

## COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY



### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the communication methods that will be used by White Hills Primary School to share information between the school and parents and carers, and to explain the expected roles and responsibilities of our school community when using social media.

*Our Communication and Social Media Policy aims to make respectful and ongoing connections with our parent, student, staff and wider communities in a way that is accessible to and inclusive of a diverse range of needs within the community. Printed communications will be legible and written in plain English. We encourage parents and carers to approach the office staff if they require information provided in a particular format eg, large font.*

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, students and parent/carers in the White Hills Primary School community.

***Notes and forms, sent home on pink and white coloured paper, remain the primary mechanism of communication used by White Hills Primary School.***

***These enable students and their parents/carers to prepare for, and be ready to participate in activities such as excursions, special food and theme days, sports activities etc.***

White Hills Primary School uses the following communication tools to share information between staff and parents.

### COMMUNICATION TOOLS

TOOL	USE	DETAIL
Notes and forms	<p>Distribution: Sent home with students as required.</p> <p>Return: Forms (eg. pink forms, absence notes) should be returned via the Office Post Box, directly to the office or to the classroom teacher.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If making a payment, a payment envelope (available from the office) should be used to enclose the pink form and payments if using cash.</li> <li>• If using EFT or QkR, return forms directly to the office.</li> </ul>	<p>Important information specific to your child regarding activities they can participate in, as well as general information or opportunities for parent/carer participation at school.</p> <p>They often include dates and times which should be diarised, as well as information about how students should prepare so as they are ready to participate.</p> <p><u>Pink:</u> Forms that require a response (eg. excursion approval and payment). Parents should retain the top section of these forms which provides important information about activities and the time and date they will occur.</p> <p><u>White:</u> Notes for information.</p>
Telephone, face to face.	<p>Parents are encouraged to keep their contact details up-to-date.</p> <p>Appointments with classroom teachers can be made before or after school hours or at a mutually convenient time.</p>	<p>Staff will call parents/carers directly as required.</p> <p><b>For urgent matters and issues that require an immediate response, parents are expected to telephone the school office.</b></p> <p>Parents/carers are encouraged to seek information directly by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making an appointment to meet with a classroom teacher or the Principal.</li> <li>• Visiting the school office.</li> <li>• Calling the school. This can also be used to report a student absence.</li> </ul>

TOOL	USE	DETAIL
Email	<p>Parents are encouraged to keep their contact details up-to-date.</p> <p>All staff education email addresses will be provided.</p>	<p>Staff will endeavour to respond to emails from a parent within 2 school days.</p> <p>Parents may contact staff via their education email address to communicate any information about their child. Staff will endeavour to check their emails on a regular basis, but as they spend the majority of the day teaching classes, may only check their email intermittently. For urgent matters, parents/carers should contact the school office.</p>
Sentral	<p>App: Download Parent Portal to device. Parents will require a code to access their child's information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole school notifications</li> <li>• Access to reports</li> <li>• Book interviews</li> </ul>
ClassDojo	<p>App: Download ClassDojo app to device. Parents will require a code to access their child's class.</p> <p>This can be downloaded on any phone, iPad or computer.</p> <p><i>Refer to appendix 1: ClassDojo - Expectations for Users</i></p>	<p><u>Creating a positive culture:</u> teachers can encourage students for any skill or value-whether it's working hard, being kind, helping others etc.</p> <p><u>Giving students a voice:</u> Students can showcase and share their learning by adding photos and videos to their own portfolios.</p> <p><u>Share moments with parents:</u> Get parents engaged by sharing photos and videos of wonderful classroom/school moments.</p> <p>Parents/carers are encouraged to sign up to ClassDojo at White Hills Primary School if they would like to receive notifications when information is posted. A unique code will be provided to the family to enable families to join ClassDojo.</p> <p>Parents/carers can expect personal messages, student and class stories, photos/videos etc.</p> <p>Please see White Hills Primary School's 'Dojo Expectation for Families' page for more details.</p> <p><b>Dojo is a communication App, but the school will not be using it as an instant messaging App. For an immediate response, please phone the school.</b></p>

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TOOL	USE	DETAIL
Newsletter	Available online on the White Hills Primary School website. Parents can opt to receive a notification about newsletter. Some printed copies available in the School office.	Published weekly on a Thursday afternoon. Includes important dates, Principal report, School Council update, Parents Group news, award winners, year level news and other general information. Parents/carers are encouraged to read the newsletter and diarise important dates for future reference.

