Trinity College
Communication Policy

Updated 2024

1. Preamble

At Trinity College Beenleigh, we seek to embody the Marial Virtues of *humility, simplicity* and *modesty,* which see us become more genuinely present to each other. We seek to live as a community where a sense of family spirit flourishes. In this context, we work to ensure that all communication practices within the College focus on building positive relationships. In doing this, we believe that we foster an environment conducive to staff supporting one another, building positive student learning outcomes and working in positive partnership with parents and the community. We acknowledge that technology plays an important role in our communication and the importance of clear expectations for our interactions.

2. Aims

i. Create a College environment where a lived reality of the Gospel message, 'To love your neighbour as yourself', is experienced.
ii. All members of our college community should recognise that the positive use of communication lies at the heart of building good relationships.
iii. Provide clear guidelines concerning communication expectations.
iv. Highlight the appropriate use of ICT concerning communications.
v. To uphold the individual right of employees to have a safe work environment and to disengage from work-related communications and activities outside of reasonable working hours.

3. 'Reasonable Hours' Definition:

Trinity College defines 'reasonable hours' as 8 am to 4 pm. In the case of coordinating events outside of these hours, the allowed time for work-related activities extends to 30 minutes after the event concludes.

4. Roles

Role of the College Leadership Team

i. Adhere to the Communication and Right to Disconnect Policies to help support a positive environment in the school community.
ii. Ensure that the Communication Policy and procedures are implemented appropriately within the College.
iii. Provide information to students, staff and parents in relation to the procedures contained within the Communications Policy.
iv. Review the Policy and procedures from time to time with the College Pastoral Board.
v. Ensure that all written communication from the College is of a high standard.

Role of Staff

i. Ensure that the Communication Policy and procedures are understood and implemented where appropriate.
ii. Adhere to the Communication and Right to Disconnect Policies to help support a positive school environment.
iii. Provide information to students in relation to the Communication Policy and procedures.

Role of Students

i. Actively engage in positive communication with staff and peers.
ii. Promote positive relationships when using the various modes of communication.
iii. Act responsibly in relation to enhancing communication between the College and home.

Role of Parents/Caregivers

i. Actively promote a positive environment by seeking to communicate with the College regularly.
ii. Communicate in a manner that is conducive to the building of positive relationships.
iii. Seek to read all communication from the College to home via email, Parent Slips, Broadcasts, newsletters and SMS for more urgent communications.

5. Staff Responsibilities

General Expectations

i. Adhere to the Right to Disconnect and Communication Policies to uphold the individual right of employees to disengage from work-related communications and activities outside of reasonable working hours.
ii. Communicate with one another in a manner considered professional and support our Catholic ethos.
iii. Read all official communication from the email groups/individuals and respond as required within given time frames.
iv. Seek to speak with colleagues in a personal manner (face to face) wherever possible.

v.   Choose the appropriate use of communication for purpose, to minimise workflow disruption, keep electronic communication traffic to a minimum for all stakeholders and address items effectively and efficiently:

     a. **Email** should be used for items that require priority action (not urgent) and/or attention. See Use of Email below.

     b. **Teams Chat** should be used where collaboration or discussion is required. More than one reply on an email would typically move to the Teams Chat.

     c. **Teams Channels** should be used to distribute non-urgent information.

     d. **Parent Slips** must be used when seeking any parental permission or acknowledgement.

     e. **Broadcasts** must be used when needing to advise a group of families of necessary information.

     f. **SMS** will only be sent in consultation with the College Leadership Team. These are for school notices outside reasonable hours, finance notices and emergency broadcasts.

