



Communications and Engagement Policy

OakTree College ('the College') is an independent co-educational specialist senior secondary school providing education opportunities for young people of migrant backgrounds who are at risk of disengaging from education.

OakTree College ('the College') seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment where all students can safely participate in the educational experiences offered by the College.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the College can provide a safe, inclusive and supportive environment where open, transparent and positive relationships occur at all times with the College community.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the communication and engagement between the College and its community.

3. Legal Requirements

This policy meets the requirements under Schedule 4, clause 12 of the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017. Schools are required to demonstrate the communication of policies and procedures relating care, safety and welfare of students to the College community.

4. Definitions

College community This includes:

- All school staff members
- Students
- Governing body (College Board)
- Family members (i.e. parents, carers and guardians of students)
- Contractors
- Volunteers

Electronic communication Includes internet-based tools for sharing information among people. It may include (although is not limited to):

- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook)
- School website
- Newsletter
- Video and photo sharing websites
- All electronic/digital communication applications (e.g. email communication).

5. Objectives

The objectives of this policy relate to the:

- acceptable communication channels between the College community to foster open and respectful communication amongst all College community;
- communication of the College policies and procedures;
- methods of communication used and for what purpose to provide up to date information about current and upcoming events, share stories news, and achievements to the College community;
- management of personal and confidential information in a manner consistent with community expectations, professional standards and legal obligations;
- processes in place to raise issues or concerns for appropriate resolution.

6. College Expectations

The College will communicate information to the College community so as to provide timely information, protect the rights of individuals, uphold its duty of care obligations and to comply with the College's legal requirements. Effective communication is essential in providing students, teachers, parents and the community with the necessary information to make appropriate decisions and/or kept informed.

The relationship between families and the College is a very important partnership in ensuring a child's educational progress and wellbeing. Central to achieving this is trust and respectful communication between all members of the College community.

The College is committed to using appropriate communication channels and techniques to build positive learning environments in order to inspire and educate all students to succeed in becoming productive and valued citizens.

7. Parents, Carers or Guardian's Expectations

It is the parent's, carers or guardian's responsibility to ensure:

- that their phone, mobile and email contacts are up to date so that communication is ongoing as required,
- that they read information from the College's electronic platforms (e.g. website, newsletter, emails etc) to stay abreast of the current happenings at the College,
- they maintain high ethical standards in their engagement, references and dealings with the College to build and support the College community.

It is important that the College has current and correct details, phone numbers and email addresses of parents, carers and guardians to ensure there is timely communication. Parents, carers and guardians can contact the College if there are any changes to ensure communication can occur in a timely manner.

8. Implementation

Electronic communication is the primary method of communication which acts as an integral tool for communicating College events and activities to the College community. This includes the use of the College website, newsletters, email communications and telephone.

In addition to electronic communication, members of the College community may request printed copies of policies and other documents from the College Administrative Office. The availability of interpreters or having key documents in community languages can also assist

with communication and can be requested. It is important that all communication by all parties is respectful and courteous.

Members of the community will also have regular, formal opportunities for engagement with the College staff at: Open Days, Parent/Teacher/Student conferences, Parent Information sessions, or more informal face to face meetings with classroom teachers and the Executive Principal as required, and other events in which the College community is encouraged to participate. Dates for these events are published in the College Newsletter or on the College website. If parents, carers or guardians want to make an appointment with their child's teacher or the Executive Principal, please make contact via email oaktreecolleges@gmail.com

The College will use various electronic platforms to share information in an instantaneous format and in a respectful and courteous manner. In order to enable effective communication, the use of one or more of the following communication avenues will be used to communicate effectively with the College community.