## **1. GETTING THE MOST OUT OF OUR COMMUNICATION TOOLS**

To assist White Hills Primary School in implementing successful communication, parents/carers are encouraged to:

- Develop a system at home to ensure that notes and forms are not left in school bags, and that together, students and parents/carers can prepare and plan for upcoming activities
- Read information from our range of communication tools such as Sentral, the newsletter and ClassDojo and actively discuss the content/comment together
- Contact your child's teacher first regarding any enquiries specifically about your child. If a matter is not able to be dealt with at this level, a parent may arrange a meeting with the Principal/Assistant Principal
- Raise any concerns or complaints in accordance with our Parent Complaint policy. [NOTE: school council play no role in considering complaints
- Ensure contact details (addresses, phone numbers) and medical information are correct and up to date
- Model effective and positive communication behaviour that is consistent with our School Philosophy and Statement of Values
- Attend parent-teacher interviews, student led conferences and other information events such as the Welcome Barbecue
- Be aware of school policies. Please contact the school office for further information on how to access school policies.

## **2. SOCIAL MEDIA ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

White Hills Primary School **will not** use any social media platform as the primary communication method with students and their parents/carers.

It is the direct responsibility of the school to:

- Regularly make checks on the various platforms used, and where a response is required, the classroom teacher will endeavour to respond within 2 school days.
- Effectively manage any communication that may be deemed offensive and/or inappropriate
- Report immediately any evidence of harassment, bullying, or personal attacks to the school leadership team
- Where social media platforms are used for learning, that applicable teaching staff are aware of their responsibility to maintain, manage and report if necessary

The Principal will:

- Ensure all staff, students and parents/carers are aware of their responsibilities in regards to communication
- Alert staff and parents/carers where further action or investigation may be required. Where able, provide supporting evidence such as screen-shots or transcripts
- Inform parents/carers and or police if any considered abuse, misuse, bullying, etc. occurs. Work restoratively with students and parents

Staff members will follow all White Hills PS and Department of Education and Training policy and guidance with respect to appropriate use of social media.

### **3. APPROPRIATE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

When staff, students or parent/carers contribute to social media in either a personal or professional capacity and discuss or identify White Hills Primary School, we ask them to consider the items listed below:

- Remain acutely aware of the audience to any social media community – Eg. “If I post this here, who will be able to see it?” And, “How will it make them feel?”
- Ensure any posted material is respectful towards individuals and the values of White Hills Primary School - RESPECT, RESILIENCE, RESPONSIBILITY and ASPIRE
- Parents / Carers should not post images or video of any child other than their own, unless they have the consent of the child’s parent/carer to do so
- Not post material that is offensive, hurtful, hateful, sexist, defamatory, threatening, harassing, breaches any Court Suppression Order or is illegal in nature
- Ensure personal details are protected and not openly shared
- Ensure copyright laws are adhered to and original work is referenced accordingly
- Where applicable, references to students (eg. work samples, photos, sporting achievements) will have full names and personal details concealed.
- Misuse of communication tools will result in documented follow up from the school principal. Further misuse may lead to a block from the communication tool for a set period of time.

### **4. OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNITIES**

If staff, students, or parents/carers become aware of a question or issue regarding White Hills Primary School being raised on another social media site, they are encouraged to notify the Principal, a staff member or School Councillor so it can be dealt with efficiently by staff.

Parents are encouraged to be a positive role model by demonstrating respectful and responsible behaviours when communicating with and about our school online.

Parents/carers are asked to avoid discussing information or commenting about students, regardless of the context; or posting photos/videos that includes students on other online social communities when it includes a child other than your own, unless you have the consent of the student’s parent/carer.

The attached “Parents Fact Sheet: Social Media and Your School” provides additional information.

If you have an amazing photo/video of a school activity, we encourage you to send it directly to White Hills Primary School via email so it can be shared in an appropriate manner.

### **5. SUPPORTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

#### **Appendices:**

- WHPS ClassDojo Expectations for Families (Appendix 1)
- Guidelines for Parents Emailing School Staff (Appendix 2)
- Parent Fact Sheet: Social Media and Your School (Appendix 3)

**Other related Policies:**

- Photographing, filming and recording students policy.
- Complaints policy
- Digital Technologies policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy and Procedures
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Care Arrangements for Ill Students Policy and Procedure

**6. FURTHER INFORMATION**

The National Safe School Framework:

<http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/home>

The E-Smart Schools Framework:

<https://www.esmartschools.org.au>

Australian Communication and Media Authority, Cybersmart website: <http://www.cybersmart.gov.au>

## 7. APPENDIX 1



# White Hills Primary School ClassDojo - Expectation for Users

### What is ClassDojo?

ClassDojo is a communication app that allows teachers to share classroom experiences and student successes.

