



# Communication Protocols

Parents/carers, school staff and students share responsibility for public schools providing safe, supportive and productive learning environments. We achieve this through our relationships, good communication and working together.

## Creating a positive environment

Innisfail State College provides a positive environment for students to learn and for staff to work.

This is achieved by school staff, parent/carers and students:

- valuing and supporting every member of the school community and appreciating their contributions
- celebrating diversity and individuality; cooperation and acceptance are welcomed and encouraged
- forming positive connections
- creating friendly, supportive and cohesive communities

## Promoting respectful relationships

Every student, staff member and parent/carer of Innisfail State College has the right to feel safe and be safe at school. This is achieved by:

- teaching students about respect and appropriate relationships
- principals working with their school community to create positive behaviour models and deal appropriately with students who violate the rights of other students and staff
- parents/carers encouraging, promoting and modelling good behaviour and respect for others at home, school and in the community

## Communicating well

Innisfail State College thrives on open communication wherein staff, students, and parents/carers have opportunities to share good news, discuss issues and maintain an ongoing dialogue.

- Principals and school staff communicate with parents/ carers in a variety of inclusive ways that are reflective of the school community. They may provide information in writing and/or speak with parents/carers in person. This will generally occur during the school day.
- Parents/carers have opportunities to speak with or write to a member of staff to raise any issue of concern, provide feedback or make suggestions.
- Teachers and school staff may not be available to respond immediately, however they will make every effort to respond, generally during school hours, within a reasonable timeframe.
- Teaching staff, including principals, are not required to respond to communications outside of their normal working hours.
- There is an expectation that communication and all interaction between school staff and parents/carers is mutually respectful.
- Verbal and/or physical aggression or threats, offensive language and derogatory comments, whether face to face, over the phone, via email or on social media is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- School staff are not expected to respond to communication that is unacceptable and these will be referred to the principal or regional office.

### Working together

Student learning is strengthened when staff and parents/carers are actively and positively involved in their education. By working together, we support the health and wellbeing of our students and help them develop resilience and confidence. Our collective efforts are aimed at providing safe environments for all and promoting respectful relationships.

### Role of school staff

School staff play a key role in fostering good relationships with parents/carers. They do this by:

- welcoming and encouraging parents/carers to participate in their children's education
- communicating information and responding to enquiries in a variety of inclusive ways, reflective of the school community
- maintaining professional relationships that are open, honest and respectful
- valuing every family and respecting their differences
- working with parents/carers to identify and promote the individual needs of their children.

### Role of parents/carers

Parents/carers have an important role in helping to create positive learning environments for students. They do this by:

- treating all members of the school community with respect and dignity
- respecting differences and preferences of others
- supporting school policies and values
- being respectful in their relationships and reinforcing their children's good behaviour
- supporting the activities of their school and getting involved where they are able to
- encouraging their children to respect other students and school staff.

### Role of students

Students also play their part so they can have positive learning experiences. They do this by:

- engaging in classroom activities
- being respectful to and supportive of others
- maintaining positive behaviour.

**By everyone playing a part in providing safe, positive learning environments and opportunities for our students, we enable them to be the best they can be.**

# Innisfail State College

## Communication Policy



### Rationale

Innisfail State College is committed to open, honest and timely communication in a safe, inclusive and supportive environment. We are also committed to communication being respectful, measured, sensitive and constructive. In adhering to these principles we aim to strengthen the goodwill and the positive partnership between parents/carers and the school, to enhance the wellbeing and learning opportunities for our students.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide a framework for timely, consistent and effective school communication
- clearly articulate the School's commitment to positive use of all communication systems in place
- acknowledge the benefits and shortcomings of communication methods
- establish clear expectations for both staff and parents in all communications

### Relevance to related legislation and DOE policy

All correspondence will be conducted in accordance with Queensland Department of Education policies and procedures.

