



Rotorua Seventh-day  
Adventist™ School  
*Te Kura o Te Rā Whitu ki Rotorua*

*Building for Eternity*

## **BOARD COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

**Whoever has knowledge controls his words and a person who has understanding is even-tempered. Proverbs 17:27**

### **Purpose:**

Establishing a communication protocol incorporates two key factors: the promotion of a meaningful exchange of information, and the building of relationships within the board and with school stakeholders as appropriate. Board communication protocol is not only a set of professional rules, but also a code of conduct used to guide governance related behaviours and etiquette.

### **Principles:**

- Board member's credibility and trust will be based on a record of truthful, open communication
- Communication about significant happenings needs to be well considered and thoroughly planned. Being too busy is not an acceptable excuse for inadequate or ineffective communication.
- Care will be taken to decide what requires formal communication and by whom, and what can be communicated informally and to whom.
- Board members will respect and give fair consideration to diverse and opposing viewpoints.
- Board members recognise the lack of authority in any individual board member, in any interaction with the principal, or staff, without the delegated authority of the board.
- Profanities and provocative statements are not acceptable forms of communication.
- A blame free culture will be promoted and fostered; prevention of "melt downs" and "blow ups". When a blame free culture exists, board members feel safe to raise any matters without fear of blame, put-downs or insinuations, thereby allowing the board to hear what may need to be dealt with, and actioned.

### **Board Communications:**

- It is expected that all conversations, communications reflect the school's vision, values, and beliefs. Even if personal views are not 100 percent in alignment with the board's directives, a board member should always support the school's vision, values and beliefs.

- Should a board member strongly hold a differing view to that of the board and wish their view to be reconsidered by the board, the member must put their view in writing, highlighting new information for consideration by the board, and submit this to the board through the presiding member. The presiding member is obligated under these circumstances to seek a written response from the NZ School Trustee Association, which, along with the board member's submission, will be deliberated In-Committee, by the board, at the next meeting of the board.
- The presiding member is the spokesperson for the board. As a general guide, outside of board meetings, communications (including questions/comments) between individual board members and the principal/staff should be directed through the presiding member. The presiding member will then discuss issues at the presiding member-principal weekly meetings (or more frequently as necessary). Standard communications about areas of the board's business should be managed between the presiding member and the principal.
- The presiding member and principal will meet regularly - generally weekly. The purpose of these meetings is to refer to board business, ensuring everything is on track according to the agreed actions of the board. Presiding member and principal will not make decisions on matters not known by the board.
- Unless told otherwise, the principal is authorised to communicate on matters of day-to-day school operations. Board decisions that relate to school operations can be communicated by the Principal to the school community. The board must abide by its Code of Conduct/Behaviour with regards to all communications.
- Board members are encouraged to discuss any concerns they may have with another member's actions or suggestions, directly with the presiding member or the board member concerned. Email communication is *not* an effective way of raising concerns, disagreements or matters of dispute.
- What the presiding member knows, board members need to know. Any concerns or disagreements concerning a board member or with the board's stance, will be resolved within the board. No member/s of the board may publicly voice a view contrary to the agreed view, stance of the board; the board speaks with one voice and will resolve matters within the board.
- Unless something is of a personal nature or a commercially sensitive matter, it can be, and is expected to be, communicated in a complete, unambiguous, and timely manner, and circulated to all board members at the same time.

#### **Principal - Board Communications:**

- The main channel of communication between the principal and board is from the weekly meetings between the presiding member and the principal. The board will consider and approve a MoU stating the working relationship between the presiding member and the principal.
- The other key communication between the board and the principal will be by way of principal reports to meetings of the board.

#### **Dealing with the Media:**

- The presiding member is the spokesperson for the board (except on professional matters when the delegation has been given to the principal) unless the board resolves that another person will be given this responsibility.

- The board should seek NZSTA advice and guidance when faced with a situation that may require dealing with the media. Some situations may require a reputable media consultant to be engaged to assist with dealing with media.

### **Email Communications:**

- Inter-board email communications should be kept to a minimum. There will be instances when due to time constraints at a board meeting, it is agreed to continue or conduct a discussion by email, but this is to be with the agreement of all members of the board.

### **Facebook Communications**

- The Rotorua SDA school board has a Facebook account which is managed by the Presiding Member.
- This account is solely for the purpose of communicating board decisions and information to the school community by posting to the Rotorua SDA School Newsletter and Notices page.
- Items for posting should be reviewed by one other board member or an external source where applicable (eg NZSTA, Proprietors, Returning Officer) before posting.
- No 'friend requests' are to be made/accepted other than the current presiding member's own page, the school Newsletter and Notices page and the principal's own page.
- The Board Facebook account will not 'like' or make comment on any posts at any time.
- Any posts made will have commenting turned off
- The presiding member can delegate another board member to take notes during a board meeting suitable for placement on the page for the purpose of informing the community of board decisions
- The Board will not respond to any personal messages sent to the account via the messenger function unless from the principal or minute secretary.
- At all times, a professional manner will be adopted when communicating via this medium and the Board Code of Conduct will be upheld.

### **Telephone Communications:**

- For messages that require action or a response within a short time frame, the board may need to communicate by phone. Communicating by phone assures that a message has been received.

### **E-resolutions outside a Board Meeting:**

- Motions which may need to be proposed and voted on urgently, outside a meeting, require all members to vote and agree on the motion before they are passed.
- All motions for consideration by e-resolution will be sent via the presiding member.
- The motion must be assented to by all members.
- The motion must be voted on by *all* board members, *and* the vote must be unanimous, otherwise, the motion cannot be carried.
- Everyone who is currently a member must vote, and to allow the motion to pass, all votes must be for the motion i.e. the replies are 'yes' and the motion must be 'carried'.
- The Presiding Member will send the proposed motion via email and it is good practice for all members to 'reply all' unless the motion is of a confidential or conscience matter.

- The e-resolution will be minuted at the next in-person meeting.

SOURCES AND ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS:

NZSTA Policies and Procedures

Richard Clarke Governance Procedures

FORMULATED BY: Rotorua Seventh-day Adventist School Board  
21 September 2021

APPROVED & RATIFIED: Presiding Member, Victoria Finch \_\_\_\_\_

BOT REVIEWED: 6 September 2022