### Who can connect to Class Dojo?

Teaching staff and students are connected. Parents require a code to access their child's class (please see your child's teacher for further information).

### What can I expect?

**Classroom teachers** will post student's work or experiences on a regular basis, either as a class story or an individual student story.

**Specialist teachers** will also post information of student work. During peak times, such as productions, sports carnivals or art shows, they may post more often.

### Times of Operation:

In line with DET Employment Agreement, Teachers will only communicate using ClassDojo between **8:45am and 4:30pm**. Staff will endeavour to check ClassDojo throughout the day, but as they spend the majority of the day teaching classes, they may only check ClassDojo intermittently.

### What types of messages can I expect to receive?

**Personal messages and Student Stories:** These are between parent and teacher only. These posts celebrate learning, share learning goals, or can be used to remind parents about upcoming event.

**Class Stories:** Posts for the whole class to share that may help prompt discussion at home and reminders or requests regarding upcoming events.

### How can I use ClassDojo to communicate with my child's teachers?

Parents/Carers are able to leave encouraging comments for their child or are able to click the like (heart) button to appreciate a post.

Request an appointment or ask about something that is occurring at school that doesn't require an immediate response.

**For urgent messages, parents are to telephone the school office directly.**

Do not rely on ClassDojo for anything that requires immediate attention.

ClassDojo is not an *Instant Messaging App*. **Please contact your child's teacher via email or phone regarding an issue or concern.**



Please be aware of the Communication and Social Media Policy.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Guidelines for Parents Emailing School Staff**

Email is an environmentally friendly way of communicating that can save time when used effectively. We acknowledge that email is very convenient for parents who are working and find it difficult to catch up with school staff during regular work hours. Having said that, our school community values face-to-face and telephone conversations, and understands that these forms of communication are preferred in many situations.

#### **Expectations of Both Staff and Parents:**

When communicating via email, staff and parents are expected to adhere to email etiquette, including:

- Emails are at their best when they are brief and informative. Issues that require a level of detailed discussion should be dealt with in person or over the phone.
- At the beginning of an email the sender can use 'No reply necessary' to convey an information sharing email only.
- Emails should always be respectful and constructive. If the email relates to a concern or problem, it ought to be focused on understanding the problem and finding a solution.
- Emails work best when they are positive. Avoid sending negative or confrontational emails. Email is not to be used to vent. We never say in an email what we wouldn't say to the recipient's face.
- Never write about or seek personal information regarding third parties (staff, students or parents). Likewise, emails containing personal or sensitive information should not be passed on to a third party without permission of the sender.
- The tone or intent of emails can easily be misunderstood, especially where humour or sarcasm is involved. Be conscious of this and pick up the phone rather than send an email in this instance.
- Avoid writing in capitals.
- Staff and parents are not expected to respond to emails that are contentious or require ongoing dialogue. A face-to-face meeting should be arranged in this circumstance.
- Group emails have the potential to waste the time of many, so avoid sending emails to anyone for whom it is not relevant. It is also courteous to avoid time wasting emails, including jokes, chain letters and commercial solicitations.
- Make sure the purpose of your email is clear...do you require specific action or is the email for information only?
- When emailing a group, staff and parents must ensure they do not disclose the email addresses of others without permission to do so. (Blind CC should be utilised)

#### **Expectations of Staff**

- Email should not be used to discuss a sensitive issue which was not initiated by the parent or had not been previously discussed with the parent.

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- When an email is received from a parent that requires some time to gather information and reply properly, the staff member should respond acknowledging that the email has been received and indicate when an informed response will be sent.
- Staff will endeavour to reply to parent emails within 2 working days.
- When on leave, staff will activate an auto-reply message detailing relevant leave dates.
- Staff may choose to send or respond to work related emails at a time of their own choosing, but there is no expectation to respond to these emails outside of school hours. (8:45-4:30).
- Staff are not to respond to offensive or abusive emails and should forward them to the school principal.

### **Expectations of Parents**

- Please only send non-vital messages by this medium. For example, do not use email to inform a teacher that your child is not to go to After School Care that afternoon, as the teacher may not see the message in time. Remember that given work demands teachers may not get to read emails until late in the day.
- Please don't seek to discuss in detail your child's academic progress, learning expectations, or behavioural issues via email. These are best addressed over the phone or in person.
- Emails that are intended for the office staff should be sent directly to the school's email address, that being: [white.hills.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:white.hills.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au)
- Remember to respect staff personal time, including weekends and holidays. Parents should not send emails outside of work hours and expect an immediate response.
- It is the responsibility of every parent to keep the school administration and class teacher up-to-date with current email addresses.

