



# PETERSHAM PUBLIC SCHOOL

## SUPPORTING STUDENTS THROUGH EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH SCHOOL

**Guidelines created: March 2019**

**Review date: March 2020**

These guidelines have been devised to assist parents and carers (referred to herein as parents) seeking school related information and/or to communicate concerns.

From time to time parents or other members of the school community may need to approach the school in order to:

- Discuss the progress or welfare of their own child
- Express concern about actions of other students
- Enquire about school policy or practice

It is therefore necessary to have procedures that will clarify matters as soon as possible to ensure a safe and harmonious school environment is maintained. The best results usually flow from all facets of the school community working together.

These guidelines aim to:

- support class programs and student learning
- provide a guide that supports community and staff and ensures that concerns are dealt with in an open and fair manner
- ensure that the rights of students, teachers and parents are respected and upheld
- support matters sensitively and confidentially
- help reach an agreed solution or resolution.

It is important that if a parent has a concern or issue that is causing them concern that they feel they are able to approach the school and have the issue appropriately addressed. It is important that the school is given the opportunity to hear and respond to issues in an appropriate manner. We ask parents to make an appointment with an appropriate staff member to discuss the matter at hand.

**All parent enquiries will be attended to at the school office. Parents should not access classrooms or the playground during school hours without prior approval of the teacher.**

**Approaching teachers after the morning bell, on the way to class or during class is not appropriate due to teachers' duty of care for the supervision, safety and learning of their students.**

**When bringing children in late or picking them up early, parents should attend the school office. Office staff will contact the class teacher and arrange for students to be accompanied to or from the classroom.**

**If parents need to drop in lunch boxes, hats, jumpers or other items, this should be done through the school office. This keeps interruptions to a minimum and supports class learning programs.**

Email is the preferred method of contact with the school office: [petersham-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:petersham-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au). Our administrative staff team is small, and high volumes of phone calls and in-person enquiries can be challenging to manage.

ISSUE	APPROPRIATE ACTION
The academic progress of own child	<p>* Speak to your child's teacher to make an appointment with them, or contact the school office to make an appointment. The teacher will get in touch with you to arrange a suitable time to discuss any queries. <b>Teachers are not able to discuss any issues with parents during teaching time, or when they have duty of care of students.</b></p> <p>* For matters which are unresolved or require further support, contact the school office to request an appointment with the Assistant Principal supervising your child's year group.</p>
The welfare of own child	<p>* For minor issues, which can be resolved or clarified through a brief conversation, parents/carers may directly approach your child's teacher to clarify information. The teacher may request that you make an appointment to discuss the matter in more detail at another time.</p> <p><b>Teachers are not able to discuss any issues with parents during teaching time, or when they have duty of care of students, including playground duty and assemblies.</b></p>



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The welfare of own child	<p>* For more serious concerns, contact the school office. State the nature of your concern and arrange a suitable time to talk with class teacher or appropriate staff member.</p> <p>* For matters which are unresolved or require further support, contact the office to request an appointment with the Assistant Principal supervising your child's year group.</p>
Actions of other students	<p>* Contact the school office detailing your concerns, marked attention to your child's teacher. The class teacher will check and clarify details of the matter and share this information with you as soon as possible.</p> <p>* The class teacher will liaise with the stage supervisor or principal for playground problems requiring clarification from students or additional support.</p>
School policy or practice	<p>* Contact the school office. State the nature of your query. This information will be passed on to the appropriate staff member.</p> <p>*The staff member will contact you to explain the relevant details or to make an appointment to discuss the matter further.</p>
Change of details or information	<p>* To convey information about change of address, telephone number, emergency contacts, custody details, health issues etc, email the school office or update via Sentral Parent Portal.</p>

## Please note the following:

Parents should not attend classrooms without a prior appointment.

All enquiries are to be directed to the school office.

All parents and visitors must sign in at the school office when entering or remaining on school grounds during school hours. This excludes attendance at organised school events.

No parent should directly approach another person's child.

## Complaints Handling Procedure

Our preference is to address and resolve complaints at the school level where possible.

Complaints can be made in writing directly to the school, or via the complaints and compliments form, available on the Department of Education's Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions webpage:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/rights-and-accountability/complaints-compliments-and-suggestions>

The principal and Department of Education staff use the Department's Complaints Handling Policy to manage complaints.

## Use of the Inclosed Lands Act

In very rare cases, where people wishing to express their concerns do so in an aggressive, threatening or violent manner, the principal or nominee has the legal authority under the Inclosed Lands Act to

- direct the person to immediately leave the grounds
- call the police to remove the person should he/she refuse
- withdraw future permission (by letter) for the person to enter the grounds without permission of the principal
- Seek further legal avenues.

This includes phone calls, emails made to or about staff or directed towards staff or the school (Legal Issues Bulletin No 31, NSW Department of Education).

The school looks forward to working with the wider school community and building strong respectful, positive relationships through communication and collaboration.



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## Effective Communication Flowchart

