COMMUNICATION POLICY – 2015

To be reviewed: 2018

RATIONALE:
At Our Lady’s school, we value a strong relationship between home and school, therefore we recognise the importance of open, effective communication. It is essential that members of the school communicate information according to the established protocols in order to protect the rights of individuals, to uphold the duty of care to students and to comply with Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM) and legal requirements.

Our Lady’s is part of the Parish and wider community, requiring ongoing communication involving all the relevant groups. As part of the wider community we also seek to be involved in celebrations and events. We are a visible presence of Catholic education in our local area.

AIMS:
• To foster a climate of trust and open authentic dialogue.
• To be sensitive to each other’s needs, points of view and feelings.
• To be non-judgmental and supportive of each other.
• To provide information to parents regarding current programs and student progress.
• To facilitate communication between school and families regarding relevant family, social, academic and behavioural information upon enrolment and in an ongoing manner.
• To facilitate open, formal and informal communication between the home and school, school and parish, school and wider community.
• To ensure that communication of information is carried out correctly and in a manner that complies with school policies, Catholic Education Melbourne and legal requirements.
• To provide an effective means of communication for our culturally and linguistically diverse families.

IMPLEMENTATION:
• Our Lady’s school has a policy of open and cooperative communication. This practice recognises that staff members have legal, local and professional obligations with regards to the communication of information.

• The Catholic Education Melbourne Privacy Policy adopted by Our Lady’s School, requires that we protect the interests of individuals with regard to their personal and health information.

• Each year the school will provide two written Reports and two formal opportunities where parents, students and teachers engage in a Student Learning Conference focusing on student progress. Additional interviews can be scheduled at any time and may be called by the teacher or the parent.

• The school will engage interpreters and translate documents, letters, etc. when possible and/or required.

• Parents are required to provide a copy of the latest Court Orders involving their child.

• Information sought by police, including interviews of students, must be directed to the Principal.

Growing together, in faith, for the future
• Requests from the Department of Health and Human Services personnel regarding students or families will be complied with at all times in consultation with, and under the direction of the Principal.

• All staff will comply with Court subpoenas to provide relevant information to the approved parties.

• Any issues requiring media liaison will be directed to the Principal who will liaise with the Media Officer at Catholic Education Melbourne.

Communication between school and parents can be both informal and formal.

1. Formal Communication:
   • Newsletters – Parish, School, Class/Level, Parenting Pointers and Education Board.
   • Information Sessions.
   • Parent/Teacher Interviews and Student Learning Conferences.
   • Reports and Portfolios.
   • Letters/emails to/from parents or teachers.
   • Program Support Group Meetings
   • Summary of Education Board and Parents’ Association Meetings included in Newsletters
   • Anecdotal records (e.g. Bullying Incident Report Forms etc.).
   • Phone calls and emails.
   • Student diaries.
   • Tiqbiz messages

Informal Communication:
• Parents helping at school.

2. Grievance/Concerns Procedures.
From time to time in any school parents may have a concern or an issue about school life, which they need to resolve. The following steps outline the appropriate process to follow if you find yourself in this position.

Teacher – Parents should discuss the matter with the classroom or specialist teacher concerned. It is important to make an appointment so that teachers are not interrupted during valuable class time. Simple matters can usually be resolved at this level, although this may require more than one meeting.

Deputy Principal / Principal – If a parent is unable to find a satisfactory solution to their problem or still feels concerned, they may discuss the matter with the Deputy Principal, or if preferred, the Principal.

Parish Priest – If it is a serious matter and the parent believes it still requires further attention, they can make an appointment to see the Parish Priest who is the overall manager of the Parish primary school.

Education Board – From time to time concerns maybe raised by Board members to the Principal only if the above procedures have been followed. It is not the role of the Education Board to be involved in issues of a management nature. However disagreements with the management of issues will not be discussed in the Board forum due to confidentiality and in accordance with adhering to the designated roles of the Board.
Catholic Education Melbourne – Parents may at times wish to contact the Regional Catholic Education Office to clarify concerns. Our Regional Office is based in Croydon and may be contacted on 9724 0200.

Parties will liaise with each other as required to meet the needs of all curriculum program concerns. All meetings with the parties concerned will be individual to ensure the children’s needs are addressed.

Action may be taken by individuals, the school, the Catholic Education Melbourne or the Victorian Institute of Teaching against staff members who choose to communicate information improperly.

EVALUATION;
This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three year review cycle or earlier as required.