

School wide communication improves with Sentral Parent Portal Picnic Point Public School

The pressing need to consolidate and improve efficiency of communication at Picnic Point Public School drove adoption of the Sentral Parent Portal and mobile app.

Communication has changed

The nature of communication has changed. Not only the devices and technologies we use, but also the expectations we have of those who send and receive messages, and the way the messages are delivered. In a diverse community like a school, taking effective control of communication is critical. To solve this complex dilemma, Picnic Point Public School adopted the Sentral Parent Portal and mobile app.

Already a Sentral school, Picnic Point Public School added the Parent Portal to its service agreement in mid 2018. The key areas of improvement emerging were distribution, efficiency and responsibility. Rapid uptake and continued use by the parent community was a clear sign that gains came swiftly.

Improved Distribution

With increasing options for sending messages such as email, SMS and social media, the Sentral Parent Portal provides a centralised distribution system for communication. Office staff no longer need to juggle multiple message delivery options and can rely on one system to effectively get messages to their recipients. Year groups, activity groups and cohorts can easily be created, with emails sent to parents and caregivers, even where recipients have multiple email addresses. SMS messages to quickly notify absences is also a particularly popular feature. Administrative staff have reported significant time savings.

Rapid Efficiency Gains

Efficiency gains were quickly evident. When parents were surveyed on how they would like to receive information from the school, the top two responses were the calendar and the newsletter. The calendar functionality solved significant communication

problems in that parents can be aware of school events and activities in real time from the convenience of the device of their choice. Whilst Picnic Point Public School is not fully paperless, circulation of the newsletter is also much more efficient, ensuring that hard copies are not lost in delivery and that the school uses far less paper.

Responsible Communication with Stakeholders

Responsible communication in the digital age is a primary concern for the staff at Picnic Point Public School. Recognising that it's not only about productivity and efficiency gains, the staff take great pride in ensuring that the quality of their communication remains high and consistent. The school is very conscious that content delivered to the digital world is effectively there forever and cannot be retracted. Sentral Parent Portal has contributed greatly to addressing this problem by providing staff with more oversight and control of what is released. It's no longer a case of anyone sending anything. Sentral Parent Portal helps to facilitate the school's strong desire to produce professional content, every time.



Positive Responses from Parents and Teachers

So how have the teachers and parents responded? According to Assistant Principal, Pammie Chatterton, the responses have been very positive. The school realises that time pressure is a constant for many families, and endeavours to maintain its own personal touch to all its communications. Parents have responded by continuing to support and encourage the school's use of the Parent Portal; a genuine endorsement. Naturally, the school still welcomes phone calls from parents and personal interaction with teachers, which indicates that the Parent Portal has appropriately taken in its place in the daily life of the school.

Teachers also welcomed the change. A brief period of upskilling and mutual encouragement from staff enabled a straightforward implementation of the new approach. Whilst teachers still communicate with parents directly by email on occasion, the larger scale, group communication capabilities of the Sentral Parent Portal are a real time saver for teachers.

The Future

The staff at Picnic Point Public School have wholeheartedly embraced the Sentral Parent Portal. That said, they also realise that it will continue to evolve as technology evolves. They look forward to advanced use of push notifications, the mobile app and the increased time for focussing on teaching and learning that the Sentral Parent Portal creates.

“It’s a fantastic product. We love it.”

Pammie Chatterton, Assistant Principal



Sentral Station

This case study is based on an interview with Pammie Chatterton, in early 2019. To hear the interview, visit Sentral Station which is available on Apple Podcasts and Spotify.

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