 <p>Belmont High School 'Strive for the Highest' www.bhs.vic.edu.au</p>	<h1>Communication with School Staff</h1>	
Policy Status: Final	Document Owner: Principal	Authorised by: Principal and Leadership Team
Date of issue: 15/09/2022	Review Date: September 2026	Version 2

PURPOSE

This policy explains how Belmont High School manages common enquiries from parents and carers.

SCOPE

This policy applies to school staff, and all parents and carers in our community.

POLICY

Belmont High School 'Strives' to understand the importance of providing helpful and timely responses to common enquiries from parents and carers. To ensure that members of our school community are directed to the most appropriate person to assist them, the information below outlines key contacts for common queries:


- to report a student absence, please add an attendance note on Compass OR contact the school absence line at [5241 0090](tel:52410090) or email attendance@bhs.vic.edu.au
- to report any urgent issues relating to a student on a particular day, please contact the Administration office on 5243 5355, who will direct your issue to the appropriate person.
- to discuss a student's academic progress, health or wellbeing, please arrange a suitable time by emailing the appropriate Subject Teacher or House Leader (contact details can be found on Compass).
- for enquiries regarding **payments** for EVENTS such as camps and excursions, please contact Administration Office on 5243 5355 (select option Finance), for general enquiries regarding the operation of EVENTS please check Compass and contact the EVENT coordinator.
- to make a complaint, please refer to our [Complaints policy](#). All Policies are available via our [School Website](#) in the About Us tab.
- to report a potential hazard or incident on the school site, please contact Administration office on 5243 5355 who will direct you to our maintenance staff for a Hazard and Principal for an incident.
- for parent payments, please contact Administration Office on 5243 5355 (select option Finance).
- for all other enquiries, please contact our Office on Administration Office on 5243 5355.

School staff will do our best to respond to general queries as soon as possible and ask that you allow us 2 – 3 working days to provide you with a detailed response. We will endeavour to respond to urgent matters within 24 hours where possible.

Expectations of both Staff and Parents around Email at Belmont High School

The following etiquette should be followed when staff and parents are communicating via email:

All emails should be...	
Brief and informative	Keep emails brief and informative. Issues that require any level of detail require a meeting in person or over the phone. An email is useful to request a meeting and give a brief outline of the issue. However, they are not an appropriate avenue to discuss the issues in detail.

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Respectful and constructive	Keep emails courteous, constructive and respectful. Do not write what you would not say to the recipient in person.
Focused on core issues	Make sure the purpose of the email is clear. If communicating a problem or concern, focus on finding a solution.
About issues related to sender and recipient	Do not write about or seek personal information regarding third parties, (staff, students or parents).
Relevant to the recipient	Avoid sending emails to anyone for whom it is not relevant. This includes not copying in recipients who do not need to know.
General email etiquette and tips	
Forwarding sensitive emails	Emails containing personal or sensitive information are not to be passed on to a third party without the sender's permission.
Awareness of tone	Tone and intent of emails can be easily misunderstood. (for example: humour and sarcasm)
Expectations on Parents when emailing teachers or any staff member	
Non-urgent messages only to staff	Do not use email to inform a member of staff of something that is time critical. Given work demands, staff may not read emails until late in the day.
Discussions about your child's progress or behaviour	Please do not seek to discuss in detail your child's academic progress, learning expectations, or behavioural issues via email. These are best addressed over the phone or in person.
Response time	Staff will aim to reply to parent emails within 2 working days. If parents send emails outside of work hours, they cannot expect a response during teachers' or other staffs' personal time.
Parents' email addresses	It is the responsibility of every parent to keep the school administration up-to-date with current email addresses.
Expectations on staff when emailing parents	
Sensitive issues	Email will not be used to discuss a sensitive issue that was not initiated by, or had not been previously discussed with, the parent.
Response Time	Staff will aim to reply to parent emails within 2 working days. Staff can send or respond to work related emails at a time of their choosing. There is no expectation to respond to parent emails outside of school hours (8:30am-4:30pm).
Acknowledgment of emails	If a parent email requires time to gather information for an informed reply, within 2 working days the staff member should respond to acknowledge the email and indicate when the full response will be sent.
Offensive emails	Staff will not respond to offensive or abusive emails. Such emails will be forwarded to the school principal for any further action.
Out of office / On leave	When on leave, staff will activate an auto-reply message detailing relevant leave dates.
Email signatures	All staff should use the Belmont High School standardised signature for emails sent from staff accounts.

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Interpreting Services

We can arrange for interpreting support if you are from a language background other than English and need help with understanding important educational information about your child. Contact [insert school contact details] for more information.

Requests for information

Parents and carers are generally entitled to information ordinarily provided to parents, including school reports and newsletters.

Parents and carers seeking information that is not ordinarily provided to parents are encouraged to apply for access through the Freedom of Information process, or, if the information is sought for use in court proceedings, by issuing a subpoena.

Freedom of Information requests should be directed to:

Manager – Freedom of Information Unit
 Department of Education and Training
 2 Treasury Place
 EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002
 03 9637 3134
foi@education.vic.gov.au

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website.

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	15/09/2022
Consultation	Consultation took place with Belmont High School Consultative Committee.
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	September 2026

