

# Family Communication Policy



## RATIONALE

Parents play a critical role in the education of their children. It is widely accepted that education begins at birth (or before) with the parent in the home environment. The parent is the child's first and most influential teacher. The School is a natural extension of the home. Good and regular interaction between the staff and parent is important in ensuring the best environment and support for the child and the family.

## NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 6: COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS		
6.1	Supportive relationships with families	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.
6.1.1	Engagement with the service	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in their service and contribute to service decisions.
6.1.2	Parent views are respected	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected, and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
6.1.3	Families are supported	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.
6.2	Collaborative partnerships	Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.
6.2.1	Transitions	Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing information and clarifying responsibilities.
6.2.2	Access and participation	Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.
6.2.3	Community and engagement	The service builds relationships and engages with its community.

## PURPOSE

The School recognises that the families are the child's first and most influential Educator. Collaborative relationships with families are fundamental to achieve quality outcomes for children. Community partnerships that focus on active communication, consultation and collaboration also contribute to children's learning and wellbeing.

We are committed to promoting a friendly, comfortable, and cooperative relationship between parents/ guardians and staff.

We encourage family participation and open communication within our School. Families are invited to attend parent information meetings and assist with projects in keeping with our open-door policy.

We aim to ensure open communication through the enrolment and orientation process, policy review, feedback forms, parent committee, documentation, formal and informal meetings, emails, and conversations.

We encourage this by:

- Listening to parents/guardians. Fostering a spirit of co-operation between the parents/guardians of the children attending the centre, the staff and the Management Committee.
- Compliance with all funding and legislative requirements.
- Supporting an environment, which is sensitive to the cultural, language and social background of families.

## IMPLEMENTATION

We understand the primary influence that families have in their children's lives, and that effective relationships between educators and families are fundamental to achieve quality outcomes for children. Community partnerships that focus on active communication, consultation, and collaboration also contribute to children's learning and wellbeing. Positive relationships with families' turn into a partnership as together we share a common objective and responsibility for reaching goals for children.

We will provide regular information about the School and ongoing opportunities for families to contribute in our curriculum. Staff will use a variety of means to communicate with parents about these and some of these are listed below:

### 1. Parent Handbook & Policies

- Each parent has access to a handbook in hard copy or via the school's website ([www.farmhousemontessori.nsw.edu.au](http://www.farmhousemontessori.nsw.edu.au)) outlining the policies and procedures of the School and the staff involved, and other information regarding the School and child and family issues to assist the child attending. All current school policies are also updated and placed onto the school website for parents to view

### 2. Newsletter

- A weekly whole school newsletter, outlining events and general activities of the School, songs, poems and other information about the classes as well as items of interest for families.

### 3. Noticeboard & A Frame

- Each class at the North Balgowlah campus has a board outside their class to let parents know about events and things of interests for parents of the children in their class.
- A noticeboard is placed in the reception area to provide parents with information on general activities of the School, child development and other general issues.
- The North Head campus has an A Frame that is place outside the front door every morning on this board is all current events that are going on at this campuses.

### 4. Conferences

- At least twice per year, a formal conference time is organised with each child's parents to discuss the child's progress and observations. These will usually occur in May and November.
- From time to time, the parent or the directress may ask for a conference to discuss an issue that has arisen. These are arranged at the convenience of both parties.

### 5. Observation Days

- Pre-primary parents are invited to visit with their child and to observe the class day. These are organised through sign-up sheets.

### 6. Accidents and Mishaps

- Minor scrapes and bruises will be handled at the School and a note given to the parents, on pickup, reporting on the injury. Other injuries will be reported to the parent by phone. Staff will complete an accident form, which is to be signed by the parent and placed in the child's personal file with a copy placed in the Injury Register.

### 7. Parent Education

- Three to four times per year, education evenings will be provided to offer the opportunity for parents to learn more about the Montessori philosophy, activities in the School or other topics related to the child and the family.
- A parent library will be maintained at the North Balgowlah campus for parents to browse through or borrow from. This will include books and brochures on the Montessori Philosophy, child development, the family, health and safety and other issues considered relevant.

## Management will ensure

- Families are aware of our open-door policy, unless such entry would pose a risk to the safety of children/educators or breach court orders regarding access to children.

