



Ryde Public School

Communications Guideline

September 2024

Contents

Contents	1
Rationale	2
Aims	2
Actions	3
1. Expectations and Responsibilities	3
2. Appropriate actions for addressing concerns at Ryde Public School	5
3. How to make a complaint, give a compliment or suggestion	
4. Curriculum and class information	6
5. Guidelines for implementation	6
5. Guidelines for appropriate email communication	7
6. Guidelines for appropriate phone communication	7
7. Guidelines for appropriate use of Seesaw communication	8
8. Guidelines for contacting staff	9
Classroom, intervention or RFF teacher	9
Other school personnel	9
9. Infographic - 4 Steps to Effective Communication	10

Rationale

At Ryde Public School, we are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment with a positive and inclusive school culture that promotes the wellbeing and success of all. This requires us to promote open communication, fairness and positive relationships where all members are respected and valued. We believe as a parent or carer, you are an important part of our school community. We know that you play a crucial role in helping your child become a motivated learner. Communication between our school and our community is critical for us to partner together. As a school community, we are dedicated to working together to meet the various needs of our school community. Central to achieving this is trust and open, effective communication between all members of the school community.

Aims

This guideline aims to provide information that will result in a harmonious school community with parents, carers, staff and students all working together. The guideline will ensure that:

- effective communication between all school community members takes place;
- processes allow for effective and respectful two way communication amongst school community members;
- confidential information is managed in a manner consistent with community expectations, professional standards and legal obligations;
- all stakeholders can confidently voice their opinions and concerns in an appropriate manner and have these acknowledged;
- clear and fair processes and guidelines are provided to ensure the resolution of issues or concerns in a timely, effective and respectful manner, in accordance with Department of Education guidelines;
- parents, carers and school staff are assisted in organising a time to communicate safely and confidentially.

Actions

1. Expectations and Responsibilities

PARENT'S Expectations	SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES	PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES
My child will experience the best education possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for all and transform lives through learning. • Commit to providing an outstanding education for every learner. • Promoting the regular attendance of students. • Accurately record the students attendance in accordance to the Department of education's Attendance Policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept and support my child's educational abilities. • Present my child at school every day, on time and in full school uniform except in circumstances of illness and family issues. • Organise holidays including overseas trips during school holidays. • Keep my child at home if he or she is medically unfit to attend school. • Provide an explanation for absences within 7 days from the first day of any period of absence.
Have accurate information about my child's progress following the Department of Education's Reporting to Parents' policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a report to each person responsible for each student at the school twice a year in accordance with the Department of Education's Reporting to Parents' policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read all reports and download and keep them in a safe place for future reference. • Attend parent meetings and interviews. • Contact teachers via email when necessary to discuss concerns. • Subscribe to Ryde Public School's Sentral Parent Portal.
Have effective home and school partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clear about what parents and carers can expect and what is expected from them. • Make it easy for parents and carers to participate. • Support parents and carers to understand the school environment. • Keep parents and carers informed and make it easy for them to understand. • Make it easy for parents and carers to communicate with the school. • Provide a timely response. • Work in partnership with parents to promote student success. • Invite parent feedback. • Be clear about how decisions are made. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read all notes and notifications. • Return all correspondence promptly. • Inform the school promptly of relevant facts which may affect my child's education including but not limited to my child's physical, emotional and learning needs. • Ensure that my child completes any homework tasks. • Help my child celebrate any learning success and growth no matter how small. • Subscribe to and use the Sentral Parent Portal. • Subscribe to my child's classroom SeeSaw. • Read the newsletter: Ryde Community inFocus (issued in Weeks 5 and 10 of each term).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the importance of positive parent/teacher/child relationships and communicate any concerns to my child's teacher in a constructive manner. • Respect teachers' preparation time before or after school by arranging an appointment at a mutually convenient time if I wish to speak to a teacher. • Refrain from discussing any grievances in front of my child/ren regarding the school.
My child is safe at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote a safe and welcoming environment. • Be responsible for students when they are at school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach my child appropriate safety measures necessary for participation in everyday activities i.e. road safety, stranger danger, hygiene procedures and personal information. • Be responsible for my child/ren's safety when travelling to and from school. • Work collaboratively with the school to address any unacceptable behaviour shown by any child/ren.
Be informed of all disciplinary concerns regarding my child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform parents about their child/ren's unacceptable behaviour in accordance with Department of Education's Student Behaviour policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruct my child as to acceptable standards of behaviour. • Support the school to uphold and adhere to the school's Behaviour Code. • Listen to my child/ren's concerns, but remember that a different 'reality' may possibly exist elsewhere.
Be involved with my child's sporting pursuits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide carefully planned, adaptable and enjoyable representative and participation based physical activity experiences for all students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember that children compete for enjoyment. • Demonstrate appropriate social behaviour by not using inappropriate language or harassing players, coaches or officials. • Encourage my child to accept and show respect for the officials' decisions. • Show respect for the sporting team's opponents.
To be welcomed into our schools to work in partnership to promote student learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with parents and carers to achieve shared goals. • Invite parent feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate appropriate social behaviour by not using inappropriate and or aggressive language. • Refrain from interrupting the class during learning time. • Refrain from allowing domestic or personal disputes to impact on the routines of the school. • Respect that schools are smoke free and pet free zones.