- College Newsletter: communications will be published fortnightly and sent to the College community.
- College website: publication of information online about the College policies, events, activities and programs. College policies are available on the College website or upon request from the College Administrative office.
- Email: a form of communication to and from the College community and wider community in a recorded format.
 - For non-urgent matters, school staff including teachers will respond to emails within two working days during school term time.
 - School staff are not required to respond to emails at night or on weekends and ordinarily will not be checking emails during those hours,
- Portal: formal communication method for parents in accessing of assessment reporting, booking method for parent/teacher/student conferences, attendance monitoring and for assessment and reporting information.
- Academic reports: the College must issue twice yearly at the end of Term 2 and Term 4.
- Handbook: the College will use Student & Parent/Guardian Handbook as a means of communication.
- College Facebook/X page: social media platforms for sharing and communicating information. It will only be used for educational purposes. (School staff are not able to connect with students, parents, carers or guardians via social media for child protection reasons. Please do not attempt to contact school staff via social media.)
- College meetings or parent/teacher/student conferences: a form of in-person communication to provide avenue to discuss or raise issues.
- Face to face meetings: parents are encouraged to meet and speak with school staff and get to know them. However, it is important to make an appointment and have confidential conversations if regarding anything specific about their child.
- Telephone: All phone calls should be via the College Business and Administration Office via 0424 833 606. The College Office is generally open for calls between the hours of 8:45am and 4:00pm. Telephone communication is useful for confidential

queries, or urgent messages that need to be relayed to students, teachers or parents, carers or guardians.

- For non-urgent matters, the College will endeavour to return calls within two working days.
- It is not appropriate to contact school staff on their private mobile numbers.
- College Assembly: a whole of College assembly to connect as a College. To recognise and share achievements, information and promotion of events with relevant school community, and presented by the College leadership staff.
- Policies will be communicated as per Appendix 1: Policy Communication Table

9. Guidelines

At all times, the College encourages the College community to provide positive and constructive comments. Concerns can be addressed by contacting the College directly to ensure they are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner via oaktreecolleges@gmail.com

All communication must be respectful in tone and language used. Parents, carers and guardians are encouraged to speak to staff in a respectful manner (and vice versa) and get to know them.

If the tone of the email from the parent, carer and guardian is perceived as aggressive or offensive, it is recommended that the staff member seek advice from the Executive Principal or the Assistant Principal. In these cases:

- Do not respond in kind.
- Be respectful in the tone and language used.
- Acknowledge the concern raised in the response and if possible, address each issue or concern.
- Ask the Executive Principal or Assistant Principal to proofread the email or if unsure how to proceed, please seek advice as appropriate.
- Only the Executive Principal is permitted to introduce the use of new social media sites on behalf of the College and make or moderate posts to the pages. All affiliated social media accounts that are connected to the College will abide by this policy.
- Information or content that staff or community members would like shared on social media, must be approved by the Executive Principal and comply with the College's privacy policy and other associated policies.
- Proper resource citations and copyright laws must be upheld.
- Facebook and X users are able to 'Like' our page or view posts.
- Online comments are NOT private. Information, internal discussions, or specific information about students, staff or other parents should not be shared. When interacting, even on the strictest settings, parents should act on the assumption that all postings are in the public domain.
- Users are not able to author a post of their own on the College social media pages. The College reserves the right to withhold any content it deems to be in breach of the College's policy. This includes discriminatory, illegal, obscene or

misleading/fraudulent comments, spam or any content which may break intellectual property laws.

- When responses are permitted online, users are personally responsible for the content that they post, share and respond to online. When posting online, all information is considered representative of the user's views and opinions and NOT of the College.
- When comments are not permitted or enabled on the College's posts, users may connect regarding a post by contacting the author of the post or the Executive Principal, and as such, details will be provided (if deemed appropriate).
- Failure to comply with this policy, may lead to an account being blocked from the College social media pages.
- Media permissions, including photograph or video usage (relating to the use of students' images, schoolwork and names), will be gained on enrolment (and updated/requested when required). The College will not use any student image without prior parent, carer or guardian approval.
- Parents, carers or guardians contacting a teacher by phone will be directed to the teacher's voicemail if they are not available, where they are welcome to leave a message for the staff member.
 - It is important to note that teachers are often in the classroom and in meetings after school and may not be able to respond immediately.
 - Staff are expected to check their voicemail on a regular basis and respond to phone messages. In the interest of protecting privacy, no teacher can provide private or home phone numbers to parents, carers or guardians.
 - A parent, carer or guardian can expect to receive a response from staff within 2 working days. If it is not possible to address the concern or question then the staff will let the parent, carer or guardian know and pass the information on to the Executive Principal.