Use of Email

i.   When staff members are out of the office and unable to access email for longer than two school days, they are to put on an out-of-office autoreply. The Auto-Reply message should direct all urgent matters to the College office.

ii.   Emails must not contain any offensive material/language.

iii.   Emails are to be checked daily, appropriately responded to and deleted as soon as possible – including clearing the 'Deleted' and 'Sent' Items folders.

iv.   Staff members are asked to use normal letter-writing conventions appropriate to the professional context when addressing one another via email, i.e., using the person's name (Dear/Good Morning), signing off in an appropriate manner, standard grammar, etc.

v.   If an email hits two replies, this needs to become a face-to-face, over-the-phone, or Teams Call discussion.

vi.   Avoid REPLY ALL on group emails. Follow email Address conventions to avoid clogging email inboxes:

     a. **TO:** These people need to take action. Be specific - whom do you need to act on the content of your email? Do not address multiple people unless all are required to take action. Multiple recipients can lead to assumptions that others will deal with this email.

     b. **CC:** These people need to be aware of this information or kept in the loop, but specific action is not required.

     c. **BCC:** Used when sending to larger groups external to the College to protect the privacy of all recipients.

Communication with Parents/Caregivers

i.   Contact with parents will be made via email, phone or face-to-face meeting to support student learning and wellbeing.

ii.   In all dealings with parents, Staff are expected to relate respectfully and professionally and be encouraged to make face-to-face contact with students and their families wherever possible.

iii.   Staff members should not engage with parents on personal websites or streaming media. i.e., 'Facebook, personal blogs etc.

iv.   Parent emails should typically be replied to during reasonable work hours within two (2) school days unless urgent or student protection related. This email may be a short reply to let families know that more information is required, and that contact will be made a little later, with an estimated time given.

Communication with Students

i.   In all dealings with students, staff are expected to relate respectfully and professionally and be encouraged to make face-to-face contact with students wherever possible.

ii.   Staff need to be aware that their contact with students must be consistent, transparent and fair to all students within the class group and undertaken with an understanding of normal staff professional standards.

iii.   Staff will only email or Teams Chat with students for professional purposes that directly relate to the teaching and learning environment.

iv.   Emails and Teams Chat to students are never to be of a personal nature.

v.   Staff members should not engage with students on personal websites or streaming media. i.e., 'Facebook, personal blogs etc.

vi.   All forms and other official college letters should be discussed with students so that they are aware of the content and expectations of the document.

vii.   All communication with students must be kept to reasonable work hours.

6. Student Responsibilities

Trinity College seeks to encourage students to use various skills successfully when communicating with one another and the College's staff. We believe that communication needs to be positive and respectful at all times. Jesus' command to 'love our neighbour as yourself' lies at the heart of our desire to communicate with one another in a loving manner.

Communicating with Staff

i. Students are expected to relate to staff in a respectful manner at all times.
ii. Students are asked to say a polite, 'good morning/good afternoon' when passing a staff member during the course of the day.
iii. Using positive non-verbal communication is a powerful tool to develop positive working relationships.

Communicating with Staff via email

i. Students are asked to use normal letter-writing conventions appropriate to the professional context when addressing members of staff via email, i.e., using the person's name (Dear/Good Morning), signing off in an appropriate manner, and standard grammar. Emails must not contain any offensive material/language.
ii. Emails are to be checked daily, appropriately responded to and deleted as soon as possible – including clearing the 'Deleted' and 'Sent' Items folders.

Communicating with Peers

i. Treat other students with respect.
ii. Use ICT in an appropriate manner to build positive relationships.
iii. Adhere to the College Personal Technology and Phone Use Agreement, ICT Use and all College policies.

7. Parents' and Caregivers' Responsibilities

General Expectations

We ask that parents always seek to work in partnership with the staff of the College and adhere to the Communication Policy and in doing so, commit to communicating positively and respectfully. Further information can be found in our Code of Conduct for Parents and Visitors on our College website: Code of Conduct for Parents and Visitors.

Reporting Student Absenteeism

The College takes seriously its responsibility to ensure students arrive safely at school. Part of this process is the need to ascertain why a student is absent and to work with parents to establish a clear process for informing the College if a child is absent on any given day. It is vital that parents always advise the College when a student is absent from school for one or more days. This Policy links to our Child Protection Policy in so much as the College wishes to work with parents to ensure that students who should be at school are at school.