<p>Have suggestions, complaints and allegations dealt with in a fair and expedient manner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly explain the choices parents have to provide the school feedback and complaints. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the school procedure to address the issue. • Discuss the issue in a calm and reasonable manner. • Provide feedback to the school via email, the school website or feedback links the school sends out post events.
--	---	---

2. Appropriate actions for addressing student matters at Ryde Public School

CONCERN	APPROPRIATE ACTION
General Enquiries (including Enrolment and Finance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the school office.
Late or Early Leavers on a school day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign in or out via the school office – do not take students directly to or from the classroom. • On special days/carnivals etc, students may be signed out via the classroom or supervising teacher.
The academic progress of your own child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request a meeting with your child's teacher by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - telephoning the school office and leaving a message. - emailing the school with a suitable time to discuss any issues.
The welfare of your own child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For queries such as daily classroom organisation refer to the stage information packs sent at the beginning of each term or Stage Outlines on the school website. • For more serious concerns, contact the office. State the nature of the concern and arrange a suitable time to talk to the class teacher or appropriate staff member. • To convey information about a change of address, telephone number, emergency contact, custody details, health issues etc. Please contact the office.
Actions of other students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom issue: contact the school via email or phone, state the nature of concern and the office will ensure your message is forwarded on to the appropriate staff member. • Playground or operational matters: contact the office to speak to Assistant Principals or Principal.
School policy or practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the office via email or phone. State the nature of concern and the office will ensure your message is forwarded on to the appropriate executive member of staff or Principal.
Actions of a staff member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediately contact the office via email or phone and state concerns and an executive member of staff or Principal will contact you. • Arrange to meet directly with the Assistant Principal or Deputy Principal.
Student Absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise via parent portal, email or send a written note when the student returns, explaining reason for absence, dates of absence. • Email medical certificates to the school office.
Extended Leave or Travel Extended illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For extended illness contact the school office and advise of the estimated date of return. Medical certificates will be required. • Application for Extended / Leave form (available from office) completed and returned with copy of travel itinerary and tickets.

RPS 4 STEPS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

These are the steps to promoting open and effective communication



3. How to make a complaint, give a compliment or suggestion.

We are committed to working with parents, carers, students and families to ensure all students are happy and thrive at school. If you have a question, issue, complaint, feedback or compliment about Ryde Public School, we'd like to know. Always contact the school first to talk about your concerns. We can solve most problems. It's best if you let someone know about your concerns as early as possible. Arrange a time to meet with a staff member or contact the school and ask for an appointment. If you are unsure who to speak to, the school's office staff may be able to help find the best person. In all cases, the school will adhere to the [NSW Department of Education's Feedback and Complaints policy](#) and aim to :

- acknowledge complaints within 2-3 working days
- resolve complaints within 20 working days.

