

COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOL

It is important for communication to remain strong between staff and home, as this creates and fosters strong, positive relationships. School-home communication usually involves multiple communication channels in order to ensure information is conveyed as widely as possible.

This document aims to manage and improve school-home communication by offering a guide to tools, timing, and work-life balance.

Communication Channels

Communication occurs through various means. The purpose of the communication determines the most means through which the communication should occur. Generally, the more issues-driven and/or detailed the information is, the more direct the means of communication should be.

Communication channels include:

- Face-to-face communication – one-on-one meetings, School Council meetings, Parent-Student-Teacher interviews
- Telephone conversations
- Hard copy, written communication – letters sent home from the school, printed school newsletters
- Electronic communication – email, electronic newsletters, texts, websites, voice mail, and social media, etc.

Direct forms of communication help establish mutual understanding through personal connection not possible with other means of communication. As such, complex issues are best communicated through real-time dialogue, either face-to-face or through telephone conversations. Initial dialogues should occur directly with the person(s) involved.

The Role of Social Media

Social media channels may work well for:

- Sharing news
- Sending key date reminders providing information and updates during a crisis
- Seeking clarification or asking factual questions
- Directing readers to resources, services, or further information

Social media channels typically do not work well for:

- Discussing complex, personal, or confidential issues
- Providing detailed information
- Engaging in dialogue

Expectations

How to Address Concerns – Moving from Classroom to Board Office

As per [Administrative Procedure 152 - School Dispute Resolution](#); parents and guardians are encouraged to bring concerns forward through the following procedure:

1. Classroom Teachers: Seek resolution through discussions with the classroom teacher.
2. School Principal: If resolution cannot be reached with the classroom teacher, discuss the matter with the school principal.
3. Central Office: If resolution cannot be reached with the principal, bring the concern forward for discussion with the appropriate division office personnel.

All parties to the issue may be invited to in-person meetings to seek collaborative resolution.

Being Respectful in All Forms of Communication

All communication must be respectful and all parties treated with dignity.

Communication must adhere to:

- [Board Policy 19, Welcoming, Caring, Respectful, and Safe Learning and Working Environments](#);
- [Administrative Procedure 176, Supporting and Guiding Students in Inclusive Communities Gender Identity and Expression](#);
- [The Education Act](#), sections 31 (students), 32 (parents), 33 (Board), 196 (teacher), 197 (principal);
- [The Occupational Health and Safety Act](#);
- The [Teaching Code of Professional Conduct](#) for teacher and administrator members.

Everyone has the right to be treated with respect and dignity, whether it's in a face-to-face meeting, in a telephone conversation, with hard copy correspondence or through electronic means.

Response Time Frames – The 7 to 7 Rule

Electronic communications are often asynchronous. Nevertheless, they give rise to an expectation for quick or immediate replies. However, teachers and other educational staff often are not able to respond to e-communication during the day when they are working with students.

To encourage a healthy balance in electronic school-home communication patterns and expectations, the Wolf Creek School Division has established the “Weekday 7 to 7 Rule”.

- All electronic communication should be scheduled for delivery between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on regular weekdays only (excepting emergencies). There is an expectation that no electronic communication occur on the weekend unless there is an emergency. It is recognized that attending to work-related tasks may occur outside of the 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m hours due to how each staff member attends to their duties.
- Responses should be as timely as possible in the circumstances respecting the 7 to 7 rule.
- Teachers will continue to exercise professional autonomy in managing evening and weekend time in support of their professional practice.

Put differently, staff should feel free to compose electronic communications at any time they choose, but should not cause the communication to arrive in colleagues’ or parents/guardians inboxes outside the “Weekday 7 to 7 Rule”. This protocol will establish healthy work-life expectations for all involved.

Staff may continue to conduct direct communications – telephone calls, online conferences, in-person meetings – on weekdays at times convenient for both staff and families.

Reference: [Education Act](#) Section 31, 32, 33, 196, 197
[OHS Act, Regulation, and Code](#)
[The Teaching Code of Professional Conduct](#)
[Board Policy 19](#), Welcoming, Caring, Respectful, and Safe Learning and Working Environments
[Administrative Procedure 176](#), Supporting and Guiding Students in Inclusive Communities Gender Identity and Expression

Adopted: September 2020
Reviewed/Revised: October 2023