Report Writing Guidelines

The purpose of reporting is to provide feedback to parents and caregivers regarding the progress of their child. It is important that formal reports accurately reflect a child's progress while still being positive rather than critical. These reports should not contain information that has not been previously communicated via another method e.g. telephone conversation, written communication, parent/teacher interview.

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a consistent approach to reporting.

General Guidelines

- ✓ Use the correct name of the child, not a nickname or abbreviation
- ✓ Try to start with a positive comment
- ✓ Use the student's name in the first sentence of a comment. The appropriate pronoun can be used after this. Do not overuse either the student's name or a pronoun in one section.

Never	➢ Use language that can be interpreted as disrespectful or labelling. ➢ Use technical terms or educational jargon without explanation. ➢ Include comments or grades that cannot be validated upon parent request. ➢ List the student's deficiencies without any positive comment. Sandwich negative feedback with positive feedback. ➢ Include negative feedback without suggestions of ways to support the child's progress.
Beware	➢ Comments should be succinct. Avoid long complex sentences, have one idea per sentence. ➢ Avoid stereotypical or generic comments, elaborate and personalise comments wherever possible. ➢ Of 'cut and paste', while useful, it can also be the source of many errors e.g. incorrect names and pronouns, repeated mistakes. ➢ Of repetition of ideas e.g. *"Matthew is a keen student who is working well. Matthew is a keen contributor."*
Always	➢ Look for positives and personalise comments. ➢ Begin and end with positive or constructive comments ➢ Ensure that there is not a mismatch between comments and results. ➢ Use professional, yet plain language. ➢ Identify the strengths and weaknesses that affected results. ➢ Tailor comments to individual students, beware of comment banks. ➢ Be honest but constructive. ➢ Give examples to support comments.

strong in **values**
strength in **character** *living* hope

Grammar Guidelines

- ✓ Use plural verbs for multiple subjects and singular verbs for singular subjects e.g. *"Ben's commitment to learning in mathematics **is** commendable."*
- ✓ When using *however* to begin a sentence, put a comma behind it e.g. *However, Mary is ….*
- ✓ When using *however* in the middle of a sentence with only one idea it should have commas placed before and after it e.g. *"David is applying himself to his work, however, he will need to continue this to …."*
- ✓ When using *however* in a sentence to connect two ideas a semicolon should be used after the first idea and a comma after *however* e.g. "Ruth is an intelligent contributor; however, she does not always apply herself to her studies"
- ✓ Take care with prepositions; congratulated *on* (not for), commended *for* (not on), capable *of* (not in), benefit *from*.
- ✓ *Who* and *whom* should always be placed directly after the noun to which they refer e.g. *"Henry, who is a valued member of our class, always ……."* Not *"Henry is a valued member of our class who ….."*
- ✓ Use present tense to describe the student wherever possible. Use past tense only to talk about activities that the students has participated in e.g. *"Mark has completed three assessment pieces….", "Mark contributes well to class discussions"*

Punctuation Guidelines

- ✓ Semester and term should be capitalized and followed with a numeral when referring to a particular period of time. e.g. *"During Semester 1 Janette was able to …."*
- ✓ Use a capital letter when referring to specific subjects, year levels or the school name but not when the word school appears in a sentence e.g. *"George participates in school activities…."*
- ✓ Do not use commas to connect separate sentences. Use a full stop and begin a new sentence.
- ✓ In general, the use of the words '*but'* and '*and'* do not require a comma

Common errors to check

- ✓ The use of possessive apostrophes
- ✓ Ending a sentence with a preposition
- ✓ With the exception of semester and term descriptions numbers should not be written as numerals e.g. *"Grace completed three assessment pieces …."*
- ✓ Words beginning with *self* or *well* should be followed with a hyphen e.g. *self-discipline, well-liked*
- ✓ Even though some alternative spellings are correct, for the sake of continuity, the following words should be spelt as follows; *co-operation* (hyphenated), *interhouse* (one word), *afresh* (one word), *focused* (not focussed), *benefited* (not benefitted), *program* (not programme)
- ✓ Common spelling errors;
    - o affect (verb), effect (noun)
    - o practise (verb), practice (noun)
    - o it's (it is), its (possessive ownership)
    - o a lot (two words), not alot
    - o criteria (plural), criterion (singular)