10. Complaints

Complaints can be lodged in line with the College Complaints policy in relation to how the College has engaged or communicated to the College community. More information about the complaints process can be found in the Complaints Policy on our website.

11. Governance

The Executive Principal will have oversight on the application and implementation of this Policy.

12. Reporting

To ensure appropriate oversight, the College Board will receive relevant reports on any issues raised from the College community from the Executive Principal at its regular meetings or as appropriate. Communication

The College will communicate this policy via the College website to the College community and will be referenced in the Student & Parent/Guardian Handbook.

13. Contact

If you have any concerns, contact the Executive Principal.

14. Related Policies

- Duty of Care Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Child Safety Policy
- Digital Learning Policy
- Supervision Policy and External Provider Procedure
- Privacy Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Enrolment Policy and Agreement
- Emergency and Critical Incident Management Plan

15. Approval and Review

Document Owner:	Executive Principal
Approved by:	College Board
Approval date:	21 June 2024
Review date:	June 2025 (and every 12 months thereafter)



Appendix 1: Policy Communication Table

Policy/Procedure	College Newsletter	College Website	Student and Parent/Guardian Handbook	Teachers' Handbook	Board Induction	Staff Handbook	Staff Induction	Staff Professional Development	On enrolment
Enrolment Policy & Register Procedure		✓	✓						
Attendance Policy		✓	✓	✓			✓		
Fee Management Policy		✓					✓	✓	✓
Refund Policy		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
Teacher Registration Policy & Procedure		✓					✓		
Working with Children Clearance Policy		✓					✓	✓	
Medication Management Policy			✓	✓		✓	✓		
Asthma Management Policy		✓	✓	✓		✓			
Anaphylaxis Policy	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			
Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations including Mandatory Reporting Policy		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
OakTree College's commitment to combating the spread of COVID-19		✓			✓		✓	✓	✓
Child Safety Policy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Child Safety Code of Conduct		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Emergency and Critical Incident Management Plan		✓	✓			✓	✓		
Child Safety Volunteers Policy		✓					✓		
Duty of Care Policy		✓	✓						

Policy/Procedure	College Newsletter	College Website	Student and Parent/Guardian Handbook	Teachers' Handbook	Board Induction	Staff Handbook	Staff Induction	Staff Professional Development	On enrolment
Communications and Engagement Policy	✓	✓	✓						
Child Safety Diversity and Equity Procedure		✓	✓			✓			
Excursion Policy		✓	✓				✓		
Complaints Policy and Procedure		✓	✓						
Records Management Policy		✓	✓						
Child Safety Visitors Policy		✓				✓			
Child Safety Staff Recruitment and Personnel Procedure		✓		✓		✓			
Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy		✓	✓				✓		
Digital Learning Policy		✓	✓						✓
Privacy Policy		✓	✓						
Restraint and Seclusion Policy		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Student Behaviour Management Policy		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Suspension and Expulsion Policy and Procedure		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
First Aid Policy		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Supervision Policy (and External Provider Procedure)		✓	✓	✓					
Student Learning Outcomes Policy		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
Assessment and Reporting Policy		✓	✓	✓			✓		
Plagiarism and Cheating Policy		✓	✓	✓				✓	✓
Delegations Policy and Register		✓	✓			✓			
Conflict of Interest Policy		✓			✓	✓			