

L A I N E
THEATRE ARTS

STAFF COMMUNICATION
POLICY
2024

STAFF COMMUNICATION POLICY

This policy applies to all staff members, including teachers, administrators, support staff, freelance visiting staff and any other individuals employed by Laine Theatre Arts.

The purpose of this staff communication policy is to establish guidelines and expectations for effective communication among staff members at Laine Theatre Arts. Clear and transparent communication is essential for fostering a positive work environment, enhancing collaboration, and ensuring that all staff are informed of, and engaged in College activities.

Expectations

Staff members are encouraged to use professional and respectful language at all times when communicating with colleagues, students, parents, and other stakeholders. We expect colleagues to communicate in a timely manner, responding to all queries within 72 hours unless extenuating circumstances prevent this from being possible.

Staff members should make use of official communication channels provided by the College for work-related matters only.

Email Communication

- Staff members are expected to check their work email regularly and respond to messages within 72 hours.
- Official College announcements, updates, and important information will be communicated via email.
- Email should be used for professional communication purposes only, and staff members should refrain from using email for personal matters during work hours.
- When drafting emails, staff members should consider the tone and language used, ensuring that their messages are respectful, clear, and appropriate for the recipient. Laine Theatre Arts would consider emails of a bullying, sarcastic, emotionally charged or containing comments of an inappropriate nature to be unacceptable.
- It is important email communications contain factual information and are aimed at facilitating solutions.
- All emails should be proof read before sending to avoid any misunderstandings or miscommunications.

Text and WhatsApp Communication

- The use of text messaging and WhatsApp for work-related communication can be acceptable, but, should be used sparingly and only for urgent or time-sensitive matters.
- Staff members should be mindful of the recipients' preferences and availability before using text or WhatsApp/text for communication.
- Confidential information should not be shared via text or WhatsApp, and privacy and confidentiality should be maintained at all times.
- It is recommended to follow up important text or WhatsApp communication with an email for documentation purposes. Communications outside of official email channels are not considered official LTA communication.

Staff Meetings

- Regular staff meetings will be held to discuss school-related matters, share updates, and address any concerns or questions from staff members.
- Attendance at staff meetings is mandatory unless otherwise excused by a supervisor with proper notice given (3-5 business days) where appropriate.
- Staff meetings should be conducted according to an agenda or email brief which should be shared with team members in advance.
- Staff members are encouraged to actively participate in meetings, share relevant information, and be generous by contributing constructively to discussions.

Social Media Policy

- Staff members are expected to adhere to the school's social media policy and represent Laine Theatre Arts positively and professionally on social media platforms.
- Staff members should refrain from posting any confidential information, negative comments, or unprofessional content relating to the College on social media. The College takes any cases of defamation extremely seriously and could result in disciplinary action being taken against you, up to and including termination of your contract.

Communication for Sensitive Matters

- When communicating sensitive or confidential matters, staff members should consider the most suitable form of communication for the handling of a particular situation, i.e. face-to-face meetings, phone calls, or secure messaging platforms.
- Confidential information should not be shared via unsecured channels, and staff members should ensure that privacy and confidentiality are maintained at all times.

Protocol for Receiving and Responding to Emails:

- Staff members are expected to check their work email during working hours and respond promptly to any urgent or time-sensitive emails.
- If a staff member receives an email outside of working hours that requires immediate attention, they should use their discretion to respond in a timely manner.
- Staff members are encouraged to set up automatic email notifications or out-of-office replies when they will be unavailable to respond to emails for an extended period.
- Staff members need to maintain a healthy work-life balance, and they are not required to respond to work-related emails on non-working days unless it is an emergency or urgent matter.
- Staff members should communicate with their supervisors or colleagues if they anticipate being unavailable to respond to emails for an extended period of time.
- It is an individual's responsibility to ensure clear and timely communication with their line manager if they are going to be out of contact for an extended period.

Communication with Staff who are off Sick

- When a staff member is off sick, they should follow the sickness absence procedures in place. If you require clarification of this, please refer to the staff handbook or contact your line manager or HR.
- Supervisors or Colleagues should reach out to offer support and express well wishes for a speedy recovery.

- If the sick staff member is expected to be out for an extended period, regular communication should be maintained to keep them informed of any important updates or changes in the workplace. These intervals should be agreed by you and your line manager and should be informed by a Dr's sick note.
- Staff members who are off sick should provide timely updates to their supervisor regarding their health status and expected return to work date always accompanied by a Dr's sick note for extended periods of sickness (usually lasting more than 4 days).
- Confidentiality regarding the health status of the sick staff member should be maintained at all times, and sensitive information should only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

Importance of Communication

Effective communication is essential to the success of the organisation and fosters a positive work environment. This policy should be read in conjunction with the organisation's Staff and Student code of conduct and Staff Handbook, as both documents outline the expectations for professional behaviour and communication among staff members. Clear and transparent communication ensures that staff are informed, engaged, and able to work collaboratively towards common goals.

Confidentiality

All staff members are expected to maintain the confidentiality of school-related information, including student records, personnel matters, and other sensitive data. Any concerns about breaches of confidentiality should be reported to a supervisor or administrator immediately.

Enforcement

Failure to adhere to this staff communication policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Review

This policy will be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure its effectiveness in supporting staff communication at Laine Theatre Arts. Adherence to this policy is mandatory for all staff members. By following these guidelines, we can create a culture of open communication, collaboration, and mutual respect within the organisation.

Policy reviewed by Senior Management Committee. Date of next review: September 2027.