1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND
Arawang Primary School aims to foster productive partnerships with families, key stakeholders and the community through transparent and effective communication between:

a) The school’s executive and staff, parents and carers of students;

b) The school and school Board, and the groups involved in providing support to the school, particularly the Parents and Citizens’ Association; and

c) The School Board and the parents, carers and other stakeholders.

This document has been created to assist in promoting the flow of communication by making the communication channels more obvious and describing the role and responsibilities of the Board and the school Executive.

2. PURPOSE
Arawang Primary School strives to create an environment within which students gain the best support that the school and the community can provide. The ability to communicate matters of importance and relevance to the operation of the school, and the environment in which students learn, is critical to achieving and maintaining such an environment. The purpose of this policy document, therefore, is to:

- Foster the sharing of information (within privacy constraints);
- Describe the pathways for communication with the school and the school Board;
- Promote regular communication between the school Executive, the school Board, the Parents and Citizens’ Association and school families;
- Explain the role of the board and the relationship between the board, the school executive and the school’s support groups; and
- Set out, in clear terms, the way in which the school and the school Board communicate with each of the school’s stakeholder groups.

3. DEFINITIONS
The following terms are used in this document:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Arawang Primary School and its associated preschools (Waramanga and Weston)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Executive</td>
<td>The Executive of Arawang Primary (this includes Principal, Deputy Principal, Executive Teachers, Business Manager and other administrative staff)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board</td>
<td>The Arawang Primary School Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>P&amp;C Association</td>
<td>The Arawang Parents &amp; Citizens’ Association and its sub-committees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td>The families of students attending Arawang Primary School, or one of the associated preschools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local community</td>
<td>The immediate community within which the school operates. This includes, but is not limited to, families within the community who attend the school.</td>
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<td>The Department</td>
<td>The ACT Department of Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P &amp;C Representatives</td>
<td>Parents and Citizens members of the Board as voted by the school community</td>
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</table>
4. COMMUNICATION ENVIRONMENT
The school operates in an environment in which communication occurs through many channels. At the same time, some of the day-to-day issues may be emotive, and require a range of messages and responses to address the needs of the diverse range of stakeholders.

The school needs to be in a position to respond to all communication, and needs all parties to appreciate that it is bound by Departmental and legal constraints that govern the information it may, or may not, share. The Department also determines the way in which the school operates, based on its education and governance policies.

5. SCOPE
This policy includes all forms of communication between:

- The school and families;
- The school and the P&C Association;
- The school and the Board;
- The school and the local community;
- The Board and the P&C Association; and
- The Board and families.

It deliberately excludes communication between teaching staff and school students, as these form part of the education policies of the school. It also excludes communication between the Department of Education and the school, as these form part of Department of Education policies and processes.

6. OVERARCHING COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES
The principles upon which school communications are based, and which should be adhered to be all stakeholders are:
- Open, honest and transparent interaction and information;
- Communication based on the best intentions for the school and its students;
- Unified and consistent messages and, wherever possible, joint communication;
- Integrity and professionalism; and
- Evidence-based information.

Any communication that purports to represent the views of a group, such as the school staff, the board or the P&C Association, must be endorsed by the chair of the group (i.e. the Principal, the Board Chair, or the P&C Association President) who is responsible for ensuring that the principles have been followed.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY

The school and the Board are bound by a range of confidentiality requirements, including the Code of Practice-Acceptable Use of Student Achievement Data and the Departmental Code of Conduct pertaining to board members. These have a direct bearing on school communication, as they constrain the information that the school or the Board can provide on certain matters. The school aims to strike an appropriate balance between the sharing of information and the maintenance of confidentiality.

8. THE ROLE OF THE BOARD

In the ACT, government schools are required to have an appointed board, comprised of representatives of parents, teachers and the school executive. Each member brings specific interests and experiences to the board, through which they ensure that the school is meeting its requirements, and is properly supported in achieving its objectives. The Arawang school Board is made up of:

- The school principal;
- One member appointed by the Department of Education and Training;
- Two members of school staff, elected by the school and appointed by the Department; and
- Three members elected by the P&C of the school and appointed by the Department.
- Two student leaders elected annually by students in years 5 and 6

If required, the board can appoint up to two additional members for a fixed term, whose selection would be based on a specific need identified by the board, and agreed upon.

The Board is responsible for:

- Reviewing and endorsing the strategic direction and priorities for the school;
- Monitoring and reviewing the school’s performance and reporting to the Department, parents of students at the school and to school staff;
- Overseeing the school curriculum ensuring that national and departmental priorities are implemented as decided by the Director General of Education;
- Discussing and ratifying education policies at the school;
- Establishing budgetary policies for the school, and approving and reviewing the school budget;
- Establishing policies for the efficient and effective use of school assets and the management of financial risk;
- Developing relationships between the school and the community, and between the school and community organisations;
- Making recommendations to the department on issues affecting the school; and
Encouraging parent participation in student learning.

To discharge its responsibilities, the Board needs to work closely with the school Executive, the teaching staff, all school support groups, and the local community. The Board must appreciate the different needs of particular stakeholders, and make itself available to listen and act on information or advice given by stakeholders.

