



School Communication Review

March-April 2015

Purpose of the review

The enhancement of communication between stakeholders is a priority goal within our school. Stakeholders believe there are improvements that can be made regarding how we communicate with each other.

We believe that an evaluation of how we communicate within and between stakeholder groups, and the sharing of ideas we have for promoting new communication procedures, will strengthen and embed a positive communication culture at Coatesville School.

Review Process

BOT, staff and parents were invited to share their thoughts regarding how they could enhance communication with the other groups in the school and how other groups could enhance communication with them.

The questions used for the three groups were as follows:

*What are BOT/Staff/Parents doing that **already promotes positive communication**?*

*What are BOT/Staff/Parents doing that may be **barriers** to positive communication?*

*What **new ideas** do BOT/Staff/Parents have to promote positive BOT communication?*

*On what **specific scenarios/issues** do we expect BOT/Staff/Parents to communicate?*

Findings

There were a number of points made by each group that could potentially positively impact on our school communication culture.

These open and honest responses were provided to give constructive feedback to all groups.

Responses were focused on their own group's perceived successes/weaknesses and those of the other two key stakeholder groups:

BOT would like ...

From BOT

- be visible to staff, parents and students
- have more/regular communication on website
- get together with staff regularly
- promote BOT member contact details
- promote formal avenues for discussion with parents and staff
- promote confidence in SLT

From staff

- regularly communicate important school initiatives & achievements (ie. Annual plan)
- share more information with parents via evenings, events, etc.

- communicate 'small things' that happen – things that parents want to hear about
- be proactive with communication, contact parents when it is required
- ensure parents are contacted after incidents
- communicate thinking behind contentious issues eg. composite classes, appointments
- earn respect from all children of the school through encouraging and supporting
- value the opinions of parents
- recognise that sometimes parents see different reactions at home to what school sees
- be out and about – smiles and positive attitudes

From parents

- be proactive about their concerns
- be proactive about sharing positives
- talk to the right people when they have an issue ie. speak to staff when there is an issue
- respect the school's consideration of issues and decision making (eg. class placements)

Parents would like ...

From parents

- issues through the right channels
- telling staff/BOT of issues if they are not being addressed
- talking to others to gain perspective on any issue
- a collaborative approach with staff
- read information carefully
- give positive feedback to staff
- value class reps who support and share class information
- appreciate staff are very busy

From staff

- give visual representations of procedures/information
- to be available to share information
- guarantee that discussion of issues will not negatively impact on children
- provide more opportunities to discuss and share with other parents and staff
- recognise parents' ability to solve problems
- acknowledge parent concerns, not fob off ("just what children do")
- be visible & interact with parents
- give regular positive feedback on how things are going
- differentiate between small and larger issues
- be proactive before issues get larger
- use other media forms to share information
- share info on bullying, social issues, drops in learning progress, changes to the class

From BOT

- communicate with stakeholders openly
- be more visible
- provide clarity with policies (eg. bullying)
- explain costs eg. swimming pool

Staff would like ...

From staff

- student best interests always at forefront of actions
- welcoming of all parents and students (not being dismissive)
- consistency in dealing with informal and formal parent communication
- acknowledgement that we are busy people & it can be a stressful job
- visibility during the day, before/after school & at events
- opportunities for parents to come and learn more – Meet the T, conferences, assemblies
- opportunities for parents to read and learn more – website, newsletter
- openness to having parent help
- thinking before reacting

From parents

- be proactive – ask for help or information
- show trust and respect
- address issues directly with the person concerned
- approach issues at a time and place that will support a resolution
- be prepared to speak to staff before making judgements
- attend meetings where information is shared or feedback requested
- read information – school and/or class information
- offer time & skills
- communicate any child 'changes' (academic, social, difficulties, ...)
- acknowledge that staff are very busy people & it can be a stressful job

From BOT

- show a high level of trust and respect
- be visible
- model effective communication with staff
- encourage parents to address concerns
- tell staff of issues if not being addressed
- be prepared to speak to staff before making judgements
- provide regular information to staff and parents

Recommendations:

After examining the findings I recommend that we now look to promote several key themes that are evident throughout the comments of stakeholders.

At Coatesville School we want our staff, parents and BOT to be:

Proactive

Deal with questions and concerns in a positive and timely manner

Open and honest

Share feelings and facts in a constructive way

Trusting and respectful

Demonstrating to others

Receiving from others

Consistent

Managing situations or potential difficulties

Sharing important information

At Coatesville School our goal is to consistently show behaviours that aim to strengthen relationships - to maximise successful resolutions/outcomes for all our students, staff, parents and BOT.

Next steps:

With Parents

Share findings and recommendations with parents – via newsletter, school website and ‘SLT Coffee and Chat’ morning in May

Staff to share existing and new procedures that support the recommendations – via newsletter, website and ‘SLT Coffee and Chat’

Parents give feedback on finding and recommendations

BOT to share existing and new procedures that support the recommendations

With BOT

Share findings and recommendations with BOT – April BOT meeting

BOT give feedback on finding and recommendations

With Staff

Share findings and recommendations with staff – staff meeting Wk 2, Term 2

BOT to share existing and new procedures that support the recommendations

Staff give feedback on finding and recommendations

Richard Johnson

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