



## COMMUNICATION POLICY (Including Grievance Procedures)

---

Prepared by	James Honor
Number of pages	7 (including Appendix)
Monitored by	James Honor
Reviewed by	James Honor
Status	Final

---

### Version History

1.0	4/6/08	Draft
2.0	4/6/08	Further draft
3.0	20/6/08	Final
4.0	07/08/12	Revised
5.0	05/11/15	Revised
6.0	18/09/17	Revised
7.0	16/08/18	Revised
8.0	14/08/20	Revised

## **1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Biblical framework and tenor of St George Christian School's (SGCS) whole school approach to communication, including communication involving grievance. It should be used to inform Departmental internal and external communication policies, procedures and practices. It outlines aims, principles and expectations in relation to communication.

## **2. CONTEXT**

This policy arises out of a need to establish a set of guiding principles by which Departmental communications approaches, practices and systems can be established. Communication involves not simply the "sending" of a message but also the receipt of the message. It is therefore an active practice that inevitably involves dialogue and requires processes that invite clarification so that the message received matches the message sent.

This process can be complicated where there is a grievance or difference in expectation. The emotional context surrounding the communication can therefore significantly affect the process and effectiveness of the communication.

## **3. DEFINITIONS**

"Departments" are the Infants, Junior, Middle and Senior Schools and the School's Administration Department.

## **4. POLICY**

### **4.1 Biblical Basis**

The Bible records God's message to persons. God communicates to us in word (the scriptures), in the physical person of His Son Jesus Christ and in the person of the Holy Spirit. His creation declares His glory and aspects of His character. John 1:1-14 reveals God's message and primary means of communication. It also acknowledges some choose not to receive His message. The Bible acknowledges that within any community people may sin against others, have different expectations and misunderstandings and there may be concerns and grievances as a result.

God's message is one that invites His people into loving relationship with Him, and makes this possible. In light of this, effective and clear relationship and improvement in school performance is the aim of school communication to enable a harmonious and productive learning community.

### **4.2 Information**

Timely and appropriately detailed information about school calendar, events, practices and expectations is essential to the smooth functioning of the school for parents, students and staff. To this end the following means of communication are used at either whole school or department level.

#### 4.2.1 Parents & Students

- School Prospectus
- A range of Information Evenings for Infants, Junior, Middle and Senior School
- School Website
- Campus Open Days and Information Packs
- ENews
- Family Handbooks
- Orientation Days and Packs (Kindergarten, Years 3 and 7)
- Assessment Handbooks Years 7 – 12
- Student Reports
- Community consultations as required
- School Newsletter (emailed, on website and in hardcopy by request)
- School Diaries (Middle School and Senior School)
- Parent Training Seminars
- Parent Connect meetings
- Notes re specific events
- School Annual Report
- Parent/Teacher Interviews
- Work Experience Handbook
- Timetables
- Assemblies

#### 4.2.2 Staff

- Staff Handbooks and Staff Policy
- Staff Meetings (Departmental and Whole School)
- Policy documents and training
- Timetables and Variation to Routine (VTR) communication
- Week at a Glance and Term at a Glance communications

### 4.3 Grievance Procedures

Within any school community there will be differences in expectations, opinions, understandings and values. SGCS views expressions of concern as a means of receiving feedback, providing SGCS with the opportunity to improve its performance and to enhance mutual understanding of all parties.

The Biblical principles that undergird our processes are outlined in Matthew 18:15 where the desirability of dealing with personal resolution of issues in the first instance is indicated.

A formal process can follow where initial attempts for resolution have not been achieved. The procedures for resolution can be found in 4.3.1 and 4.3.2. These procedures can also be found in the Family Handbook located in the School's Parent Portal (for Parents and Students) and in this document on Sentral (for Staff).

The Principal will not allow any member of the School community to be hindered in the exercise of their rights under this policy.

