Community Interactions
Policy and Procedures

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Introduction

Effective interactions are vital for maintaining the Charlton community. How we interact with each other will affect individual well-being, relationships between staff and families, and how students learn from us about effective communication skills. When we engage positively together, we are able to further develop good interpersonal skills and allow for productive outcomes to be pursued.

To achieve this, all of our interactions should strive to produce the best outcomes and not disparage, tear down or be aggressive. This policy outlines the expectations around positive communication at Charlton, remembering that we are always endeavouring to be Christ-like in our dealings with each other.

Interpersonal communication

Interpersonal communication is the way we communicate with others. It may be with another individual or to a group of people. It includes written, verbal and non-verbal communication.

General

Members of the College community are to take into consideration
- who we are talking to
- the type of information to be communicated (for example; confidential, good news/bad news, difficult technical information, instructions, general daily information)
- what the most appropriate type of communication to use is (for example – verbal, email or phone call). This may be determined by the type of information to be communicated
- who is the best person to make contact, and which family member is the best person to interact with

At all times, members of the Charlton community aim to be respectful and polite to one another. At no time should we raise our voice, swear, or speak in a manner that makes another person feel belittled.

Cultural awareness

The College aims to create a safe and culturally aware community
- We aim to recognise that people come from a variety of backgrounds and cultures and with them they bring a variety of different values, attitudes and beliefs
- All community members aspire to non-judgemental, respectful and tolerant attitudes and behaviour in light to each other's differences. When communicating with people from other backgrounds, we seek to show care to ensure that cultural differences in both verbal and nonverbal communication are considered

Disability support

The College endeavours to create a safe and supportive environment for people with disabilities such that alternative methods of communication will be engaged when appropriate and where possible (for example – translators or written communication over verbal).

Conflict resolution

The College Concerns and Complaints (Grievance) Policy describes underlying Biblical principles and procedures on how to proceed with issues that arise.

Communication Protocols

Knowing how to use the different types of communication and following appropriate etiquette helps to ensure that information is received positively and efficiently. Communication can be internal or external or both. Internal communication is defined as being between staff at Charlton. External communication is defined as being between staff and families or other community members including the media and teachers and administrators at other schools and professional organisations. At Charlton, routine workplace protocols exist for written communication (sending and receiving information) and verbal communication (giving and following instructions and messages).

Written Communication

Types of written communication used at Charlton between the community members outlined above include

- email and letters (internal and external)
- forms, reports and memos (internal and external)
- minutes and agendas for meetings (internal)
- technical and procedural manuals (internal)
- workplace signs (internal and external)

Written communication is a vital part of communication at Charlton. The College recommends that written communication between all parties

- is simple and easy to understand
- is to the point and avoids unnecessary repetition
- avoids too many technical terms
- avoids slang, offensive and discriminatory, racist or sexist language

Emails

When writing emails
- start with a greeting, for example "Dear Jane", until you know the person well enough to be able to address the email as "Hi Jane"
- explain yourself clearly
- don't use abbreviations in emails - write all out in full
- end the email correctly saying "Regards, Jane"

Remember that the person reading your email can't see you so they can't read your body language to see if you are joking, angry or serious.

Phone Communication

When on the telephone, commit to
- speaking clearly and at a speed that enables people to understand us
- generating a record of the phone call that includes key points, agreements and actions to be taken along with the timeline for action
- ending the telephone call with some kind of resolution for the person who rang, either asking the person with whom they wish to speak, taking a message for them, asking the person to ring back at a later time, or solving the issue yourself.

Verbal Communication

Types of verbal communication at Charlton include parent/teacher/administrator meetings (internal and external) and telephone (internal and external).

The way we speak to other people can make a difference to the way information is received. Within our Charlton community, verbal communication is most effective when

- it is clear and concise
- it is friendly and professional
- appropriate feedback is given
- active listening is used
- there is an awareness of non-verbal communication styles
- there is an understanding of cultural differences

Respectful Termination of Communication

If, in communication between parties, there is a substantial breakdown or etiquette is not adhered to, it is the right of one party to terminate communication or request that until appropriate interaction is re-established, communication is paused. Everyone has the right to feel safe, heard and respected.