

# COMMUNICATIONS POLICY 2020

Forming part of: Giant Steps Tasmania's *Personnel Manual*

## Policy Statement

Giant Steps Tasmania believes effective communication is central to the establishment of a positive partnership between different parts of the school, between school and home and between the school and the wider community.

A copy of this policy is given to all parents on enrolment and is available on the school's website.

Giant Steps Tasmania:

- Provides parents/ carers and the wider community with information about events taking place at the school.
- Provides a two-way channel of communication between parents/ carers and the School.
- Provides parents with an avenue for communicating their concerns to teachers and an opportunity to take their concerns further is necessary (see also *Grievance Policy*).
- Provides parents/ carers with opportunities to communicate with staff about students' progress, achievements and issues.
- Provides a two-way channel of communication between staff and Management.
- Fosters channels of communication between staff and students.
- Maintains and utilises a wide range of communication methods.

## Purpose

To support effective communication between all stakeholders in order to maintain an environment that is open, honest and transparent and which ensures a safe environment for all.

To ensure that all communication is conducted professionally and with respect for the well-being of all members of our community.

## Implementation

### Communication between Parents/ Carers and the School

1. A yearly calendar of School events is supplied on the school website. This is provided to parents/ carers at the beginning of each school year and is updated regularly.
2. A weekly newsletter is emailed to parents/ carers and the community about school activities, developments and initiatives.
3. Official correspondence from the School is printed on school letterhead and is signed by the Principal (or delegate) prior to circulation.

4. Teachers use the student's Communication Book for fast and informal contact with parents/carers and respite accommodation. Parents/ Carers and respite accommodation are encouraged to use the Communication Book to raise matters of celebration or concern with the school.
5. The StoryPark App is utilised for information about students' learning activities and parents can contact staff using this App during normal working hours.
6. The School's website contains important information about the school, staffing, curriculum, events, the school calendar and community involvement.
7. The School's Facebook page highlights upcoming and important events.
8. All written communication from parents/ carers is acknowledged in writing (email or SMS within 24 hours and mail within 3 working days). It may take longer to answer specific queries and concerns and this is made clear in the acknowledgement.
9. Parents are encouraged to contact the school office and teachers by phone or text message. Parents are reminded that school staff are not available outside of normal working hours.
10. Parents/ Carers are contacted in writing regarding IEP meetings. It is expected that all parents/ carers will attend two face-to-face IEP meetings each academic year. (See: *Home-School Agreement*)
11. A written report against IEP goals is sent to parents/ carers mid-year and at the end of the year.
12. Parents/ carers are required to provide the school with updated information about students mid-year and at the end of the year. Students cannot be re-enrolled if the school does not receive up-dated information prior to the start of the new academic year.
13. Teachers respond in a timely manner to phoned requests for information or appointments, acknowledging calls within 24 hours.
14. Teachers keep a record of their contact with parents/ carers, respite homes and schools where students are dual-enrolled in their Communication Books.
15. Front office staff answer telephone calls promptly, using professional responses with a friendly manner and they return telephone messages within 24 hours.
16. Front office staff pass on messages to relevant staff as promptly as possible.
17. Front office staff respond in a timely manner to verbal or written requests for information or appointments, sending information requested within 3 days.
18. Giant Steps Tasmania has a Parents Group which meets regularly with the Principal and other staff members. The purpose of the group is to represent parents/ carers and raise matters of interest/ concern and to assist the school with feeding into and helping to review the School Improvement Plan.

19. Parents/ Carers are aware that bus staff do not carry messages between the school and home as the responsibility of bus staff is to ensure the safety and well-being of students on their journeys to and from school.

20. Messages about student absences (see **Addendum 1**) and appointments can only be accepted via phone to the school office.

The school's telephone number is: 6362 2522

The school's email address is: [principal@giantsteps.tas.edu.au](mailto:principal@giantsteps.tas.edu.au)

The school's address is: 37 West Church Street, Deloraine 7304

### **Communication with staff**

Information for Staff is disseminated through:

- The Whiteboard in the staffroom
- Professionals' Meetings
- Health & Safety Meetings
- Staff Meetings with the Principal
- Class Team Meetings
- Email (It is an expectation that staff check their emails daily and respond as requested to all emailed communication).

1. Staff complete the required form to request unplanned leave or carer's leave.
2. Staff contact the Education Administrator before 7.30 am by phone or SMS if they are unable to attend work.
3. Staff submit reports of student incidents, accidents or concerns regarding student behaviour or wellbeing in a timely manner and on the appropriate forms.

### **Communication with students**

As students at Giant Steps may be partially verbal or non-verbal, it is important that all staff are adequately equipped to be positive communication partners for them. Giant Steps Tasmania facilitates regular PDs to improve staff members' skills in this area.

