

Boarding Parent/Carer Communication Policy

Source of Obligation

Parent/carers communication in boarding is an essential part of ensuring successful parent/carers and family engagement with the boarder and our Boarding School.

The Australian Boarding Standard requires that the Boarding School has policies and procedures in relation to:

- providing for boarders timely access to communication with their parents/carers (3.4(k)(v));
- communications with parents/carers during settling in and other vulnerable periods (5.2(a));
- providing clear and convenient avenues for parent/carers contact and communication and timely and effective responses (5.2(a));
- facilitating regular communication between all parties including academic teaching staff and residential Boarding Staff (5.2(a)); and
- providing proactive and appropriate communication about individual boarder's care and support needs, progress and achievement, personal strengths and contributions (5.2(a)).

The Armidale School's Policy

Parents/carers are primarily responsible for their children, including their children's development and wellbeing. In partnership with The Armidale School, parents/carers and families contribute to the quality and accountability of our boarding service delivery, including ensuring boarder support and wellbeing.

It is our policy that we promote and enable positive, clear and effective communication between the School and parents/carers. The provision of a mutually supportive environment is central to ensuring that our boarders meet their full potential.

This policy outlines the main ways in which The Armidale School seeks to facilitate communication between academic staff, Boarding Staff and parents/carers.

Boarders' Communication with Parents/Carers

We support boarders' regular communication with parents/carers to ensure the maintenance of familial bonds while boarders are away from home.

However, to ensure boarder development and independence, we recommend that parents/carers commit to a maximum of one communication each day.

The School facilitates boarders' timely access to communication with parents/carers through the following communication procedures:

Telephone calls

Parents can contact the House phone at line at any time as there are always staff on duty.

Mobile phones

Most boarders are contacted on their mobile phones when not in prep, after lights out, or in school related activities.

Email

All boarders are provided with a personal School email address. Email is the most non-disruptive means of maintaining communication with boarders.

Social media

We recognise the value of social media as a means of communicating with parents/carers and families. We require that all boarders acknowledge the privacy of other members of the community and that any post should be appropriate and respectful.

Mail

The **School** collects the mail sent to boarders **daily**. Boarders collect it from the **Reception**. The address to which mail should be sent is:

**The Armidale School
Locked Bag 3003
Armidale NSW 2350, Australia.**

Boarding School Communications with Parents/Carers and Staff

The Head of House is the first point of call for parents/carers for all issues involving boarder wellbeing, academic progress, participation in sports/performing arts groups and general progress in the School relevant to the boarders in their House.

The Head of House can be contacted via email, landline and mobile phone and regular contact with parents/carers is welcomed and encouraged. Contact details can be found on the School's intranet or in the Boarding Handbook.

The Head of House will endeavour to communicate with all parents/carers regularly in a variety of ways including:

- face-to-face conversations;
- telephone calls;
- emails;
- newsletters; and
- boarding parent evenings (see below).

In particular the Head of House and other Boarding Staff will communicate frequently with parents/carers during vulnerable periods such as the 'new boarder' period.

Parent Initiated Communications with Boarding Service

Frequent communication between Boarding Staff and parents/carers is welcome and essential. Parents/carers are encouraged to call or email their child's Head of House if they have a query about how their child is faring in the Boarding House.

The Head of House can direct parents/carers to the relevant person who will address boarding or School matters. Boarding Staff will endeavour to as soon as practicable, depending on the urgency of the issues.

Relevant contact details can be found in our **Boarding Handbook**.

Courteous and Respectful Communication

The Armidale School's Boarding Staff will endeavour to be courteous and respectful with boarders, parents/carers and our wider community. We also expect boarders, parents/ carers and others to be courteous and respectful with our Boarding Staff, especially to set an example for their children.

Parents/carers are expected to abide by the School's relevant **Code of Conduct (Parents & Guardians)** and in particular all communications with Boarding Staff should be approached in a calm and non-aggressive manner.

Complaints Policy

If a parent is dissatisfied with the conduct or outcome of their communications with a Head of House, member of the Boarding Staff or other member of School staff they may lodge a formal complaint which will be dealt with in accordance with our **Complaints Handling Policy**.

Implementation

The Armidale School has set up a series of compliance tasks to ensure that key legal and regulatory obligations and obligations under the Standard are managed effectively.