



School Communications Procedure

Damascus College operates with the consent of the Bishop of the Diocese of Ballarat and is operated and governed by the Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL).

Procedure Statement

Damascus College is dedicated to open, transparent, and effective communication with all stakeholders. Effective communication is essential in providing students, teachers, parents/caregivers, and the community with the necessary information to make appropriate decisions. The school is committed to using communication processes and techniques to build positive learning environments for students, school staff, and parents/caregivers, inspiring and educating all students to succeed in becoming productive and valued citizens.

Purpose

The purpose of the School Communications Procedure is to:

- provide accessible and inclusive communication that responds to the needs of diverse groups within the school community
- promote a culture of honesty, trust, transparency, openness, and respectful communication
- ensure the management of confidential information is in accordance with legal obligations, professional standards, and community expectations
- provide the school and broader community with information regarding events, achievements, and activities at the school promptly

Distributing Information to Parents/Guardians/Carers

Email is the preferred method of distributing information within the school community.

Parents/guardians/carers are to inform the school office at 5337 2222 if they prefer to receive information in another form.

The following is a list of instances in which the school will need to contact the student's parent/guardian/carer and the appropriate process for each situation.

	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	STEPS
A	Concerns that arise about a student	Teacher	The parent/guardian/carer will be contacted promptly via email or phone to arrange a face-to-face meeting to discuss concerns about the student.

B	A student's behaviour is deemed inappropriate or disrupts the learning process.	Teacher Year Level Coordinator (YLC) Head of Relevant School – (HOS) (i.e. Junior School)	The Teacher / YLC / HOS is to contact the parent/guardian/carer promptly via email or phone.
C	A student is injured, complains of illness, or must go home for any reason.	First Aid or Office Staff	First Aid / Office Staff to contact the parent/guardian/carer promptly via email or phone.

Communicating with School Staff

Parents/guardians/carers may sometimes have concerns about a student's academic progress, social relationships, or general classroom matters. In the first instance, these concerns should be raised directly with the student's class teacher.

Contact with the class teacher is made by using one of the following approaches:

- in writing via email asking to organise a suitable time

If a concern remains unresolved between the teacher and parent/guardian/carer, an appointment is to be made with Damascus College to determine how to discuss the issue further.

Right to Disconnect

The Fair Work Act includes a provision where employees can disconnect from communication tools and not respond to their employer after or outside work hours. Specifically, employees have two rights:

- to refuse to monitor, read, or respond to contact from an employer outside of the employee's working hours unless the refusal is unreasonable
- to refuse to monitor, read, or respond to contact from a third party if the contact relates to their work and is outside the employee's working hours unless the refusal is unreasonable.

Laws now include a 'right to disconnect' term and a free-standing right to disconnect in modern awards.



The Fair Work Commission has the authority to issue stop orders for continuous unwarranted contact.




The legislation outlines factors to consider when determining whether contact outside working hours is reasonable. These include:





- the nature and urgency of the reason for contact
- the method of contact (e.g. a phone call would likely be considered more disruptive than an email)
- whether the employee is compensated for working outside of their ordinary hours
- the level of the employee's responsibility within the organisation
- the employee's individual circumstances.

For more information, refer to the [VCEA – Right to Disconnect: Fair Work Act Amendments Information Sheet](#).

School Communication Methods with Parents/Guardians/Carers

	COMMUNICATION TOOL	DESCRIPTION OF USE
1	 Telephone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For urgent matters, enrolments, changes to contact details, and to arrange meeting times with school staff contact the office by telephone: Phone: 5337 2222• office hours are Monday to Friday – 8.00am – 4.30pm• Staff members are not to be contacted on their personal mobile phones.
2	 Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All families are requested to provide their email details on their enrolment application. Changes to email address must be communicated directly to the school.• The school distributes reports via SIMON and advises as such via email and SMS

