- After a complaint has been followed up, the resolution/decision will be communicated to all parties in writing (usually by email).
- Serious complaints will be handled by 2 staff members, at least one of whom should be a Principal Class Officer.
- The school and staff have the right to stop or refuse a complaint conversation/request with a parent, should the complaint have been raised at an inappropriate time or if a level of mutual respect and courtesy is not being followed as per the above policy.

**NB:** This policy does not cover matters for which there are existing DET policies providing rights of review or appeal, such as: student discipline matters involving expulsions; complaints about employee conduct; performance and complaints that should be dealt with by performance management; grievance resolution or disciplinary action; student critical incident matters or any criminal matters.

### Raising Concerns or Complaints – For Parents/Guardians

The following points outline how parents/guardians should go about raising a concern or making a complaint to the school. Parents are encouraged to access our support and feedback processes at all times, with the correct person. This will ensure quick response and no double handling.

In the first instance the person concerned/complainant should telephone, email or write to:

- The relevant teacher if it is a concern about the academic progress of your child.
- The Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Coordinator, Sub-school Leader or Assistant Principal (in that order) if it is a concern about behaviour or wellbeing,
- An Assistant Principal or the Principal about issues relating to other staff members or complex student issues, or if it is escalated to an official complaint level.
- The Principal about issues relating to school policy, school management, staff members or very complex student issues.
- At times a telephone conversation may be helpful, but the school also values personal appointments with complainants assuming they can be arranged at a mutually convenient time. Parents should not expect an impromptu meeting without first having made an appointment.
- At no time should a complainant approach a staff member or student in the school without first reporting to the General Office.

### Support

#### Support Material/Resources

There is a significant and valuable support resource from the DET with associated links:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>