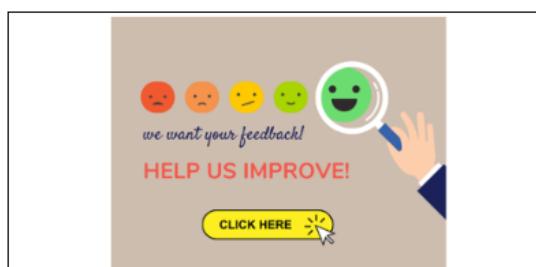
a. Email - ryde-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

If you have a question, issue, complaint, feedback or compliment we prefer you to contact the school via email as this helps the office staff to direct your email to the appropriate staff member.

b. [Ryde Public School Website](#) or Newsletter '[Ryde Community inFocus](#)'

If you have a question, issue, complaint, feedback or compliment you can use the quick link on our school website or newsletter which looks like this or just click on the feedback form below:

Feedback Form



c. Contact the Department of Education

You can also use the department's online [complaint form](#) to make a complaint or give feedback. The department of education will find the right place to respond to your complaint or feedback.

In most situations, a complaint will be referred back to the school. In some situations, a complaint or feedback may be provided to the Director Educational Leadership responsible for the school, so they can decide the best approach to resolve the issue.

For more information, see the department's [tips and advice for effective complaining](#).

Additionally, the Easy Read guide below explains with words and pictures how to make a complaint, give a compliment or suggestion to the school. The guide also contains information about supports available to make a complaint.

[Easy Read guide](#)

4. Curriculum and class information

Classroom teachers and Assistant Principals will communicate curriculum information formally at:

- Term 1, Stage Information online meetings; Parent - Teacher face to face Interviews
- Termly Stage updates via Sentral Parent Portal notifications and via the school website under '[Stage Outline](#)' tab.
- The end of Term 2 and Term 4, through academic reports.

5. Guidelines for implementation

Ryde Public School will use a range of strategies to communicate effectively with the school community.

- The main source of school community information is the Sentral Parent Portal, which acts as an integral tool for communicating the school events and procedures to the school community. Sentral Parent Portal communication is sent as a notification.
- It is the expectation and responsibility of the parents and carers to read the Sentral Parent Portal notifications and Parent Calendar to stay up to date with the current happenings at the school.
- The purpose of the parent calendar is to provide parents a termly schedule of events for the term ahead. Where parents are invited to an event and/or when permission and payment is required, the school will send a minimum of two reminders before an event is held. Under normal circumstances, a reminder is sent two weeks in advance and followed by a final reminder one week before the event/due date.
- It is the expectation and responsibility of the parents and carers to read permission notes for excursions/incursions that are sent electronically, provide/decline permission and complete all requirements including but not limited to payment of fees by the due date.
- The school is committed to working with and supporting parents who require financial assistance. However, parents must seek this assistance by contacting the school office before the due dates.
- Due dates are final and there are no exceptions if parents are unable to meet the requirements for that event by the due date. Due dates are often set by the external organisations and the school is normally invoiced and payment is required in advance.
- The school newsletter is called "Ryde Community inFocus". The purpose is to acknowledge the teaching and learning that occurs across the school. The community inFocus is supplied in electronic form (Week 5 and Week10).
- Seesaw's main function is to allow parents to view posts about the learning that is happening in the classroom and about their child. Teachers post 1-2 times a fortnight where possible. Teachers do not respond to messages sent through Seesaw, please use email for this purpose. During emergency situations and to maximise intended audience, the school will use Seesaw as an additional layer of communication to send quick one-way messages/alerts.
- The main source of two way parent-teacher communication is by school email. Please use the school's email address for non-urgent matters in the first instance. Our staff will respond to your

queries within 2 school days under normal circumstances. For longer discussions or complex matters, we ask parents and carers to make an appointment to speak to teachers directly, at a time that works best for everyone. The Department of Education has clear expectations for when and how teachers respond to communication outside of school operating hours. This means staff may not reply to non-urgent messages or emails outside of school operating hours (8.00am - 4.00pm)

- In all cases, if the matter is urgent and/or relates to the possible risk or harm to a student or a staff member, someone within the school, particularly a Senior Executive staff member, should be informed immediately and the urgency of the matter conveyed.
- For urgent matters, please contact 9809 3181. Urgent matters include serious student health, safety and wellbeing issues.

*Please note: It is not appropriate to share correspondence received from staff with students. Please remember that while we will maintain confidentiality, some documents retained within schools can be subpoenaed or subject to the Government Information Public Access Act (GIPA).

