

Guidelines for Email Communication

Emails should not be used to communicate urgent or critical matters. It is always best to speak with the member of staff concerned by telephone or in person. Please contact the school to arrange an interview to discuss urgent or critical matters with the appropriate person. If the teacher is unavailable due to them teaching their class, a delegated officer will be allocated to your call or a message will be taken and followed up promptly.

When sending emails to multiple email address the author should always place the email addresses in the BCC box. This will not share other people's email address as they may not have given permission for their email address to be shared with a group. In our school this applies to parents and school staff.

Never use e-mail for matters of controversy or real distress. When you have a really serious matter, it is always best to meet with the teacher directly.

Email may be useful for parents who have difficulty getting in to see the teacher. It can be used as a means to make an appointment to see the teacher.

Because of the nature of their work, teachers spend almost all of their time in the classroom. When they are not in the classroom teachers may be in staff meetings, on excursions, or planning, marking or duty. Because teachers have a range of duties to fulfil, it may take longer than a parent might wish for them to respond to an email or telephone call. Generally speaking, teachers will endeavour to respond to an email or telephone call within three working days. If a parent sends an e-mail at 8.30 a.m., a teacher may not see it until after their classes are over for the day. Teachers may or may not respond to an e-mail before 8am, after 4pm or on weekends as that's when they are focusing on being a parent to their own children or dealing with other personal responsibilities. If you have not received an expected response, follow up with a written note or telephone call.

It is important to reflect upon the tone, timing and content of an email message before it is sent. Emails written in haste or in anger rarely help to sort out issues or problems; in fact, a poorly written or emotionally charged email will almost always have the opposite effect. Too often, harshly written and 'angry' emails result in later regret. The rules for civility in e-mail are the same as in face-to-face meetings. Convey a positive tone in your e-mails which can set the stage for a cordial working relationship with teachers and other school personnel. Never say anything by e-mail that you wouldn't want published. Any inappropriate or offensive language or comments deemed to be defamatory will be sent on to the appropriate authorities. This will not be tolerated.

Some members of staff have many different responsibilities. It is therefore important to ensure that you have made contact with the correct member of staff to be able to address your particular question or issue.

Emails are a quick and convenient way of communicating "good news". You are encouraged to use emails to send messages of encouragement and support to the staff of the school.

Please Keep in Mind: Each of our teachers has at least 25 students. Think about the volume of emails this many parents could generate. Teachers are committed to communicating with parents. Teachers want to know if a student is experiencing difficulty at home or at school. Responding to e-mails takes time and thought.