

Guidelines for Staff – Parent - Student Communication

Rationale

In fulfilment of our Mission Statement and Aims, these guidelines suggest approaches for communication between the staff, parents/guardians and students of Lucan Community College.

Communication should take place in a respectful atmosphere where the unique contribution of each is recognised. Teachers are the educational professionals and will endeavour to offer the most appropriate educational advice in the circumstances. Parents/guardians are the main carers of the student and are supported in this role by the school community. Students attend school to achieve a high standard of education and are supported in this role by the school community.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to be actively involved in the education of their children and we aim to actively assist this process. If an issue of concern arises, parents can make an appointment to meet or speak with an individual subject teacher, class tutor or year head with the relevant student present if deemed appropriate. Issues of a serious nature can be taken directly to the Principal or Deputy Principal.

With this in mind:

- The College journal is the main means of communication between student, parent and teacher. Notes from home of a very sensitive nature should be sent in an envelope to the teacher/tutor and not written in the journal.
- Meetings between parents/guardians and teachers (and students where appropriate) should be arranged by appointment through the administration staff;
- Participants in meetings should be aware of the time constraints from the beginning of the meeting;
- Parent-teacher meetings are opportunities for a short input from the teacher and brief comment from parents/students. Any issue needing more time should be dealt with through the normal appointment system;
- All participants in meetings should deal respectfully with each other. If this does not occur the meeting may be terminated and rescheduled where appropriate;
- Use of positive language is encouraged with the focus on solving the issue in question rather than dwelling on the negative;
- Staff members may refer parents/guardians to other agencies inside (Guidance counsellor, Principal, etc.) or outside (Youth Reach, Jigsaw, Pieta House, Social Services, National Education Welfare Board, etc.) the school community where the need arises.

