Staying connected is really important. Ideally home and school needs to work in partnership together in order to provide the best support, encouragement and outcomes for all students.

On average, children attend school for approximately six and a half hours (five hours of instruction time) each day. This leaves around 17.5 hours of home and/or out of school time daily. Fortunately, most of our families understand the importance of following up at home, providing time for reading practice, homework etc. all of which helps to reinforce the learning that takes place at school. When the partnership between home and school is strong, then student learning outcomes are certainly stronger.

At Glen Katherine, we value the importance of staying connected. Ways that we do this include:

- Publishing a weekly Linkletter on our website and notifying all subscribers to the Linkletter (via email) each time the Linkletter has been uploaded. Families who haven’t subscribed to receive the email update are asked to go the home page of the school’s website and look for the tab (right hand side of home page) to register.

- Early in each school year (usually end of week 3) we send home a comprehensive package of information for each child. Included will be grade level information booklets; several parent information bulletins including Home - School Communications; General Start of School Year information; Pedestrian and Road Safety; Student Attendance; Student Wellbeing. The information sent home is not intended to overwhelm, rather to inform parents so that everyone is aware of key school procedures, expectations, information etc. All designed to help parents better understand what happens at GK.

- Providing comprehensive information and updates on our school website www.glenkps.vic.edu.au. Make sure you visit the website on a regular basis. The school calendar is always worth a look so that you can see activities, special events, Curriculum Days, camp dates etc. throughout the year.

- Posting current information on our new electronic sign at the front of the school. Being electronic, we can now post daily reminders, give notice of imminent meetings and school events.

- Providing parents each year with a comprehensive overview of the expectations and responsibilities that go along with students using digital technologies at home and at school. Parents are asked to read, sign and return the student User Agreement forms early in the year. Without signed agreements, students are unable to access the internet at school. Further ICT information for parents can be found on our website / Notices & Forms tab / ICT. There are enormous risks involved when children have unsupervised, open access to the internet at home. From time to time, we’ll provide parents with important links aimed to help parents better understand some of the pitfalls of allowing children to have unsupervised internet access out of school hours.

- Sending home information about excursions and special activity days. This is currently done in paper form and copies of notices are also placed on the website (Notices & Forms tab).

- Using QKR which is an app that enables parents to access and make online payments, order uniforms, lunches from the canteen and so on. Introduced later last year, QKR is providing parents with immediate online options and has significantly cut down the need to return cash to school along with improving efficiency in the way things are done.

- We are soon to trial another app, SKOOLBAG which will be a further way of distributing information to parents. We’re also hopeful that we’ll eventually do away with paper notices including the need for handwritten signatures. We’re also looking into the use of electronic signatures so stay tuned for further information.

### Staff email contact ...

Teachers will provide their email details to parents in grade level information booklets earlier in the year. Being able to use email contact between class teacher and home on occasion, also helps to keep the lines of communication open.

Guidelines governing the use of emails are:-

- Emails may be used to communicate appropriate student related information between teachers and parents. (e.g. student absence notifications; request for a meeting or phone contact; information about an incident; volunteering to assist; etc.)

- Responses from teachers are not likely to be immediate given that the majority of their time at school involves supervising and teaching students. A response will be provided when it is convenient to do so.

- Any information regarding the need to notify a student about immediate changed pickup arrangements, forgotten lunch etc. must still be done by contacting the office. Teachers are not expected to be checking their emails throughout the school day so unless the office is notified of a sudden change to arrangements, the message is not likely to be read if it goes directly to the class teacher.

- All email communications are expected to be respectful and where grievances are raised and/or tone of emails isn’t respectful, then these emails will be referred directly to the principal for follow up.
Keep the school updated:

We only know what you have told us or provided us with. We also know that there are times in family life where things happen and change:- bereavements; moving house and change of address; change of contact details; a medical condition is diagnosed or changes have occurred to a medical condition; separation of parents etc. Please keep us informed and make sure you update us when things change. Quite often, we go to contact a parent only to find that the information we hold is outdated. In case of a medical emergency, we must have current contact details so never hesitate to check with the office to make sure we have your current details registered. Help us to help your child by keeping all information that we hold current.

During term 1, the administration team sends home a print out of current family contact information, addresses etc. that we hold for your family. When you receive this, please check it to make sure the details are accurate. If the information needs to be amended, then make the alterations and send the document back to school so that we can amend our records and make them current. When any of your contact details change throughout the year, please phone or email the office with your updates.

Get in touch with us if you have a concern:

Always contact us if you have a nagging concern about your child. The first person to contact should be the class teacher who will know your child best. Always make an appointment though if you want to have some sit down and chat time. Teachers have a number of things to do (meetings, planning, yard duty, professional learning etc.) before and after school so they are not available on a ‘drop in’ basis. Plan ahead by emailing or phoning the office to arrange a meeting time. Please don’t try to catch teachers unannounced.

If after having spoken with the class teacher and for some reason, you still have some concerns, then by all means contact the Principal, Assistant Principal or Student Wellbeing & Engagement coordinator, whoever you feel would be the most appropriate person to speak to about your concerns. Remember though to make an appointment ahead of time so that time can be set aside to meet with you.

It is important that issues are addressed quickly. Don’t always assume that we know about a child being bullied, for example, as often bullying or intimidating behavior can go unnoticed as it rarely occurs when an adult is nearby. Further information about bullying, behavior management, school processes etc. will be provided in separate parent information bulletins.

Ways to get involved and learn more about GK:

There are lots of opportunities to learn more about GK and contribute to the life of the school. Examples include helping out in classrooms, becoming a class communicator, joining the PFA or School Council or helping out on a variety of their sub-committees, helping in the canteen, on excursions, camps, at special activity days, sport, assisting in the community garden and Science area, attending working bees etc. All are great ways of meeting staff and parents and becoming more involved in the life of our school. Your children will love your involvement! Don’t hesitate to ask for information and keep watch in the Linkletter, on the website and in your children’s bags for opportunities to get onboard at GK.

Parent feedback:

We welcome your feedback. From time to time we ask parents formally for feedback about aspects of school operations (e.g. approachability; extra-curricular opportunities; school communications etc.) We utilise surveys, run information sessions, canvas opinions in meetings etc. We welcome ideas and suggestions at any time. Some things we can change, some things we can’t, however, we’re always willing to listen and discuss ideas and receive feedback whether positive or in the form of suggestions for improvement. One thing we can guarantee though is that our school continues to evolve. We are all on a learning journey with you and your child. Education and what we do at GK is not a static thing, hence there may be changes along the way, always focussed on what is best practice for our students, your children.

General reminders …

♦ Strong Home - School communications are essential if a child is to be successfully educated.
♦ Read everything that we send home or post on the website
♦ Register to receive email notification of the weekly Linkletter uploads.
♦ Notify us once any of your circumstances or contact details change.
♦ Speak to your child’s teacher if you have a concern but don’t forget to make an appointment first.
♦ Don’t fuel the rumor mill with what sometimes is only idle gossip and information that strays from the truth after being passed on from one to another. Get the facts first, speak to someone at school who can explain and tell you exactly as it is.
♦ Contact us if you have any queries or concerns:

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