Parents must provide the school with an appropriate explanation for the student's non-attendance via the BCE Connect App, Parent Portal or via email to sbeeabsentee@bne.catholic.edu.au.

Emergency /Medical Information

Every year, the College sends a reminder to update emergency contacts and medical information. This can also be done at any time of the year using the BCE Connect App. We ask parents to update information that requires alteration prior to any excursions, retreats or camps.

Media Permissions

Every year, the College sends a reminder to update Media Permissions to families. BCE schools require informed consent from parents/legal guardians and in some cases students, to use their images in any form. Families must nominate one of the following categories:

i. *'All'*: Use of images is approved. Images that go to a wider audience will require additional permissions for being used by the College.
ii. *'School Community Only'*: The College cannot publish photos, videos and/or full names of students any social media posts, newsletters or publications that will appear outside the school. Can use in internal school slideshows, yearbook, assemblies etc.
iii. *'None'*: Students with 'None' nominated cannot have any photos or videos taken, including formal, class, sporting or individual photos.

Excursions and Camps

Prior to any student being able to attend an excursion or camp, a range of documentation is sent home for parents to complete and return to the College by the date stated. Submissions after the stated return date, will not be accepted. Families are asked to limit contact with students on excursions and camps unless absolutely necessary. This typically can trigger homesickness and feelings of being left out, which can result in a bad experience for their child/ren at camp.

Telephone

If you would like to speak with a teacher or a member of the Student Growth and Wellbeing Team, contact the College Office on 07 3442 5222. Our reception can put you through to the relevant team to help support your query. As all of our staff have a regular teaching schedule, a member of the team will get back to you as soon as possible. All matters are treated with respect and urgency.

SMS

SMS (short message service) via mobile phone is used to contact the primary carer for absenteeism and important notifications requiring priority attention.

Email Correspondence

When communicating via email, staff and parents are expected to adhere to email etiquette. Don't write an email when emotions are heightened. If you are concerned – use Save as Draft or Delayed Delivery. This will give you time to think about whether you feel the same after a couple of hours or the next day. Abuse, personal attacks or inappropriate communication with employees of the College will not be tolerated.

Issues that require a level of detailed discussion require a different channel of communication. The responsible parent/s will be contacted by phone, or the issue will be dealt with in person.

Parent Portal

Families have access to the portal to be informed about their child's learning, sporting draws, report cards, and timetables and to contact classroom teachers. This can be found by downloading the BCE Connect App available in the Apple Store or Google Play.

Email Notices and Letters

The College uses a digital platform for delivering College notices, letters, announcements, past report cards and sporting draws. Email contact is implemented on a regular basis. If a family does not have access to email, another channel for communication will be established.

Newsletter

The College produces a digital newsletter on a regular basis, for families to stay informed with news and events. Families receive an email notification with a link to view the newsletter. New families receive an automatic subscription to the newsletter. The newsletter can also be viewed on the BCE Connect App and Parent Portal.

Social Media

The College has an official Facebook, YouTube and Instagram page for the school and for Trinity Sport. These platforms are used to showcase events and activities within the College and to promote our College to the wider community. No other pages or groups are endorsed or affiliated with the College, even if staff members are involved. We ask that parents and families do not use this to ask questions, raise a concern or seek assistance. Please contact the College directly via phone or email for all queries or requests.

BCE Connect Mobile App

Families can download the free app through the App Store (iPhone/iPad) or Google Play (Android) by searching for BCE Connect and downloading the app to your device. The app delivers information and instant notifications in real time to the school community - reminders, special events, diary dates, notifications and alerts. The App can also be used to log absences, access your child/ren's timetables and to contact classroom teachers.

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Enriching Learning
Inspiring Excellence
Creating Pathways

TRINITY BEENLEIGH COLLEGE

IN GOD WE TRUST

www.trinitycollege.qld.edu.au