6. Guidelines for appropriate email communication

Ryde Public School considers the use of emails to be a vital communication tool and recognises the importance of appropriate content and timely replies.

Nevertheless, the high volume of communication traffic and the resultant impact on workload issues necessitates some guidelines for all users of the school community.

When emailing the school, seek to:

- facilitate a speedy response by limiting messages to less than 200 words;
- write clearly to explain your question or concern; and
- acknowledge teachers are not always online, due to their additional responsibilities. Their response times may take up to 2-3 school days under normal circumstances.
- an exception to the 2-3 day response time may be found in the situation that a teacher works at a part-time capacity or is on leave. Teachers may not check their emails while they are on extended leave.
- staff are only expected to respond to email messages between the hours of 8:00am and 4:00pm, Monday to Friday. Teachers read emails at different times of the day and so an immediate reply is not possible. In fact, you may not receive an email reply at all, since the staff member will determine how best to contact you: by phone call, email or to schedule a face-to-face meeting.

7. Guidelines for appropriate phone communication

Ryde Public School encourages parents and staff to use the telephone as an important tool to communicate personal issues or serious concerns that require an urgent response.

It is also important that all conversations by all parties are respectful and courteous.

Telephone communication is also useful for queries, urgent messages that need to be provided to students and teachers, and student absences.

Staff may not always be able to return telephone calls during the normal school day and may take up to 2-3 working days to return the call. Office staff will liaise with parents to arrange mutually agreed times for staff to return phone calls.

8. Guidelines for appropriate use of Seesaw communication

- To use the Seesaw effectively in a school setting, we have developed the following guidelines for parents/ carers:

Seesaw is appropriate for:	Seesaw IS NOT appropriate for:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers/students sharing a 'snapshot' of class work/learning that is happening in the classroom where possible. Parents engaging with the shared class work with an emoji or by typing an appropriate comment that will be visible to all. <p><i>NOTE: During emergency situations and to maximise intended audience, the school will use Seesaw as an additional layer of communication to send quick one-way messages/alerts.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Enquiring about your child's academic progress. This is best addressed through an email, telephone conversation or a face-to-face meeting; Enquiring about your child's wellbeing; Threatening or offensive language; and Sensitive information about your child or an incident that has occurred. This is better communicated in a more confidential unhurried way (e.g. - phone conversations or face-to-face meeting).

9. Guidelines for contacting staff

Classroom, intervention or Relief from Face to Face (RFF) teacher

When a parent wishes to contact a member of staff to discuss matters relating to their child, the procedure is to contact the school, giving a brief outline of the issue. Contact should be made using one of the following approaches:

- contact the school, either by phone, email or coming to the front office, and ask a school administration officer to arrange for the teacher to contact you to arrange a suitable meeting time. Teachers are not available to answer phone calls or come to the office during teaching hours or whilst on playground duty.
- contact the appropriate staff in writing via: a handwritten note or email, asking them to organise a suitable meeting time.
- speak briefly with the appropriate staff, either before or after school hours (not at a time when they are teaching, leading students or on playground duty), and ask them to arrange a suitable meeting time.

Other school personnel

When a parent has a concern or wishes to discuss an issue regarding a situation which they consider affects the whole school, their child's wellbeing or related to a school policy or matter, the procedure is to either:

- email the school (ryde-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au), where the office will triage the email and forward it to the most appropriate staff member;
- send, bring or post a letter, addressed to the school or relevant individual, which will be provided to the staff member indicated. When appropriate, this may be forwarded to a staff member responsible for monitoring and supervision of the identified provided information; or
- call the school, where the office will ask some questions to clarify the purpose of the call, they will then triage it and provide the details to the most appropriate staff member.

When parents have a concern or wish to discuss an issue relating to a member of staff or of a sensitive nature, they should make an appointment with a Senior Executive staff member by contacting the school office, either by phone or coming into the office personally, and asking the office staff to arrange a suitable meeting time.

In all cases, if the matter is urgent and/or relates to the possible risk or harm to a student, staff member or school community member, the Principal should be informed immediately and the urgency of the matter conveyed. The Principal may determine it is appropriate for someone else to resolve the issue and redirect it accordingly.

In relation to any complaints made, the Principal will adhere to the Department of Education's Complaints Handling Policy by following the School Community and Consumer Complaints Procedure.