	COMMUNICATION TOOL	DESCRIPTION OF USE
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers will respond to parent/caregiver emails within three (3) school days during the school week. The administration email address is info@damascus.vic.edu.au. Administration Officers and the Leadership Team will access their emails at various times throughout the day. They will respond to parents/guardians/carers within one school day during the school week. For urgent matters the school should be contacted by telephone at 5337 2222 rather than by email Messages concerning arrangements for going home should be entered via PAM and not phoned or emailed into the College
3	 <p>Text Messaging</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school uses an automated text message service to notify parents/guardians/carers of unexplained student absences. These messages are sent by 10.30 a.m. to any parent or caregiver who has not contacted the school regarding their student(s) absence via PAM. Parents/guardians/caregivers must alter, add or adjust any absence in PAM in relation to the SMS they may have received. The school may use the text message service to contact parents/guardians/carers regarding other urgent matters, such as school closures due to extreme weather events. The school may use text messages to inform parents/guardians/carers about compulsory school drills such as lockdown and fire drills.
4	 <p>Damascus College Website</p>	<p>https://www.damascus.vic.edu.au/</p> <p>The school website contains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> access to information about the school, including policies, procedures, and school reporting documentation. relevant contact information and links to other resources and communication tools. a digital calendar with the most current upcoming events to be checked regularly in case of date changes to events.
5	 <p>Social Media</p>	<p>Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/DamascusCollege/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Damascus College Facebook page updates school events and activities information. The Damascus College Facebook Page is a public page. Please refer to the Social Media section of this Procedure for guidance on contributing to or commenting on the page. The Facebook page is an excellent place to check for any last-minute updates, such as changes to sporting events due to inclement weather.

	COMMUNICATION TOOL	DESCRIPTION OF USE
6	 <p data-bbox="304 365 459 398">School App</p>	<ul data-bbox="555 237 1453 300" style="list-style-type: none"> • For urgent matters, student absences, enrolments, changes to contact details
7	 <p data-bbox="276 600 488 667">Face to Face Communication</p>	<p data-bbox="528 427 842 454">Parent Teacher Interviews</p> <ul data-bbox="544 479 1394 586" style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent and teacher interviews occur each term to discuss students' progress, concerns, goals, and other issues. • Bookings for these interviews are made by via PAM. <p data-bbox="528 602 866 629">Parent Information Sessions</p> <ul data-bbox="544 654 1449 1151" style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent information sessions provide information to the school community. Information evenings occur annually to outline the year ahead. • Teachers will discuss processes, procedures, expectations, and curriculum. • For sensitive issues and concerns, communication should be by face-to-face meetings. • Parents/guardians/carers can make appointments with teachers and school leaders via email to the teacher. • Meetings to discuss student needs will be conducted outside school hours. • Communication between parents/guardians/carers, and staff is always welcomed and encouraged.
8	 <p data-bbox="304 1498 459 1532">Newsletter</p>	<ul data-bbox="555 1344 1445 1496" style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/guardians/carers will receive an electronic newsletter each fortnight • Newsletters will update families on what students are learning, news, and events from the term.
9.	 <p data-bbox="280 1727 483 1794">School Opinion Survey</p>	<ul data-bbox="555 1561 1465 1995" style="list-style-type: none"> • Damascus College conducts School Opinion Surveys annually to obtain the views of parents and caregivers, students, and school staff on what they do well and how they can improve. • This survey is conducted electronically and will be emailed to the random participants. • Opinions on the school, student learning, and student well-being are sought from parents/guardians/carers in all families and a sample of students from the school. • All school staff and Principals are asked for their opinions on the school as a workplace. Teaching staff are also asked additional questions about their confidence in teaching and improving student outcomes.

COMMUNICATION TOOL	DESCRIPTION OF USE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school shares the key results of the survey with the school community.

Social Media

When anyone within the school community is contributing to the school's social media platform, it is important that such contributions are positive and respectful. Members of the school community must not post any material which:

- vilifies individuals on the basis of their religion, gender, race, or sexual preference
- is racist, hateful, defamatory, libellous, derogatory, threatening, harassing abusive, discriminatory, or humiliating
- contains material (written, audio, video, and other electronic forms) that infringes Intellectual property rights such as copyright
- contains personal information about another individual without their consent (including identifying information, email addresses, phone numbers, or private addresses)
- falsely represents another individual, organisation, government, or entity
- implies endorsement of a product, business, company, or organisation
- promotes a product, business, company, or organisation, the only exception being their school
- interferes with or prejudices the course of or otherwise deals with civil or criminal proceedings that are presently before any court, tribunal, commission, or similar body or any investigation by the police, Crime and Corruption Commission, or other agency.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
School staff	<p>School staff will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> respond to parent/guardian/carer emails within three (3) school days during the school week use language that is clear and accessible to parents/guardians/carers and the community activate an autoreply message detailing relevant information concerning staff on leave ensure that school email account users respect confidentiality, privacy, legal and professional privilege, and the rights of others and that the content and dissemination of email do not jeopardise those protections. [School to insert additional points if required]
Parents/guardians/carers	<p>Parents/guardians/carers will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide the school with the most current contact information including telephone numbers and email addresses contact the school via [school to insert preferred communication method] to advise of short-term student absences due to illness. refer all school related matters to the school. If parents/guardians/carers have any concerns, they must contact the school directly. [School to insert additional points if required]

Principal	Steven Mifsud
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