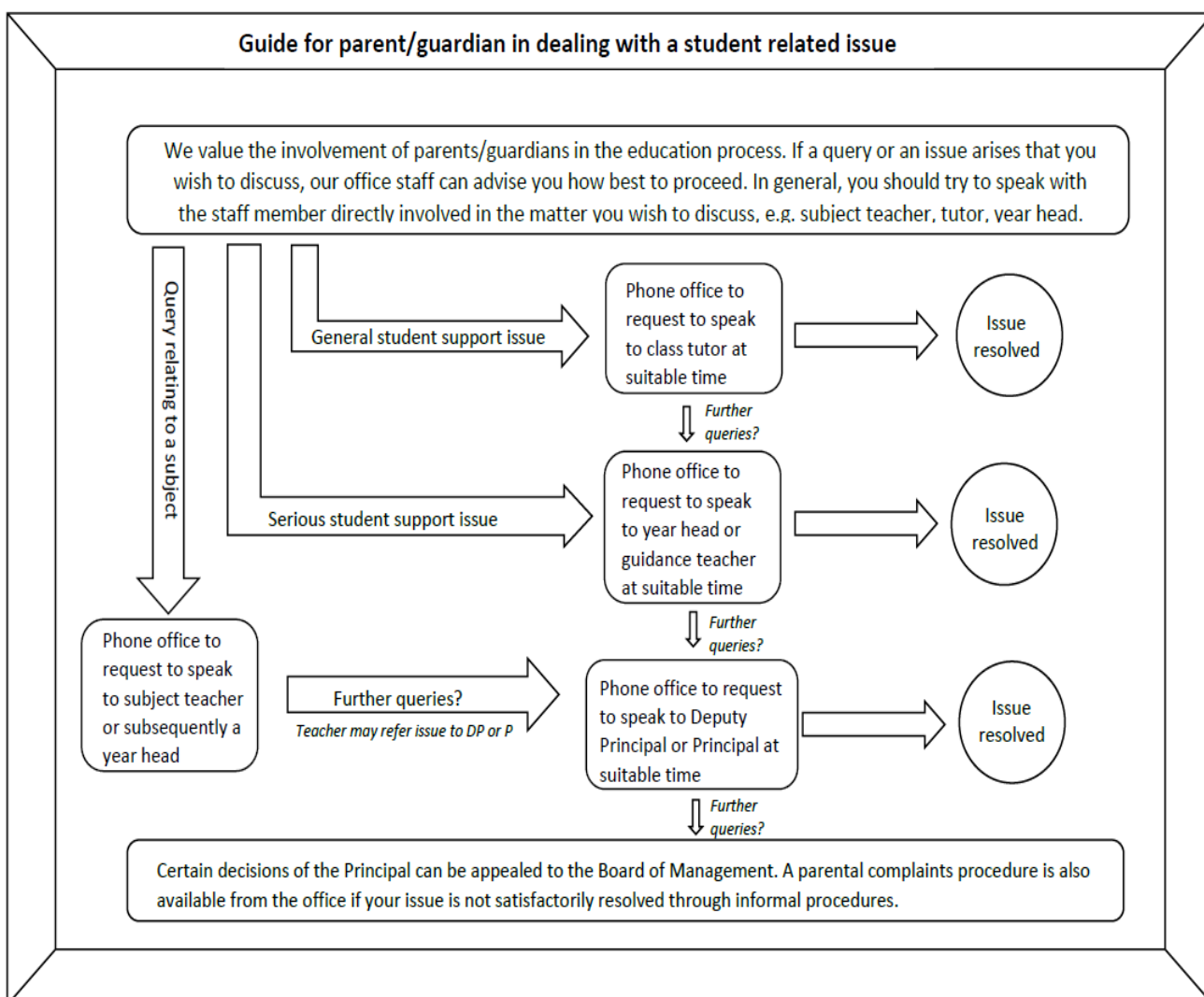
Communication Technologies

Lucan Community College will make use of available technologies as appropriate to improve communication with parents/guardians/students including for example:

- Use of telephone - all phone communications by parents/guardians/students should be directed to the school office number or to the school mobile number provided for trips and tours. Text messages between parents/guardians/students and staff personal phones is not considered best practice;
- Use of email - all communications by parents/guardians/students should be directed to the school office email address admin@lucancc.ie and will then be forwarded to the relevant personnel. Use of email between teachers and students where appropriate to assist teaching and learning may be used provided the school email addresses of teachers and students are used. Issues of a sensitive nature or that may involve significant discussion to resolve are usually more appropriate to raise on the phone or at a face to face meeting. The school may use email addresses for the purposes of distributing school newsletters, surveys and other information.
- Use of SMS system to send text message updates to parents. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that the school has the appropriate contact details. All text messages being sent from the school should have prior approval from Principal or Deputy Principal. Where appropriate SMS messages can also be sent to students where permission has been sought and given for the student mobile number to be stored on the student management system;

- Use of student management system both within the school and to facilitate parents/students accessing attendance, subject reports, behaviour reports and other relevant information;
- Use of Virtual Learning Environments to further enhance teaching, learning and communication;
- Use of website to publish news and events and to give an overview of the college and to publish an electronic school calendar;
- Use of local media to report on college events and activities;
- Other technologies as deemed useful. Staff members and students managing communication technologies on behalf of the college should be mindful of the school acceptable use of technology policy and the use of student photos and videos policy.

We ask parents/guardians to be mindful that teachers spend most of the day teaching classes and may take some time to respond to phone or email messages. The following graphic will guide you as to who you should contact in various situations.



Guidelines for Parent-Teacher-Student Meetings

For Parents/Students

Welcome to the Parent Teacher meeting for your year group. We hope that you find the time spent with each teacher a useful experience in adding to your information as to how you or your son/daughter is progressing in our school. You also receive a school report close to Christmas and at the start of Summer which reports on recent assessments that you or your son/daughter has completed.

Please remember that a parent/guardian can contact any individual subject teacher through the administrative staff in our office in order to make an appointment to discuss an issue of concern. Your child's class tutor and year head have a special role in taking care of your son/daughter while they are in our school and may be of assistance where the issue is not related to a specific subject. We also have guidance counselling staff available to meet you by appointment.

