

NSW Secondary Principals' Council



Comms and Engagement Position Paper Author: Comms and Engagement Reference Group

Date Ratified: 2025 Term 1 State Assembly (Thursday 6 March 2025)

Rationale

This Position Paper presents an agreed NSW Secondary Principals Council (NSWSPC) statement of position and recommendations about what constitutes effective consultation between the Communication and Engagement directorate and the Reference Group.

Communication and Engagement Directorate is divided into 5 main areas

Campaigns – Construct and design media campaigns based on DOE priorities.

Media – Support schools in emergency situations. Issues and crisis management as well as press releases and ministerial and government liaison.

Engagement – Toolkits and collaboration resources. Stakeholder engagement support as well as sponsorship and donations. Speech writers. Public education week, DOVES, Gamechangers challenge. Stewart house campaign.

Content and Digital Transformation – Design and interface digital marketing such as video production and designs for the school website but not to management of the school website. Nrand management

Corporate and internal communication – Staff noticeboard and emails. Via engagement, webinars and MS Teams for statewide staffrooms.

Statement of Principles

The Communication and Engagement Reference Group have identified four main areas to provide support for colleagues:

- The way the DoE and Schools Communicate with the wider community
- The way individual schools communicate with their communities and promote the work they do
- The way the DoE Communicates with schools, in particular school Principals.
- The way the NSW SPC Communicates with its members.



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The NSW Secondary Principal Council recognizes that we have a range of views and perspectives, but we can reach consensus about what will benefit schools. Principals need autonomy to ask questions and seek clarification to their site specific however as a collective we offer extensive experience, and this is critical in shaping policy and procedures that impact on schools. In principle, where the Department of Education seeks to consult with principals of schools with secondary enrolments, they do this through the NSW Secondary Principal Council. This would involve consulting the Senior Executive, Executive, Reference Group Leader and Regional Associations as appropriate.

Recommendations:

Consultation

NSW SPC recommends that the department facilitates consultation with principals through the SPC rather than sporadic or targeted consultation with individual principals. NSW SPC believes that genuine and effective consultation with employees is sound management practice. We recognize that final decisions on matters rests with decision makers; however, consultation should provide

- a genuine opportunity to influence a decision or implementation of a decision;
- provide relevant information to SPC in a timely manner to support consideration of the issues;
- show evidence that the feedback from SPC has been considered and advise SPC of the outcome of the consultation and the decision.

Effective communication

The SPC believes that:

- communication on new initiative or policies or any major announcement impacting on schools should be released to SPC executive then Principals before staff or the media.
- major announcements should not be announced on the last day of the term to avoid negative impacts of principal's wellbeing.
- communication should be clear and written using language that schools understand.
- that communication needs to be specific and all links work.
- communication works best when it is released in multiple areas and forms. SPC believes that new initiatives and major announcements should not be announced through just one medium e.g. Viva Engage, webinars or Staff Noticeboard only but also be followed up with an email to principals and school emails that is linked to an intranet page of information. The emails should have the subject be the announcement name to facilitate email search capabilities.
- Principals should be reminded of major deadlines through emails as well as staff noticeboards.
- consistent communication platforms are used across DOE. That all Directorates communicate to schools via the same method. There is a consistent approach to page design within the Department website. That apps and teams and statewide staffrooms are not the main means of Communication will call cation with schools, but rather a place to manage information storage for further use.
- The DoE will continue to work on its search capacity to make the intranet usable in line with effective communication processes.
- the announcements on webinars and roadshows should match policies and other communication.



Media

It is the SPC position that Media unit should be supporting principals when schools are being attacked in media and social media platforms. That the DOE should provide a strongly worded statement of support for the principals and school.

Internal SPC communication

The reference group feels that email is still the most effective form of communication and will work with members to support the professional use of email with an understanding that the employer owns all emails written by DoE staff including group emails such as Share.

Principals must be aware that when using Share that staff have the right to disconnect and to be mindful of when they send Share emails.

Share email is only reserved for financial members of the SPC and when a principal is relieving in the role of DEL or any other role that they remove themselves from the Share email by contacting the NSWSPCadminstration@ NSWSPC.org.au.

The NSW SPC website should be the repository for all minutes of reference groups and state assembly so all financial members can access minutes to support their leadership of their schools. These should be sent in and uploaded in a timely manner.

NSWSPC Position:

The Communication and Engagement Reference Group will make recommendations to Senior executive to improve internal procedures.

The Communication and Engagement Reference Group will provide timely and effective feedback to members and strengthen connections with DoE and PPA.

Ratified at the SPC Term 1 State Assembly on



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