These procedures are referred to in:

- o Family Handbook and Department Handbooks
- o School Website
- o Staff Policy
- o Staff Handbooks
- o Senior School Diary

### **4.3.1 Whistleblower**

A Whistleblower Policy was established in October 2019 in response to the 2019 amendments to the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth). These amendments require that the school has in place:

- Clear systems to protect from detrimental impacts, any employee who 'blows the whistle' (from 1 July, 2019)
- A 'Whistleblower' policy (from 1 January, 2020)

This policy was designed to ensure that the School meets these legal requirements. The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that those who would draw attention to any potential or actual breach of legal, financial or regulatory requirements by the School or any of its employees are fully protected from any potential negative consequences of doing so.

This can be found on Sentral under Whole School Policies.

### **4.3.2 Parents and Students**

Matters may be raised by any member of the school community and discussed directly with the persons involved, e.g. Class Teacher, Year Adviser, Core Teacher or appropriate staff member. Concerns can be raised in person or in writing. Appointments can be made with teachers and other staff members by phoning or emailing the School.

Students are welcome to express their concerns, and these may be raised with their Class Teacher, Core Teacher, Year Adviser or appropriate staff member.

Raising the concern with the person most directly involved is most likely to facilitate resolution or clarification. If, however, any member of the community feels unable to raise the matter in this way, they should direct their concern to the relevant Head of Department or School Principal.

Staff will respond to concerns raised by considering the subject of the complaint and addressing or clarifying matters as relevant. They may seek advice from Faculty Coordinators, Supervisors or Heads of Department in their consideration of the matter.

If resolution is not reached at this level concerns may be referred to the Head of the respective Department or the Principal (or in his absence, the Acting Principal).

Concerns and suggestions can be raised using the Suggestion/Concern Form, available from the School Office or on the School's Website under 'School Community'. Upon receipt of the form, the Principal will:

- Consider the substance of the concern raised in light of the School's policies, procedures and ethos as well as the various State and Federal requirements.

- Investigate any allegations raised in the concern in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the matter and consider all perspectives.
- Communicate any findings and responses, as appropriate, to relevant members of the community, including the complainant.
- Provide a response within 14 days of receipt of the form.
- Seek legal advice as necessary.

If there is lack of resolution despite the oversight of the Principal, and the complainant wishes to pursue the matter further it may be referred to the School Board. The relevant contact details can be obtained by contacting the school office.

Concerns regarding the Principal should be raised with the School Board. The relevant contact details can be obtained by contacting the Company Secretary via the School Office. The Board delegate/s will follow the principles above in their consideration of the matter.

### **4.3.3 Staff**

Staff are encouraged to seek resolution with the person most directly involved.

If resolution is not reached at this level concerns may be referred to the Head of the respective Department or the Principal (or in his absence, the Acting Principal).

If the staff member has a grievance against the Principal, in which case the assistance of a Head of Department is engaged to bring the matter to satisfactory resolution.

If there is lack of resolution with a staff grievance against the Principal, despite the oversight of a Head of Department, and the complainant wishes to pursue the matter further it may be referred to the School Board. The relevant contact details can be obtained by contacting the Board Secretary.

## **4.4 Student Assessment Appeals Years 7 – 12**

The Assessment Committee handles appeals of assessment tasks following procedures outlined in Assessment Handbooks.

## **5. PROCEDURES**

Specific publications and procedures reflecting departmental requirements will be practised to ensure effective, timely and informative communication as outlined in 4.2 of this policy.

## **6. CONGRUENCE WITH LEGISLATION AND RELATED POLICIES**

- Ends Policy Statements and Executive Limitations of the Board of SGCS.
- NESA Registration Systems and Member Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual.

## **7. SOURCES**

SGCS Board Governance Policy Manual.

## **8. CONSULTATION**

This document reflects the involvement of Head of Departments (schools) and teaching staff who have contributed to the formation of relevant departmental procedures and publications.

## **9. REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed as required by Principal and Heads of Departments.

## **10. ACCOUNTABILITIES**

### **10.1 Responsibility**

Responsibility for this policy lies with the Principal and respective Head of Departments.

## **11. POLICY ADVISER**

Director of Research, Compliance and Accreditation, Mrs Jennifer Howse.

## **12. FORMS**

Concern Form and Idea/Suggestion Form refer to Appendix 1 annexed hereto.