### Appendix 3

## PARENT FACT SHEET: SOCIAL MEDIA & YOUR SCHOOL

***Be a positive role model by demonstrating respectful and responsible behaviours when communicating with and about your child's school online.***

### *Times have changed*

A few years ago parents discussed concerns or issues with friends at the school gate. Today, with the internet, mobile phones and social media, discussions between you and your friends can reach a far wider audience than ever before.

Social media can provide an enjoyable way to socialise online and keep you connected with what is going on in your school community.

While these technologies can be great for sharing ideas and keeping in touch, don't forget that comments about your school community can have greater impact than expected and can have very real consequences for the reputations of individuals including teachers, principals, other parents, students and yourself.

As a parent and carer, you are your child's first role model when it comes to online behaviour. Make sure your online conduct demonstrates how they can use social media respectfully and safely.

There are also legal implications around what people are able post and share about others. The idea of privacy in the online world can be confusing but essentially posting or sharing personal information about another person online requires consent.

### *Top tips for positive and respectful online communication with your school community*

#### Avoid posting negative comments that identify your school or individuals.

Feedback from the school community is important for schools and the department. Each Victorian Government school has a complaints process for raising concerns. If you have a concern, rather than go online, speak directly to your child's teacher, Assistant Principal or Principal.

If after having this conversation you feel that your concerns have not been resolved, you can contact the **Community Liaison Officer** at your closest Department of Education and Training Regional Office, who will assist you and the school to find a solution. For more information on raising a concern or issue with your child's school see: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complainschool.aspx>

Remember: serious instances of inappropriate online behaviour may constitute a criminal offence and become a police matter. School staff may obtain personal legal advice if they feel that online content seriously impacts their reputation.

#### Try not to be emotive or hasty. Keep comments calm and polite.

Before you post something online about your child's school ask yourself:

- Am I being a good role model for my child?
- Will this information reflect badly on me?
- Does the school community or individual really need to know this information?
- Is this information relevant, helpful and positive?

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- Will this information upset or embarrass the school community or an individual?
- Am I making situation worse?

If things do get heated online consider logging out and taking time to relax.

### Be aware of what you are sharing and with whom.

Remember that the legal implications around sharing personal information applies to images and video presented online.

As the parent/carer of your child, you have a responsibility to **not share** the personal details of other children.

If you upload photos on social media of school events, be aware of who is in the background. Some parents and caregivers do not want themselves or their children on social media. It is recommended that you never tag a child's image with any personal information.

If your child's personal information or image has been shared on social media without your consent you can request its removal by the social network hosting it.

All Victorian Government schools have a policy on if and when it is appropriate to use cameras for filming or photographing school events. You can contact your child's school for more information.

If you share pictures of your children publicly through online photo-sharing sites and hashtags, remember that once it is shared, you have no control over how it is used or by whom. To avoid these photos being shared by others or used for purposes without your consent, make sure you set up your account security settings to share images only with close family and friends.

### Get to know social media.

It may be helpful to research online networks and mobile applications. In particular look at:

- Terms of Use
- Policies and procedures for the removal of content
- Privacy settings

### Be proactive.

If you see something you feel should be removed, flag it. Some sites will allow you to do this anonymously.

### Address inappropriate content.

If you encounter inappropriate content online, there are a number of steps you can take:

- Refrain from responding.
- Take a screen capture or print a copy of the concerning online content.
- If you think the content is explicit, pornographic or exploitative of minors, contact the eSafety Commission <https://esafety.gov.au/complaints-and-reporting>
- Block the offending user.
- If the inappropriate or negative comments are in regards to your child's school or members of the school community you should also contact the school Principal or Assistant Principal.
- Report the content to the social media provider (e.g. Facebook). Providers can remove content that

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contravenes their Terms of Use.

*How do I report inappropriate content?*

Most website have a 'report/block this person' or 'report/block this content' function. Links to report or block users can be found below:

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/safety](http://www.facebook.com/safety)

Instagram: [help.instagram.com](http://help.instagram.com)

Google (including YouTube): [google.com/support/go/legal](http://google.com/support/go/legal)

Tumblr: [www.tumblr.com/help](http://www.tumblr.com/help)

Twitter: [support.twitter.com](http://support.twitter.com)

eSafety Commissioner: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/complaints-and-reporting>

*Further information*

eSafety Commissioner: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/>

Bully Stoppers: [www.education.vic.gov.au/bullystoppers](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/bullystoppers)

*A copy of this factsheet can be downloaded from*

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/bullystoppers/parentsocialmediaschoolcommunity.pdf>

The Communication and Social Media policy will be reviewed annually.

This policy was last ratified by White Hills Primary School Council on \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal School Council President