In the event of a school closure being necessary, teaching staff aim to provide students with on-going access to education and support remotely. Teachers use a variety of different materials and resources to:

1. Communicate with students regularly
2. Manage remote learning
3. Facilitate students' self-directed learning
4. Support students' literacy
5. Create engaging and stimulating digital lesson content

(See **Addendum 2**)

### **Annual Principal's report**

The principal publishes an annual report to the school's wider community on the school's website each year outlining information from the previous year. The information includes:

- the curriculum

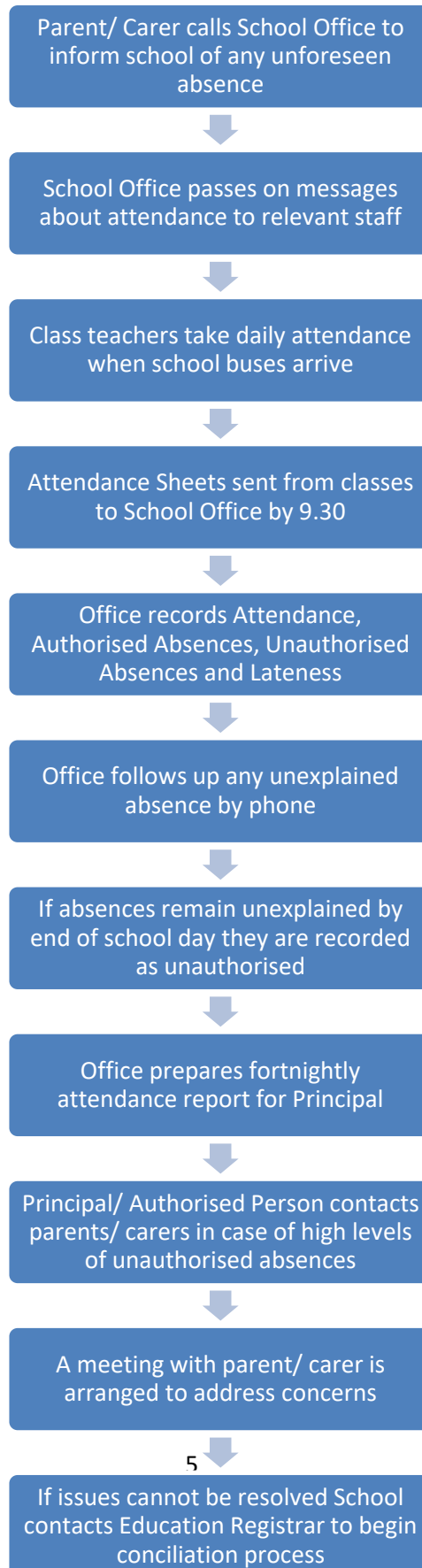
- extracurricular activities
- total number of enrolments
- a summary of assessment results (including NAPLAN)
- patterns of attendance
- school improvement and staff development priorities
- parent/ carer, teacher and student satisfaction with the school
- strategies used for involving parents in their child's education
- staff composition and qualifications of teachers
- average staff attendance.

### **Addenda**

1. Communication procedures for Attendance Issues
2. Resources for teachers to support communication and remote learning during a closure

Authorised by:	Paul Bowman
Position:	Chair of Board
Signature:	
Date accepted:	
Original policy developed by:	Chris Jacobsen
Position:	Formerly Education Administrator
Date Original Policy developed:	October 2017
Date of last review:	October 2018
Staff consultation period:	August 2020
Revisions prepared by:	Chris Jacobsen, Fairlight Educational Consulting
Date of next review:	October 2022

## Addendum 1: Communication Procedures for Attendance Issues



## **Addendum 2: Resources for teachers to support communication and remote learning during a closure**

### **1. Communication Tools**

Hangouts Meet – Video calls integrated with other Google’s G-Suite tools.

Teams – Chat, meet, call and collaboration features integrated with Microsoft Office software.

Skype – Video and audio calls with talk, chat and collaboration features.

WhatsApp – Video and audio calls, messaging and content sharing mobile application.

Zoom – Cloud platform for video and audio conferencing, collaboration, chat and webinars.

### **2. Remote Learning Management Systems**

CenturyTech – Personal learning pathways with micro-lessons to address gaps in knowledge, challenge students and promote long-term memory retention.

ClassDojo – Connects teachers with students and parents to build classroom communities.

Edmodo – Tools and resources to manage classrooms and engage students remotely.

Google Classroom – Helps classes connect remotely, communicate and stay-organized.

Schoology – Tools to support instruction, learning, grading, collaboration and assessment.

Seesaw – Enables the creation of collaborative and sharable digital learning portfolios and learning resources.

### **3. Self-directed learning content**

ABRA - Selection of 33 game-like activities to promote reading comprehension and writing skills of early readers.

Khan Academy – Free online lessons and practice in maths, sciences and humanities, as well as free tools for parents and teachers to track student progress.

KitKit School - Tablet-based learning suite with a comprehensive curriculum spanning early childhood through early primary levels.

Mindspark – Adaptive online tutoring system that helps students practice and learn mathematics.

Music Crab – Mobile application accessible for music education.

OneCourse – Child-focused application to deliver reading, writing and numeracy education.

Polyup – Learning content to build math and gaining computational thinking skills for students in primary and early secondary school.

Quizlet – Learning flashcards and games to support learning in multiple subjects.

SDG Academy Library - A searchable library of more than 1,200 educational videos on sustainable development and related topics.

YouTube – Huge repository of educational videos and learning channels.

#### **4. Literacy Support**

Global Digital Library – Digital storybooks and other reading materials easily accessible from mobile phones or computers.

Reads – Digital stories with illustrations.

Worldreader – Digital books and stories accessible from mobile devices and functionality to support reading instruction.

#### **5. Digital lesson content creation**

Thinglink – Tools to create interactive images, videos and other multimedia resources.

EdPuzzle – Video lesson creation software.

Nearpod – Software to create lessons with informative and interactive assessment activities.

Squigl – Content creation platform that transforms speech or text into animated videos.

**Note: This information can also be found in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy**