- Code of Conduct

### Relevant Policy

Information Security Procedure

### Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually

### Implementation

Routine/formal communication tools

Telephone	For urgent matters, student absences, enrolments, changes to contact details, and to arrange time to meet with teachers or the School Leadership Team please contact the office by telephone: (07) 4078 0222 Please note that office hours are Monday to Friday – 8:00am-4:00pm
Newsletter	Our school newsletter is distributed electronically fortnightly. The newsletter includes date claimers and reminders of upcoming events. If you do have email, please drop into the school for a printed copy.
Website	<a href="http://www.innisfailsc.eq.edu.au">www.innisfailsc.eq.edu.au</a> Contains access to information about the school including important policy and school reporting documentation. It also contains relevant contact information and links to other resources and communication tools. A digital calendar can also be found on the website that highlights the most current upcoming events and should be checked in case of date changes to events.
Email	Please refer to the email guidelines in this document for expectations of parents/carers and students. Invoices related to school resource scheme, excursions and other subject activities are distributed via email. All staff check their email on a daily basis and endeavour to return queries within 2 school days.

Mail	Communications can be mailed upon request. Suspension paperwork is mailed.
Facebook Page	The Innisfail State College Facebook page is used to provide updates on events and activities for the school. It is a public page. Please adhere to the Queensland Department of Education Acceptable Use Guidelines and the Social Media Guidelines set out in the Communication Framework when contributing or commenting on the Facebook page. The Facebook page is an excellent place to check for any last minute updates, e.g. changes to sporting events due to inclement weather. Please note that Facebook page is also able to be viewed and accessed via the school website homepage.
Instagram	The Innisfail State College Instagram page is used to provide updates on events and activities for the school. It is a public page. Please adhere to the Queensland Department of Education Acceptable Use Guidelines and the Social Media Guidelines set out in the Communication Framework when contributing or commenting on the Facebook page.
School Assemblies	Year Level Assemblies and Whole School Assemblies are held weekly. Schedules for assemblies communicated at beginning of each year. Parents/Carers are encouraged to attend these assemblies as we share information, learning, performances and the successes of students.
Parent/Teacher Meetings	Appointments with teachers can be made via email or through the office or through SOBs booking system for scheduled parent/teachers events. The link for this booking system is found at the bottom of the home page on the school website. If you wish to discuss your students' needs with the class teacher, it is important to acknowledge that teachers are busy with the students in their classes from 8:40am to 3:00pm therefore meeting times will be outside these hours. Communication between parents/carers and staff is always welcomed and encouraged.
Information Sessions	Specific information sessions are held throughout the year. These will be communicated via the various communication methods.
Student Academic Report	Report cards are distributed via email to the email address provided to the college at enrolment. To request a printed copy please contact the college office.
Text Message Service	Innisfail State College utilises an automated text message service to notify parents/carers of unexplained student absences. These messages are usually sent by 10:00am in the event that a student has not attended school and the school has not been notified of this absence. We also utilise the text message service to contact parents/carers in regard to other matters. Generally the text message is sent to one parent/carer per student, unless other arrangements are in place.
Electronic Sign	Electronic signs are located at both entrances to the college and are updated by the School Administration team to provide information, updates and reminders for school events, activities and initiatives.
School Opinion Survey	School Opinion Surveys are undertaken annually and are designed to obtain the views of parents/carers, students and school staff from each school on what they do well and how they can improve. Opinions on the school, student learning, and student wellbeing are sought from a parent/carer in all families and a sample of students from the school. Opinions on the school as a workplace are sought from all school staff and principals. There are additional questions for teaching staff on their confidence to teach and improve student outcomes.
Other publications	These include permission slips for school excursions and other school related events. Hardcopy papers require parent/carer signature therefore will be mailed or sent home with the student.
QParents	Communication tool coming soon to ISC

## COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

Email is Innisfail State College preferred method of correspondence and 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 regular work hours. Our school community values face-to-face and telephone conversations and understands that these forms of communication are preferred in many situations. **Parents/Carers should inform the school if they have a preference for receiving information in another form.**

### **RAISING CONCERNS**

At times parents/carers may have concerns regarding a student's academic progress, social relationships or a general classroom manner. These concerns should be raised directly with the student's class teacher in the first instance. For further contact in regards to these matters the Head of Year can be contacted. Contact details for these staff members can be found on the school website on the Our Staff Page under the About Us tab.