For some year groups students are invited to attend the parent-teacher meeting with one parent if the student and parents feel this would be a valuable use of time and would aid the learning process. Your invitation will let you know if a student is invited or not. If you need to have someone with you for translation purposes, please contact the relevant year head to discuss.

Due to the brief time available for each parent/student and teacher to have a conversation, we ask you to observe the following guidelines for the duration of the parent-teacher meeting.

1. Please bring any helpful documentation with you: list of the relevant teachers' names and subjects, student journal, recent report, etc.
2. Check you are in the correct line before queuing to see a teacher. Some of our staff members share the same surname, so it will be useful to know if it is Ms X the Science teacher or Ms X the French teacher. Students and staff members will be happy to help if you have any questions.
3. When you meet the teacher, please introduce yourself and state the name and class of your son/daughter if they are not attending. Please state the nature of your relationship with the student if you are not a parent/guardian. Teachers can sometimes find it hard to remember a face on such occasions even if they have met you before. A teacher cannot provide information to someone other than a parent/guardian/student without prior arrangements being made between the parent/guardian and the school office.
4. Because of the number of people present at parent-teacher meetings, conversations may not be very private. If an issue arises that you would prefer to discuss privately, please inform the teacher and arrange an appointment for a later date.
5. If a teacher is finishing the meeting and you feel you have more to discuss, ask for additional time. If this is not possible, the teacher will suggest you make an appointment for a later date.
6. If an issue arises that is confrontational, try to address it in a manner that is respectful of all concerned. If you are unhappy with how an issue is dealt with, you may make an appointment to see the Principal to discuss it further.
7. If an issue arises that is not appropriate to discuss with teacher, parent (and student) all present, please arrange an appointment for a later date.

Guidelines for Parent Teacher Meetings

For Teachers

Parents are anxious to meet with you to inform them as to how their child is progressing in our school. They also receive a school report close to Christmas and at the start of Summer which reports on recent assessments that their child has completed. Parents have been reminded that they can contact any individual subject teacher through the administrative staff in our office in order to make an appointment to discuss an issue of concern. Parents/guardians are aware that their child's class tutor and year head have a special role in taking care of their child while they are in our school and may be of assistance where the issue is not related to a specific subject. Parents/students can also be referred to career guidance and counselling staff by appointment if the nature of their concern suggests it.

Due to the brief time available for each parent/student and teacher to talk about each student, we ask you to observe the following guidelines for the duration of the parent-teacher meeting.

1. Please check the notice displaying the seating position for the parent-teacher meeting displayed on the staff notice board in good time and ensure that your name is included or excluded where appropriate. The Principal and administrative staff should be informed if you are unable to attend a meeting.
2. Please arrive on time and ensure that your name is clearly displayed on your table. Please bring any helpful documentation with you: list of the students, recent results, samples of student work, etc.
3. Have a copy of the seating arrangement with you so that you can direct parents to their next teacher if they are having difficulty.
4. Parents/guardians have been asked to introduce themselves and to state the name and class of their son/daughter.
5. Because of the number of people present at parent-teacher meetings, conversations may not be very private. If an issue arises that you would prefer to discuss privately, please inform the parent and suggest that they arrange an appointment for a later date.
6. Try to provide brief but useful information as to the progress of the student. Some teachers may prefer to write a brief summary to give to the parents. Be mindful of those waiting to speak with you and try to keep each discussion brief.
7. Invite the parent to make a comment or ask a question before finishing the meeting. If the student is also attending, invite them to contribute also.
8. If you are finishing the meeting the parent may ask for additional time. If this is not possible, suggest that they arrange an appointment for a later date.
9. If an issue arises that is confrontational, try to address it in a manner that is respectful of all concerned. If you are unhappy with how an issue is dealt with, you may report the matter to the Principal. If a parent is unhappy with how an issue is dealt with, suggest that they make an appointment to see the Principal to discuss it further.