Policy Writing and Formatting Policy

RATIONALE/PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to ensure that all policy documentation in the school is consistent and uniform and that any staff member who takes on the responsibility of writing a document, knows the correct formatting and layout requirements.

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY BELIEFS

It is a shared belief that all policy documents should follow set guidelines regardless of the type of document or the content within the document. With this in mind there are a number of specific inclusions required for any school policy written.

GUIDELINES

Specific formatting and layout inclusions are required for all school policy documents. These are listed below.

Audience

School policy documents should be written for both teaching and non-teaching staff, ancillary and support staff and also for the wider community. The most important consideration when writing material for public is the AUDIENCE.

Specifying the audience as much as possible will ensure that the information is relevant and meaningful.

When writing for parents, remember that they have ‘children’ and not ‘students’ whereas teachers have ‘students’ in their classrooms.

People with disability should be able to receive information in alternative formats and the availability of these formats should be promoted wherever possible.

Font

Please use the following when drafting material for publication which will then be typeset or put on the website:

• Arial
• 12 point.
Header/Footer

Each policy document should have a header and footer. The header should contain the school name, draft or copy number and date the policy was written. It will be written in Arial font and be 10 point size. The footer should contain the page number and also the file path to where the document is stored. It will be written in Arial font and be 7 point size.

Headings

The school name will be at the top of all policy documents. It will be in 11 point Arial font and will be bolded.

The name of the type of policy document will be in 18 point Cooper Black font and will be bolded.

Sub-heading within the policy document will be in 12 point Arial font, bolded, capitalised and written in a blue font colour. Any headings under these will be in 12 point Arial font and will be bolded.

Page numbering

All pages within the policy should be numbered. Numbers should be in the footer of the document and should be in the right hand corner of the page.

Plain English

All text for publication MUST be written:
• in plain language – using active voice where possible
• clearly and concisely
• for the target audience
• to promote key objectives/messages.

School logo

The school logo will be present on all policy documents. It may be included as a watermark behind the text of the policy or as part of the heading.

Spacing

Two spacebar spaces must be used between sentences when material is going to be typeset.
Two ‘enter’ spaces must be used at the end of a paragraph. Line spacing within the document will be at 1.5

**Language Conventions**

**Abbreviations and contractions**

An abbreviation is a shortened form of a word (or words) that consists of the initial letter alone, or the initial letter followed by letters other than the final one. A contraction is a shortened form of a word (or words) that ends in the same letter as the word itself:

- Mr
- Dr
- Pty Ltd

Contractions are not followed by a full stop unless they end a sentence.

**Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders**

The preferred terms are:

- Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders
- Aboriginal people (if you are also referring to Torres Strait Islanders reference needs to be made in the document that the term is inclusive of this group of people).

Always use capital A for Aboriginal.

**Acronyms**

The full name must be used for the first reference, followed by the acronym or initials in brackets. Avoid using acronyms in headings where possible as it unnecessarily clutters the page.

**Ampersands**

Do NOT use ampersands except in very specific circumstances like P & C Association or P & C and where an ampersand is part of the name of a particular organisation.

**Dot points**

If all of the dot points in a sentence are full sentences in themselves, each starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop (see the first example below). If each dot point consists of a sentence fragment, no initial capital is used and there is no semi-colon or full stop at the end of each. The last dot point ends with a full stop.
Numbers

Numbers nine and under are expressed in words in descriptive or narrative texts and above nine are numbers.

Numbers that start a sentence must be expressed in words even when other numbers in the same passage are shown in figures. Figures are preferred in works of a mathematical, scientific, technical or statistical nature. Numbers over 99 are shown in words when the numerical expressions are used to convey an approximation or are used in a casual way.

Numbers must be expressed as figures when they accompany a symbol or a unit of measurement in tabulations such as:

Referring to books, journals, legislation, newspapers and policies

Books and reports

The titles of books and reports are always in italics and minimal capitalisation is recommended.

Journals, periodicals and newspapers

The titles of journals are always in Italicics with maximal capitalisation.

If a publication contains frequent references to newspaper material, it may be best to abbreviate the newspaper titles: SMH, for example, could replace Sydney Morning Herald. The abbreviation, like the full title, is italicised.

Legislation

The titles of acts, ordinances and legal cases are always in italics with maximal capitalisation, and include the date – eg School Education Act 1999.

Policies, programs and agreements

The titles of policies, programs and agreements are always in roman type and maximal.

Websites

Web addresses can be given directly in the text. For example:
Schools, education regional offices and local education offices
When referring to schools, education regional offices and local education offices in general, lower case must be used.

WRITING CHECKLIST

Any person who writes a school policy document is expected to adhere to the conventions outlined above and also follow the writing checklist below, prior to the document being sent out for consultation.

• Are the objectives clear and accurate?
• Has the document been written for the target audience?
• Does the document meet the requirements of this style guide?
• Do the words flow easily?
• Is the structure clear and does it allow readers to find things easily?
• Has the document followed the required font type and size requirements?
• Use headings, boxes, tables, diagrams, captions, breakout quotes and illustrations to make the pages easier to read.
• Has the document been proofread for spelling and grammar?
• Have you obtained the necessary approvals?
• Have forewords been approved by the person in whose name they are written?
• Is an acknowledgement page required?

POLICY DOCUMENT INCLUSIONS

Most school policy documents will include all of or some of the following headings:

• Rationale or Purpose
• School and/or community beliefs
• Guidelines
• Teacher/Staff roles and responsibilities
• Parent roles and responsibilities
• Students’ Roles and Responsibilities
• Strategies
• Responses to and reporting and monitoring the purpose of the policy
• Related resources