

# Communication Procedures and Schedule Policy

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## PURPOSE

To ensure that the communication of information at Carranballac P-9 College is carried out correctly and in a manner that complies with school, departmental and legal requirements.  
To ensure all stakeholders are provided with information in a timely and effective manner.  
To ensure appropriate ongoing training is provided to all staff, teaching and non-teaching, and to new staff members as part of the induction process.

## SCOPE

It is essential that the school communicates information in a timely manner to all stakeholders in accordance with established protocols, to protect the rights of individuals, to uphold our duty of care to students and to comply with departmental and legal requirements.

This policy applies to all policies and procedures that ensure the efficient and safe operation of Carranballac P-9 College. It is the goal to ensure that Carranballac P-9 College policies frame and accurately reflect the school operations, directions, and goals and meet all legislative compliance with Victorian Registrations and Qualifications Authority (VRQA), and duty of care requirements.

This policy is intended for School Leadership, staff and parents/carers at the school.

## POLICY

The school principal is responsible for operational school policies, procedures and decisions. There are a **small** number of policies that must be developed and/or approved by the school council because of legal requirements or Department policy (e.g. Uniform and Student Dress Code, all finance policies).

The school has a policy of open and cooperative communication. However, this policy recognises that the school has legal, departmental, local, professional and social obligations with regard to the communication of information.

Parents/carers are readily able to communicate with teachers face-to-face at any mutually agreeable time throughout the school year, electronically by sending an email through to the school's email account, or in written format directly to the teacher.

We value and actively seek input from all in our school community with the primary approach to seeking parental input through the members of School Council.

Broader consultation throughout the school community will be undertaken where required and this consultation will be inclusive and non-discriminatory.

It is important to note that consultation does not mean decision making. Nor does it equate that decision-making will simply be based on popularity of ideas or weight of numbers.

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DET employees are free to make public comment on issues relating to education, but in doing so, must be wary not to make comments that can be construed as negative criticism of our school, School Council, our community, staff or community members.

As a matter of professional courtesy, and as a requirement of Section 3.6 of the Teaching Services (Conduct of Duties) Order 1998 staff will communicate with the Principal before making public comment or formal statement on educational issues or that bears on the organisation or program of the school or place of work. The Principal and School Council President will ensure that each other are informed.

In providing advice to students, teachers should limit their advice to areas within their professional knowledge, ensure it is given in situations arising from a role specified by the Principal and ensure such advice is correct and in line with the most recent available statements. Please refer to the school's *Duty of Care Policy*.

The *Privacy & Data Protection Act 2014* and the *Health Records Act* require that schools protect the interests of individuals with regard to their personal information and respect the individual's right to control how their personal information is used, and for what purpose. The school will only collect consensual information that it requires about individuals, and will only communicate and disclose information for the purposes for which it was collected.

Any person seeking information from the school that falls outside the school's previous practices must be directed to the Principal who may require that a formal written Freedom of Information request be made.

All such Freedom of Information requests will be referred to the Manager, Freedom of Information and Privacy Unit.

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

Requests from Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection Unit personnel regarding students or families will be complied with at all times. Please refer to the school's Police & DHHS Interviews Policy.

The school will comply with court subpoenas to provide information at all times, but will not respond to requests from lawyers seeking information without DET approval.

Action may be taken by individuals, the Department or organisations against staff members who choose to communicate information improperly.

The school will table its Annual Report to the School Community at an open meeting of the School Council as soon as all components are finalised. This report will subsequently be made available to all in our community through the school's website. The content of the Annual Report will reflect the requirements of the DET.

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School Council records are not available to the general community. Please refer to the school's *Freedom of Information (Fol) Policy*.

We will provide a minimum of two comprehensive written reports, one parent/carer - teacher interview for students in June with an option for a second in December and additional interviews upon request.

The school will identify those aspects of its policies and procedures which must be communicated to staff and parents/carers. Please refer to the attached Communication Schedule.

The school will identify the staff training that is required and who will be responsible for providing the training.

Other than that described in the school's *Internet, Social Media & Digital Devices Policy*, staff members may not communicate to students or parents/carers by any form of social media. Please refer to the school's *Staff Code of Conduct (General) Policy*.

### **Policies: Carranballac P-9 College will provide the following minimum steps:**

**Consultation** with key stakeholders in the school community when updating or introducing new policies. There are **very few** policies that require school council approval. However, even where a policy does not require school council approval, it is open to the school principal to choose to consult with and/or seek approval from their school council if they consider this to be appropriate.

Consultation may include, but is not limited to:

- circulating draft policies amongst staff, parents and teachers for comment
- including notices in your school newsletter inviting input into policy development
- discussion about draft policies amongst a working group of school council
- workshops with student representative groups.

**Publish** applicable school policies so that they are accessible to Carranballac P-9 College community. Inclusion of key policies on the school website, or other communication channels used by Carranballac P-9 College including enrolment packs, staff handbooks, induction packs, newsletters and student diaries.

