



# Oakleigh Grammar

<b>Policy Document Name</b>	<b>Email &amp; SMS Communication to Parents</b>
<b>Date Ratified by Board of Management</b>	May 2021
<b>Date for Review</b>	March 2024

## 1. Objective

This document is to outline email & SMS communications, with a view to maximising the tools while we maintain professional and timely contact with parents.

## 2. Policy

The School has moved to email as the primary communication method for general communiqués. It is expected that all parents have an email address registered on enrolment. Items communicated by email should not be communicated by post as well, except in the case of undeliverable email.

The decision on whether an item is emailed or posted rests with the relevant Executive Leadership Team Member – e.g. Principal, Deputy Principal, Head of School, Business Manager etc.

All communications must follow the School's visual identity and style guides.

## 3. Types of Communication

In general, items of the following nature should be communicated by **email**:

- Notices of upcoming events in the school community, including information evenings, sporting events and the like.
- All-school notices, such as information about scholarship exams, uniform policy, school calendar etc.
- Year level specific notices, such as information about camps, exam timetables and parent teacher evenings.
- School newsletters
- Notices from the school administration, such as changes to parking or fee payment procedures.
- Fee statements.

Items of the following nature should not be communicated by email.

- School information of a confidential nature.
- Debt collection letters.

In general, items of the following nature should be communicated by **SMS**:

- SMS should only be used as notification for emergencies, for a quick, short notice, message or reminder e.g. expected late return of a bus returning from camp/excursion or in the event of an emergency.

An SMS may only be sent on the approval of the Principal, Deputy Principal or Head of School.

#### **4. Who Communicates?**

Most communications will continue to be requested and proofed by teachers, Head of Faculty, Head of School or Deputy Principals. In addition, the Principal, School Chaplain, Business Manager and Chairman of the Board, and President of the Parents' Association can request email communication.

Email to an entire year level must be approved by a Deputy Principal, Head of School or Year Level Coordinator.

Email to a class or year level in relation to a school event, must be approved by the Head of School or Year Level Coordinator.

All email to the entire school community, ELC – Year 12 must be approved by one of the following:

- Principal
- Chair of the Board
- School Chaplain
- Business Manager
- Deputy Principals

Email to the entire database that includes Alumni and friends of the School must be approved by the Principal or Business Manager.

The responsibility for content of the email remains with its originator.

The Principal is to be copied on all email to the entire parent body.

#### **5. Email Frequency**

Care should be taken to ensure we do not abuse email and communicate too often. If there are several messages for parents, they should be consolidated into a single email where practical.

In most cases, items are to be communicated once only. Repeat communications on the same topic are not helpful and erode parents' goodwill.

#### **6. Timeliness and Deliverability**

Communication with parents should always be timely. Although email is a quick communication method, we should not rely on it for "last minute" notifications, in particular because there will always be parents who will only be receiving the information by post. Whenever possible parents should be advised of dated events at least 2 weeks in advance.

Email initiators should remember that many parents do not check their email every day, and that the lack of a "non-delivery" notification is not a guarantee that the email has been opened or read by the intended recipient. This is true for both work-based and home-based email addresses.

#### **7. Procedure**

##### **7.1 Ensuring Parents are notified**

The SAS or XUNO system will be used to create and update mailing lists as required. These lists will include both email and postal addresses. Originators should send emails when possible and post when not.

Communications by post should be sent the same day as the email, whenever possible.

When email addresses “bounce back” as undeliverable, the email originator should post the information, along with a notice that we were unable to email, and giving the reason why: e.g. mailbox full, address invalid. The parents should be asked to clear their mailbox or advise us of an alternate address. Email and postal address updates should be forwarded to Accounts for updating.

## **7.2 Messaging protocols, content, style and formatting for main school-based communication**

- The School has a standard email template for outgoing communication, which should be used for all official communication. The School’s general disclaimer will automatically be added to outgoing email and should not be removed.
- Parent email addresses must be placed in the BCC (blind carbon copy) field, NOT in the “To” field. This is essential to preserve the privacy of our parent information.
- The subject line should not be left blank. School email should have a meaningful title in the subject line, with the prefix “Oakleigh Grammar” so that parents know who is writing to them.
- The first sentence in the body of the email should indicate the target audience. For example, “This email is being sent to all parents of Year 8 students from the Business Manager”. This is especially important if the sender is not known to parents.
- All email should be “signed” by the originator or authoriser and include their contact details.
- All bulk email should contain an “opt-out” option, allowing recipients to request future communication by post rather than email.
- Document attachments must comply with the School’s visual identity guidelines and style manual and must be clearly identified as being from the School. The name of the originating person or department should also be identified, ideally including an image of the person’s signature.
- Most bulk emails are generated from SAS or XUNO, rather than a specific staff member in the usual format of a covering email with PDF letter attachment