9. THE ROLE OF SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND LEADERSHIP TEAM
The School Principal, supported by the school’s leadership team is responsible for:

- Providing educational leadership and management of the school including strategic, financial and human resource management and collaboration with other schools.
- Providing educational outcomes for students at the school including support, evaluation and development of teacher quality, setting goals, assessing outcomes and ensuring accountability.
- Providing support to the school board in carrying out its functions.
- Contributing to the development and implementation of educational policies and strategies.
- Making information about the school’s educational programs and policies, and the school’s operation, available to parents of students at the school, as well as to staff and students.

10. POLICIES

10.1. Communication between families and the Board
- The Board is comprised of representatives from the P&C, teaching staff, Department of Education and the school Executive. Each member is a conduit for information for general consideration by the Board.
- Parents and carers are able to bring matters to the attention of the P&C representatives on the Board, either directly or through the P&C Association.
- Any parent can raise a matter with the Board, either through contact with parent representatives or by writing to the board through the school. In such cases, depending on the matter at hand, associated sensitivities (for individuals concerned), and the urgency of the issue, parent representatives may seek broader parent views via the P&C Association.
- The Board will make standing and ad hoc invitations to interested parties to attend Board meetings for the presentation of relevant information/issues at the beginning of meetings. This may include the P&C Association President.
- Unless responding to specific correspondence, the Board will communicate with families through the school Executive, and will provide material through school newsletters, and other forms of communication, depending on the nature of the issue or topic being communicated.

10.2. Communication between the Board and the P&C Association
- Parent representatives will attend P&C Association meetings on rotation, providing feedback on Board matters and hearing issues developing within the community (as well as appreciating P&C Association activity generally).
- Where the P&C Association wishes to raise a matter with the school Board, the P&C Association President will bring the matter to the attention of the P&C representatives on the board, who will take the matter to the next Board meeting for discussion, and
discussion of the matter will be followed by confirming correspondence (email, letter). Such discussions will address whether the matter is within the Board’s remit.

- The outcomes of the Board’s consideration of such issues will be fed back to parents via the P&C Association.

10.2. Communication between the Board and the school

- The school Executive form a key element of the school board and meet regularly to discuss matters affecting the school. All Board formal meetings are minuted.
- Where the school wishes Board support for messages to families of students, this is brought before a board meeting, where the Board approves the communication of such messages based on input from the teacher, departmental and P&C representatives on the Board.
- Teaching matters that require Board consideration are brought before the Board by the school Executive. An example of this might include considering the allocation of school funds to support specific education aims, or school enhancement.

10.3. Communication between the school and families

- The school communicates at regular intervals to the families of students through the school newsletter.
- The school accepts and publishes content for the newsletter from a variety of sources including the P&C Association, the Board, and other members of the school community.
- The school communicates with families through regular parent and teacher interviews, and other school and family events as necessary throughout the year.
- The school provides formal reports on school management, development and achievements upon approval by the school Board.

10.4. Communication between the school and the P&C Association

- The school Executive are standing invitees to P&C Association meetings, and use this opportunity to inform families of students about matters that affect them and/or their children.
- This attendance is also an opportunity for families to seek information about matters of interest directly from the school Executive.
- Where the P&C Association has a matter it wishes to bring before the school Executive, the matter will be communicated in writing, endorsed by the P&C Association President, and the school Executive will be given time to consider the matter before responding.
- The school Executive will respond to all formally communicated matters in writing, and be open to discussing the response (where the nature of the matter allows) at subsequent P&C Association meetings.

10.5. Communication between the Department and the Board

- Where the Board wishes to raise a matter with the Department, it will do so through the Departmental representative, who will take the matter to the Department for formal consideration.
- The Board will correspond with the Department when matters require.
- Where the Board has corresponded with the Department on matters raised by individuals, or by the P&C Association, the Board Chair will provide feedback to the party who raised the matter as to the Department’s response.

10.6. Written communication
All written communication to the school should clearly indicate the nature of the matter being communicated, and identify the party from whom the communication is from. Any correspondence from the school or the school Board will use school letterhead, and will be signed by the school Principal or the Board Chair.

Written communication about matters raised by the P&C Association will be accepted as long as the P&C Association President has endorsed the correspondence in writing.

10.7. **Online communication**
Any communication that represents the school, or the school’s interest, will be undertaken in consultation, and by approval, of the school. Use of community websites that reflect events or activities within the school will also be developed in association with the school to ensure that communication principles are adhered to, and that any content promotes a unified image.

11. **POLICY COMPLIANCE**
All parties identified in this document are expected to comply with the documented policies. In cases where the policies have not been complied with, the breach of policy will be brought to the attention of the party involved, with reference to this policy document. Communication that falls outside the aims of these policies may remain unacknowledged.

12. **POLICY REVIEW AND REVISION**
The School Executive and the Board will review this policy on a regular basis, to be determined by the Board. Revision will be based on the level of effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of this policy, and whether the communications policies continue to achieve the stated purpose and aims.

Endorsed by the School Board

Signed by Jason Wegener, Chair of the School Board

Date: 6 June 2011