### **EMAIL COMMUNICATION**

#### Staff & Parents

When communicating via email, staff and parents are required 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.

At the beginning of an email the sender can use 'No reply necessary' to convey an information sharing email only.

- Emails should always be respectful and constructive. If the email relates to a concern or problem, it ought to be focused on understanding the problem and finding a solution.
- Emails work best when they are positive. Avoid sending negative or confrontational emails. Email is not to be used to vent. We should 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). Likewise, emails containing personal or sensitive information should not be passed on to a third party without permission of the sender.
- The tone or intent of emails can easily be misunderstood. Be conscious of this and pick up the phone rather than send an email in this instance; or send an email to request a time to meet/speak.
- Staff and parents are not expected to respond to emails that are contentious or require ongoing dialogue. A face-to-face meeting should be arranged in this circumstance.
- Email is not 'instant messenger' and a response is not guaranteed the day it is received. Responses to emails within 48 hours is reasonable. Consideration needs to be made to staff who work scheduled days. If a staff member works two days a week, then the response time may be longer given they are not on site again for up to another week.
- Make sure the purpose of your email is clear...do you require specific action or is the email for information only?

#### Staff

- Email should not be used to discuss a sensitive issue which was not initiated by the parent or has 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 indicate when an informed response will be sent.
- When on leave, staff will activate an auto-reply message detailing relevant leave dates.
- Staff who work scheduled days must ensure their email footer includes the days they are scheduled to work.
- Staff may choose to send or respond to work related emails at a time of their own choosing, but there is no expectation these responses will be sent outside of school hours. (8:00-4:00).

- Staff should use the SDPS standardised signature format for emails sent from staff accounts. This will include a Disclaimer statement re: this policy being adhered to.
- Staff will not respond to offensive, contentious or abusive emails and should forward them to the school principal.

### Parents/Students

Please only send non-vital messages by this medium. For example, do not use email to inform a teacher that you/your child is not to go to "Helping Hands" 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/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 their email address
- Remember to respect staff personal time, including weekends and holidays. Parents shouldn't send emails outside of work hours and expect an immediate response. Replies will be sent during a staff members work time.
- It is the responsibility of every parent/carer to keep the school administration up-to-date with current email addresses.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

The intent of this section is to ensure individuals are able to contribute views to the Innisfail State College social media platforms without being exposed to inappropriate content, offensive language or discriminatory views.

When contributing to school social media do not post any material that:

- is racist, hateful, defamatory, libellous, derogatory, threatening, harassing, abusive, discriminatory or humiliating to another person or organisation;
- is pornographic or contains nudity;
- vilifies individuals based on their religion, gender, race or sexuality
- contains material (written, audio, video and other electronic forms) that infringes Intellectual Property\* rights such as copyright.
- contains personal information about another individual without their consent (including identifying information, email addresses, phone numbers or private addresses)
- falsely represents another individual, organisation, government or entity,
- infers endorsement of a product, business, company or organisation
- promotes a product, business, company or organisation
- is a statement that may interfere with or prejudice the course of or otherwise deals with civil or criminal proceedings that are presently before any court, tribunal, commission or similar body or any investigation by the police, Crime and Corruption Commission or other agency

The Innisfail State College social media platforms are not the correct forum for complaints, issues or questions regarding specific staff members, programs or policies. These are to be addressed privately.

These guidelines offer information to parents/carers about how to use social media in relation to comments or posts about their school community. Reputations of teachers, schools, principals and even parents/carers and students can be permanently damaged — and in some cases, serious instances of inappropriate online behaviour are dealt with by police and the court system.

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIpgXmMt2-cVRvH1K9bkSdQ?view\\_as=subscriber](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIpgXmMt2-cVRvH1K9bkSdQ?view_as=subscriber)

### **LETTERS/PRINTED COMMUNICATION**

#### **Staff**

All letters on school letterhead are to be signed by the principal (or delegate)