- Educators provide information to families regarding the content and operation of the educational program in relation to their child, and that a copy of the educational program is available for viewing at the Nth Balgowlah Campus.
- Families have access to their child's developmental records outlining developmental progress against the framework, as well as their strengths, developmental needs, and interests.
- Families are notified of any incident, injury, trauma, or illness that affects their child whilst at the School.
- That both campuses has an administrative space that is adequate for the purpose of consulting with parents and for conducting private conversations and meetings.
- Families are notified of changes to School policies via the school website and National Regulations.
- The current Education and Care Services National Regulations and the Registered and accredited individual non-government schools NSW manual 2019 are available for parents to access on request from the school PA.
- The enrolment and orientation process provides families with information about the philosophy, policies, and practices of the School.
- **A Class Parent Committee is created to encourage family involvement in the School.**

The School appreciates and respects the convenience of each family and their preference in communication. **The Principal/Nominated Supervisor and the Educators will:**

- Inform families about the processes for providing feedback and making complaints
- Be available for families on arrival and pickup to communicate about their child's day.
- Encourage ongoing open and direct two way communication with families to develop trust and a collaborative relationship.
- Encourage families to contribute to quality improvement progression with the school.
- Provide offer mediums of communication such as email, verbal, communal signage in the School, newsletters, Family Involvement Wall, sign-in sheets, Notice Board and notes sent home.
- Educators will ensure that the current program is displayed in the relevant room and that parents/guardians are informed of their location during their orientation.
- The School will survey each family to gain their preference of communication and implement. Example: email, SMS, verbal etc.

**Families will be encouraged to be actively involved in:**

- Goals and reflection of their child's learning
- Provide accurate information on enrolment and medical information forms during the enrolment process.
- Notify educators when any information changes.
- Be requested to contribute to the quality improvement progression within the School.
- Be encouraged to attend children's excursions to help meet required ratios and to support their children's knowledge of and engagement in their community.
- Be invited to events held periodically to help family's network and develop friendships in the local community.
- Program inclusions such as cultural experiences and interest based topics
- Routine or procedure changes or inclusions

The School will value the input and feedback from families and endeavour to implement as much family involvement and ideas as possible. The expertise of families is recognised and we will actively encourage families to share in decision making about their child's learning and wellbeing.

- Educators and coordinators have access to space for private and confidential discussions with families and access to the School for families during the hours of operation.
- Information will be available to families about community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.

- Educators will make themselves available for meetings with families to ensure that their needs are being address and met.
- Families will always have the Policy Manual available for their perusal and reviewal. Any comments will be noted and discussed.
- Each child’s developmental records will be made available to their family and the opportunity for a confidential consultation with the child’s Educator will be made available at the family’s convenience.
- All information shared is treated as strictly confidential.
- Families who require interpretive service will be supported by the School in making Polices and other information available in their preferred language.
- A Communication Book will be developed and supported by the School to support children who are using specialised professionals to create continuity between all involved.
- Families will be asked to update their personal information throughout the year to ensure that the School has the most recent details available.
- The School will continue developing strategies, which contribute to a partnership approach with parents to create a two-way process of knowledge and information sharing.

#### Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Informing a staff member of the child’s arrival at the centre.
- Participating at the centre, this may include spending time at the centre, assisting with activities, excursions and special events.
- Offering suggestions to the staff on items/areas of interest to the child.
- Communicating with staff about special events in the child’s life at home, for example the arrival of a new baby, grandparents visiting from overseas, moving to a new house.
- Reading School communications and emails, collecting information from the family’s pigeon hole or pocket on a regular basis, reading and where necessary acting on the information provided.

#### Source

- The Early Years Learning Framework
- National Quality Standards 2018
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and Education and Care Service National Regulations 2017

#### Review

Policy Reviewed	Modifications	Next Review Date
September 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Added ‘Educators’ to “The Nominated Supervisor will”</li> <li>• Points added (Highlighted).</li> <li>• Sources checked for currency.</li> <li>• Sources/references corrected, updated, and alphabetised.</li> </ul>	Sept 2022
April 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor terminology and grammatical adjustments made to further support understanding and implementation</li> <li>• Included the list of related policies</li> <li>• New Logo added</li> </ul>	April 2019
October 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated the references to comply with the revised National Quality Standard</li> </ul>	April 2018
April 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor changes made to policy</li> </ul>	April 2018
November 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created</li> </ul>	April 2017