**Communicate** school policies to all school staff to ensure that they are well understood and consistently applied. Ensure that key policies are regularly referenced in school decision-making processes and staff meetings and easily accessible. All relevant policies will be included in staff induction and any staff handbooks published by Carranballac P-9 College.

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**Review** the effectiveness of school policies and collect data to help to measure their success.

Examples of data that Carranballac P-9 College may choose to collect include:

- student survey results
- parent survey results
- incident registers.

**When reviewing policies Carranballac P-9 College will ensure:**

- School policies describe the purpose, scope and implementations of the operations and directions of the school as a whole;
- The process of considering school policies is managed by the principal on a continuous cycle and will use a transparent and consultative process;
- the responsibility of reviewing and evaluating policies is the responsibility of the principal who may delegate to a designated person. No other person is permitted to amend or change current policies without prior permission from the principal;
- All relevant policies will be uploaded to the school's website at the principal's discretion by the designated person;
- New policies will be added and modified to reflect the growth and evolution of the new school and new programs;
- All policies will use the school policy layout, meet legislative and compliance requirements, and have a designated review period;
- All policies use a consistent template, font and file format;
- When developing a new policy, the principal will consult with appropriate personnel in order to draft the initial policy statement. The draft policy may be circulated for comment to the appropriate committee/s, to staff members, to parents, to students before approval (if required) by School Council;
- Policies will be developed taking into account DET policies, memos and circulars relating to a particular policy area;
- A list of policies and a review schedule to provide a timeline for reviews either annually or on a three-year basis is to be maintained;
- When reviewing an existing school policy as per the review cycle, the principal will consult with staff and the appropriate Committee/s, and to School Council for approval (where applicable);
- Changes as a result of policy developments and / or reviews will be widely advised to students, staff and parents, and updated on the school's website (where applicable);
- Staff will be given opportunity to provide input into the policy development or review process (where applicable);
- The focus of all school policies will encompass the needs of students and school operations;

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- Any concerns relating to the structure of the school should be directed to the principal;
- Relevant policies will be available on the school portal and school website where applicable.

### Maintaining Registers

#### Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)

All teachers who are employed or engaged as a teacher in a Victorian school must be registered with VIT. The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (part 2.6) sets out the requirements for registration as a teacher. Section 2.6.56 prohibits persons from undertaking the duties of a teacher in any Victorian school without current Victorian Institute of Teaching registration.

Under the Act it is an offence for any school to employ a person to undertake teaching duties unless they are registered or have permission to teach.

The Minimum Standards for school registration require schools to:

- maintain a **register** of VIT details for all teaching staff; and
- have **procedures** for maintaining that register

Carranballac P-9 College will maintain a current register (through access on the VIT school portal), of VIT details (including names, registration numbers and expiry dates), of all teaching staff. Carranballac P-9 College may also choose to keep a separate table or spreadsheet as the register. The Carranballac P-9 College principal (or a designated nominee) is responsible for ensuring the register is current and readily accessible. The principal (or designated nominee) will develop a local procedure and be responsible for recording each staff member's VIT information in the register at the commencement and cessation of employment and following up with them if their VIT expiry date is reached.

#### Working with Children Checks

All Victorian government schools are required to comply with the Department's policy in relation to Working with Children Checks and other suitability checks for all **employees** (both Department and school council employees). The Department's policy (which incorporates legal requirements under Ministerial Orders) must be followed in relation to Working with Children Checks or other employment suitability checks **for employees**.

Working with Children Checks are required by law only for people who engage in child-related work, unless an exemption applies (e.g. parent supervising their own child, Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered teacher, police officer).

The Minimum Standards for school registration require schools to:

- maintain a **register** of all staff with a Working with Children Check; and
- have **procedures** for maintaining that register

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Carranballac P-9 College will keep a current register of staff holding a Working with Children Check (including names, registration numbers and expiry dates), generated from CASES21, or may choose to keep a separate table or spreadsheet as the register. Carranballac P-9 College principal (or a designated nominee) is responsible for ensuring the register is current and readily accessible. The principal (or designated nominee) will develop a local procedure and be responsible for recording each staff member's Working with Children Check information in the register or in CASES21 at the commencement of employment and following up with them when the expiry date is reached.

### **Working with Children and Suitability Checks - volunteers and visitors**

Carranballac P-9 College will determine what checks will be required for **Volunteers** and **Visitors** to the school in accordance with legal requirements under the *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic), the Child Safe Standards and Department policy.

**Note:** For more information see the Visitors and Volunteers Policies

### **FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

#### **Related School Policies**

- Concerns Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Carranballac P-9 College - Policy Responsibilities and Schedule 2021
- Visitors Policy
- Volunteers Policy

#### **Related Legislation**

- [Education and Training Reform Act 2006](#)
- [Ministerial Order 870](#)
- [Working with Children Act 2005](#).

### **EVALUATION**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's review cycle or if policy guidelines change