



WHAT TO DO IF YOU NEED INFORMATION?

At Old Bar School we pride ourselves on our ability to communicate openly and effectively with our parents, carers and the wider school community.

If you **need information** about what the school does and why, there are several ways that you can access the information you require.

1. For information about *classroom activities, routines, organisation and individual student progress* contact should be made with the class teachers. Parent/Teacher information sessions are held at the beginning of each year.
2. For general information about the *stage curriculum, team activities, disciplinary matters and issues to do with the wellbeing of students* contact team leaders.
3. For *all other issues*, contact the administration staff who will advise you of the appropriate person to talk to.
4. The Old Bar School website contains current information about the school, the policies and student programs. This is where you will find the weekly newsletters, a calendar of events, the Annual School Report and the management plan.

Making contact with the appropriate person.

Many of the teaching staff are happy to talk informally with parents/carers before and after school. This informal interaction promotes strong links with families and creates a firm basis for further dialogue.

Opportunities are available to talk more formally with teaching staff at parent/teacher interviews that are held at the end of term one each year.

At other times, teachers are able to organise interviews during their 'release from classroom' time. Appointments for such interviews can be made through the school office or by sending a letter to the teacher or executive staff member to request an appointment.

Apart from the teaching, executive and administration staff at Old Bar School, there are others that might be able to assist you with information.

Old Bar School boasts a strong community involvement through the School Council and the P&C Association. Both organisations meet monthly and support the work of the school through promotion, decision making, endorsement of programs and fundraising. Both maintain close contact with the school and are excellent sources of information.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN OR COMPLAINT.

Should you have a concern or complaint about an issue, a child or a staff member at Old Bar School, we need to know about it. Providing us with constructive feedback and suggestions help us to improve our systems and processes.

- If the concern or complaint is about a classroom issue, your first 'port of call' needs to be the class teacher.
- If the concern or complaint is not resolved, please refer it to school executive.
- If the concern or complaint is in relation to a staff member, please refer directly to the principal.

Suggestions can be brought to the attention of staff, School Council or P & C by letter or in person.

"Enabling people to complain and ensuring that their complaints are heard, understood and acted upon is an essential component of a democratic society. The right to complain brings with it the mutual obligation to adhere to certain standards of conduct and responsibilities."
Ombudsman's Department, NSW.

Complainants have the right:

- To make a complaint to express their opinion in ways that are reasonable, lawful and appropriate
- To a fair and impartial assessment based on merits of the case
- To a fair hearing
- To be informed in general terms about actions taken and outcome of their complaint.
- To be treated with courtesy and respect
- To communicate valid concerns without fear of reprisal or other unreasonable response.

Staff have the right:

- To determine whether and if so how a complaint will be dealt with
- To finalise matters on the basis of outcomes they consider satisfactory in the circumstances
- To expect honesty, cooperation and reasonable assistance from complainants
- To be treated with courtesy and respect
- To modify, curtail or decline service in response to unacceptable behaviour by a complainant.

Dealing with Serious Allegations

Allegations of serious breaches of conduct and procedures by staff are referred by the Principal to an investigation unit attached to the Department of School Education and the Ombudsman's Office.

The Principal needs to be made aware of the issues or incident in question at an interview or the matter may be presented in writing. The investigation unit will liaise with the Principal about addressing the issues. Procedural fairness, confidentiality and privacy are important factors for both parties in dealing with serious matters of this nature.

Other Departmental Procedures

The Department has procedures for dealing with:

- ❖ Suspension and expulsion of school students;
- ❖ Issues dealing with child protection;
- ❖ Managing teachers who are having difficulties with their teaching performance and
- ❖ Anti-discrimination and
- ❖ Racial discrimination.

The Department promotes principles of excellence, procedural fairness, equality of opportunity. Old Bar School practices reflect the guidelines and procedures of the Department of Education. If you need information about these procedures, please contact the principal or refer to the DEC website.

What do I do next?

What to do if these means of communication don't address the questions or issues you have.

1. Don't give up. Good communication doesn't always happen the first time round.
2. Make contact with the office for a phone or personal appointment with the principal. Parents who work are catered for if this is an issue.
3. Write a letter briefly stating what the issue is, what you have done to try and have the issue addressed and how we can best make contact with you.
4. Ask your parent representatives on Council or P & C to be a support person to raise an issue at meetings. Issues can be addressed in general terms at meetings.
5. Group meetings can be arranged for parents who have common issues to be discussed. Make contact with the principal.
6. Parents can make contact with Taree District Office in Forster for advice.

In the majority of cases, these steps lead to improvement and satisfaction. It's important to let us know that we have given good service.