

## HOKOWHITU SCHOOL COMMUNICATION POLICY (2024)

### PURPOSE

Hokowhitu School Board will ensure that effective, appropriate, and timely communication will occur between the school and families, whānau, and the wider school community in support of creating a positive learning environment.

### GUIDELINES

#### Forms of Communication

1. Board communication with families and whānau will include the following:
  - a. The school website will offer key information about the school's governance, including Board member profiles, meeting minutes, policies, and the annual report.
  - b. A dedicated Board email address will be publicised to the school community.
  - c. The dates and times of Board meetings will be publicised to the school community, and the agenda and papers will be made available two full business days before each meeting.
  - d. The Board will undertake an extensive community consultation exercise at least once in its three-year term, as well as additional targeted consultation exercises as needed, and will provide both online and paper options for participation.
2. School-level communication with families and whānau is provided across multiple modes, and is available to the wider community upon request:
  - a. The school website will offer key information about the school's structure and operations, including enrolment information, staff details, and a calendar detailing upcoming events..
  - b. Weekly school newsletters, including upcoming events and important updates, will be emailed to every school family.
  - c. A phone app will be used to convey updates and reminders.
  - d. Kete and classes will also communicate as needed with families and whānau through paper or email newsletters, the school phone app, and/or online learning platforms.
3. Some specific kinds of communication with the school will not be conducted with the classroom teacher:
  - a. Absentee reports are made through text message, the school app, or an email or a phone call to the school office.
  - b. Community consultation responses are submitted online or to the school office.
  - c. Sports team queries are submitted to the teacher overseeing that code, or to the coach concerned.
4. Communication in the event of extraordinary circumstances (emergency, traumatic incident, or other urgent situation) will be in accordance with the school's Emergency Management plan.
  - a. Existing forms of communication as detailed in Guideline 2 of this policy will be used to ensure that families, whānau, and the wider school community are kept informed to the greatest possible extent.
  - b. Only the Principal, Presiding Member of the School Board, or a spokesperson delegated by the Board are authorised to speak to the media on behalf of the Board, and they will endeavour to do so in a proactive fashion in order to meet the information needs of the wider community.
  - c. Both the Principal and Presiding Member should have media training.

- d. If the extraordinary circumstances involve the Presiding Member, the Board will delegate a spokesperson in their place.
- e. The school community may be asked to refrain from comment to the media.

#### Student Phones and Portable Digital Devices

5. Students are requested not to bring phones or other internet-enabled portable digital devices (i.e. laptops, smart watches) to school, but those who do must not keep them in their possession or access them during the school day.
  - a. Phones or digital devices must be handed to a Kete teacher immediately upon arrival, who will ensure they are stored at the office until the end of the school day.
  - a. Phones or digital devices that are used in breach of this policy will be confiscated and stored at the office for the remainder of the day.
  - b. The school will take all reasonable care for phones and devices that it is asked to store, but otherwise accepts no responsibility for any loss or damage caused to them while on school property.
  - c. Students must not take phones or other internet-enabled portable digital devices on any EOTC activity, and if these are found they will be confiscated for the duration of the activity.
  - d. Any breach of this policy may result in further action in accordance with the Behaviour Management Policy.
  - e. The Principal may grant an exemption to this guideline for any student who requires a phone or other digital device to increase or improve their ability to participate in learning activities, or for legitimate health and safety reasons.

#### Principles of Communication

6. Family and whānau communication with the school should occur within the following parameters:
  - a. Staff are generally available to talk on an informal basis immediately before and after the school day.
  - b. Except in emergencies, any change of pick-up arrangements must be communicated to the school office no later than 2pm.
  - c. Families and whānau can make a formal appointment to meet with staff at a mutually agreed time during the term.
  - d. Staff can be contacted through their school email addresses, which are listed on the school website, and will endeavour to respond to queries within two working days.
  - e. Staff are unable to engage in communication about school business through social media or their personal phone numbers, unless this is mutually agreed.
7. Staff communication with students outside of class will only occur through school email addresses or online learning environments provided by the school, and will be restricted to school work, in accordance with the Online Safety Policy.
8. School staff and Board members are expected to maintain high standards in all their communications with the school community, and to ensure that their public social media presence is consistent with the values of Hokowhitu School.
9. Complaints or concerns about school communication will be addressed in accordance with the Complaints and Concerns Policy.

#### **ASSOCIATED POLICIES/PROCEDURES/HANDBOOKS**

Guidelines

- Standards for the Teaching Profession
- Code of Professional Responsibility

School Policies, Procedures, and Other Documents

- Board Responsibilities and Conduct Policy
- Complaints and Concerns Policy
- Complaints and Concerns Procedures
- Emergency Management Plan
- Online Safety Policy

**Ratification date:** 19 March 2024

**Review date:** Term 4 (October/December) 2025

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**Presiding Member**

**Principal**