**letter template – Communication Plan**

(To be used on School Letterhead)

[*Insert name*

*Address*

*Address*]

Dear[*insert name*],

You contacted [who, when, about what]. Unfortunately, the incident was very disruptive for [the classroom teacher, school leadership, office staff, school operations as appropriate], and the approach you used did not match the school community’s expectations for communication. [If appropriate: We also recognise that as the situation escalated our response in the moment contributed to the tension that existed.] I am sure that neither of us wants such an incident to recur.

As a result of this incident, I am writing

1. to ensure that you have been fully informed of the values and policies of our school and of our school community’s goals for respectful communication;
2. to ask that you commit to following these values and policies when communicating with the school in the future; and
3. to advise you of the framework that I have established at present to ensure that you continue to have the opportunity to participate effectively in discussions about school and your child’s [children’s] educational issues.

As Principal, I am committed to ensuring that everyone is treated with respect, fairness and dignity. I strive to lead by example, and encourage all employees, students, parents and members of the school community to make a similar effort, especially when a challenging issue arises. If we don’t achieve that goal in every situation, we strive to learn from the experience and do better in the next situation. This letter is part of fulfilling my responsibility to ensure and maintain the safety, security, health and wellbeing of all of our staff and students.

VALUES AND POLICIES:

The School’s policies/ Statement of Values[*Insert name of relevant school policies*]outline the standards of behaviour expected in our school community when communicating with the school or others in the school community. Parents, carers and others who have an interest in a child’s wellbeing are always welcome to raise concerns and ask questions in a respectful manner.We encourage you and your family to continue to communicate concerns and questions to the school about your [child/children]’s education, safety, health or wellbeing.

COMMITMENT TO VALUES:

Your behaviour during the incident referred to at the outset of this letter was not consistent with these values. In particular, [brief detail of breach: e.g., swearing, shouting, making threats] prevented us from having an effective conversation together, and created an environment where [staff, teachers, other students, etc.] felt unsafe. We therefore ask you to please review the [school policy name] and to commit from now on to acting in accordance with these values when communicating with the school. We commit to doing so in our responses to you.

MAINTAINING YOUR OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTACT THE SCHOOL:

In order to support more effective discussions, I have set up the following framework for future communication. This framework will provide an effective way for you to raise concerns with the school, support a respectful working relationship, and establish a level of certainty for all of us about how to work together.

1. If you have a non-urgent matter that you would like to discuss with any member of staff:
* Email the school inbox [*INSERT**@education.vic.gov.au*], marking the email to the attention of the relevant staff member;
* Your email will be allocated to the appropriate staff member and you should receive a response within 7 days.
1. If you have an urgent matter:
* Call the school on [*INSERT*] and alert the office staff to your concern;
* Inform the office staff as to the nature of your concern and provide information about why it is urgent;
* If you are unable to speak without shouting or swearing at, or otherwise being disrespectful to staff, your phone call will be immediately terminated;
* You should then instead send an email with a brief outline of the urgent matter set out in a respectful way to the school inbox;
* Office staff will notify the appropriate leader at the school, who will assess the information, take any required action, and advise you by telephone or email within 24 hours of what action was taken.
1. If there are concerns at school for your children’s immediate safety or welfare, a staff member will immediately attempt to contact you by phone. The call will be limited to discussion about the immediate issue.
2. Emails from you to the school will be answered in the following way:
* Multiple emails sent within a short period of time will be consolidated and responded to with a single email;
* You will typically receive a reply within 7 days or, if the matter requires more time to prepare a response, notification by email within 7 days about when you will receive a substantive reply;
* Public or school holidays or the occurrence of school events such as camps or other excursions may occasionally delay responses;
* Emails with threatening, abusive or disrespectful language may not be responded to;
* Emails regarding issues that have already been responded to will not be answered.
1. If you are not satisfied with the school’s email responses, you may contact the regional office via email on [*INSERT**@education.vic.gov.au*] about your concerns. Please note that the region will have its own protocol for responding to emails, which may not necessarily be the same as the school’s.

[Name], I will review this communication plan each term to ensure that it maintains constructive and efficient avenues for communication between you and the school. As you demonstrate commitment to the school values in your future communications, we will be able to revisit this plan and adjust it accordingly. I hope we will be able to make such adjustments soon.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to give your child [children] a safe and supportive learning environment. Thank you for your attention to this letter and to these issues.

Yours faithfully