COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL POLICY

It is essential that staff members of the Marcellin College communicate information in accordance with established protocols so as to preserve the professionalism of the College, to protect the rights of individuals, to uphold our duty of care to students, and to comply with departmental and legal requirements.

COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL PROCEDURES

- The College has a policy of open and cooperative communication.
- This practice however recognizes that staff members have legal, local, professional and social obligations with regards the communication of information.
- Action may be taken by individuals, the CEO or organisations against staff members who choose to communicate information improperly.
- The College will provide two written reports for students each year, one parent-teacher interviews per year, additional interviews upon agreement, and an annual College report to the community.
- College employees are free to make public comment on issues relating to education, but in doing so, must be wary not to make comments that can be construed as negative criticism of the College, the College Executive, the CEO, the Catholic community, staff or community members.
- As a matter of professional courtesy staff will communicate with the Headmaster before making public comment or formal statement on educational issues or that bears on the organisation or program of the College or place of work.
- The Privacy Act 1988 requires that schools protect the interests of individuals with regard to their personal information and respect the individual’s right to control how their personal information is used, and for what purpose.
- The College will only collect consensual information that it requires about individuals, and will only communicate and disclose information for the purposes for which it was collected.
- Any person seeking information from the College that falls outside the College's previous practices must be directed to the Headmaster who may require that a formal written Freedom of Information request be made. The Headmaster will inform the CEO of any such requests.
- All such Freedom of Information requests will be referred to the CEO.
- Information sought by police, including interviews of students must be directed to the Headmaster.
- All staff will comply with court subpoenas to provide information at all times.
- Where it is necessary to communicate with external departments such as DOCs to uphold our duty of care to students, the Headmaster or College Counsellor will follow departmental policies and procedures.
COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

Letters

It is sometimes necessary to write to the parents of a particular student concerning his progress or conduct. All such letters should be approved by the Headmaster. Such letters should be countersigned by either the Year Co-ordinator, KLA Co-ordinator, Deputy or Headmaster. A copy of all such letters should be given to the Homeroom Teacher, the relevant Year Co-ordinator and a copy placed in the student’s file. A record of the letter issue addressed in the letter should be recorded on the student database.

Teachers, as private citizens, may write references for students, but not on College letterhead. The only reference given to students should be the official College Reference.

Telephone calls

Staff are encouraged to phone parents if a student’s attendance, conduct or progress gives cause for concern. The relevant KLA or Year Co-ordinator should be consulted before the phone call. A record of a phone call and its outcome should be recorded on the student database.

Email

Email has become a useful tool in effectively communicating with students and parents. Emails are subject to the same legal, local, professional and social obligations with regards to the communication of information.

Emails are not private and must be written with the understanding that others may see them. Misdirection of emails can easily occur.

Facsimiles

The Headmaster must approve all faxes on College letterhead.

All faxes are to be left at the front counter for the Receptionist to process. When sent, faxes will be returned via pigeon holes. Incoming faxes will be left in pigeon holes.

Length of faxes should be no greater than six pages – less urgent and lengthier documents should be preferably go by mail.

Informal Parent And Teacher Interviews

When a staff member wishes to invite a parent to the College for an interview, he/she should consult with the KLA and Year Co-ordinator, ensure that he/she has all necessary information concerning the issues to be discussed and arrange a suitable time and place for the interview.
Formal Parent And Teacher Interviews

Formal interviews between parents and teachers are organised each year. Boys are expected to attend. If there is need for discussion without the student present for part of the interview they can be asked to leave.

The interviews provide the opportunity to commend the boys for their efforts, to challenge them in the areas that need it and to encourage parents in their efforts to have the boys meet their challenges. Parents are often looking for this encouragement and for assistance in techniques and strategies to help them and their sons.

If parents are unhappy or dissatisfied with our efforts in the College scene, (or possibly their own in the parenting area), staff are encouraged to maintain their professional approach to prevent the interview becoming a confrontationist situation, especially in what is a semi-public area. There is always the option to ask that the interview be continued at another time.

As in all areas of our contact with boys and parents, the phraseology should be carefully chosen if the boy has been at fault. Certainly, the parents have the right to know the exact situation but it should be done in a manner with our philosophy and ethos. Hopefully, parents should always be left with the feeling that we are all working together in partnership for the good of the boys.

It is not desirable that serious issues that have been ongoing are raised for the first time at the formal teacher parent interviews. Teachers are encouraged to contact parents if there are matters of concern when they arise. The DIARY is an effective method for such communication, along with the other usual methods.

Formal interviews are held in Terms 1 and 2 for Years 7 and 12, and Term 3 for Years 8 to 11. They are generally timed to be subsequent to the issuing of the College Reports. These interviews are only of five-minute duration. During the year parents are also welcome and encouraged to contact teachers if they have concerns about their sons' progress.

Reports

Full College Reports on the progress of each student are forwarded to parents twice yearly. These reports provide an examination mark in each subject and the position in class that each student has attained.
COMMUNICATION WITH TEACHERS

Staff are advised of coming events within the College by means of:

- **Staff Information Meetings** each Monday morning commencing at 8.25 a.m. in the Staff Room.

- **A 'Staff Bulletin'** distributed at the Monday morning meeting, covering the events for the coming week. If members of staff have any items that ought to be included, please make sure they reach the Headmaster by 9.00am on Friday morning.

- Each staff member is allocated a pigeon-hole and should clear it regularly.

- **Meetings on Monday afternoons from 3.30 - 4.30pm.** These meetings vary from whole staff meetings, subject or Year group meetings.

- **KLA Co-ordinator and Year Co-ordinator meetings** are programmed on Wednesday mornings. The object of these meetings is to assist communication within the staff, to promote the smooth organisation of the College and to ensure consultation in the development of College policy.

- **Notice board** with daily information regarding replacements, detention lists, and daily important messages. Staff are advised of new enrolments, departures and subject changes by means of notification on the noticeboard in the staff room. Staff are requested to post notices on the relevant section of the staff notice board. Each member should also regularly check noticeboard in the staff room, as messages are cleared at appropriate periods.

- **College Calendar**, which gives staff a summary of the main events proposed for each term. Any staff member organising an excursion or any other change of program must make sure that the information is given to the Deputy Headmaster.

- **A timetable** for Years 10, 11 and 12 assessment dates and items. These timetables are coordinated by the Curriculum Co-ordinator and distributed to staff and students.

December 2008