



Email Policy for Staff 2023

Rationale

Email is an extremely effective communication tool, and invaluable in the modern world. We know that this is often the preferred format of communication, particularly when access to a telephone is limited. The purpose of this policy is to clarify how and when email should be used appropriately in a professional context. It is not to discourage the use of email as a form of communication, but rather to set out what should be expected of those sending and receiving emails.

This policy aims to recognise the impact that emails have upon the working life of school staff. It is important to carefully consider the effect of the timing and content of emails upon the recipient. Access to emails outside normal working hours can increase work-related stress and inhibits essential relaxation time. This policy aims to clarify expectations in order to preserve work-life balance and reduce the workload of staff.

1. Checking Emails

There is an expectation that all staff check emails at least once a day ideally before the start of the school day or at the end of the day, but not during teaching time. Do not expect an immediate response to emails. Colleagues are not expected to check emails outside working hours and are strongly advised not to check them at weekends. Staff are not expected to check emails when off sick or when they are on holiday. Staff are, obviously, free to check and read their email at any time outside of the school day, to suit their preferred working pattern.

2. Sending/Replying to Emails

No email should be sent to staff between the hours of 7:00pm and 7:00am. This curfew is applied to encourage a better work-life balance and to make staff think more carefully about the emails they are sending. During the curfew, staff can draft emails and schedule replies, but these must not be sent until 7.00am the following day. Further, staff should not email at weekends. The weekend curfew is in effect between 7.00pm Friday and 7.00am Monday.

In terms of replies to both staff and parents, we expect that any emails are responded to within a two working day time period. It is highly inappropriate to chase someone up for a response to an email before two working days have elapsed. If a response is required urgently, it may be best to consider another form of contact rather than an email. Staff may not always monitor their email accounts during the school holidays, so they may not be able to respond within two working days.

The school policy is to avoid using personal devices at home for emails. It may be unavoidable in some circumstances, when you may have to login on your personal computer. But we advise all

staff to refrain from having work emails on their mobile phones/tablets or signed in on their personal computers. This is to ease the pressure on staff to constantly be replying to emails.

Consider having a conversation or phone call instead of sending an email; if your message is urgent, please see the relevant person (this is particularly important for any safeguarding concerns you may have).

3. Staff Mailing Lists

Whilst there is the facility to use mailing lists to send emails to the entire staff team, we strongly encourage personal discretion in the use of this facility. This is in order to cut down on the amount of unnecessary email being sent to staff inboxes. Staff mailing lists should only be sent to instruct or share information about operational matters, not to enter in debate. Moreover, we have sought to encourage greater 'intention' when it comes to email. We only send emails to the relevant people. Use the 'CC' tool correctly, which is to keep other people 'looped in' with no expectation of a reply from them.

We have a weekly staff briefing held each Wednesday at **8.30am**. All staff are invited to attend to keep up to date with things taking place in the school. The meeting is held virtually and minutes of briefings are kept in the school office for anyone who does not attend.

4. Email Etiquette

Forwarding emails:

Do not forward emails without the permission of the original sender, unless they are addressed to the wrong person or should have been sent to somebody else – e.g. a question that somebody else is far more qualified to answer. Staff and parents should have the expectation that their emails are private and will only be read by their intended recipient.

Further, the recipient of the email should be aware of who else is receiving the email. If you wish for someone else to receive the email, please "CC" them in full sight of the recipient.

Emails sent to the School Office must, of course, be forwarded to specific people, as this is the first point of contact for many parents and outside agencies/individuals. Emails from reps will be forwarded to the relevant people

Language in emails:

This is a professional environment, and as such, we expect all emails to be written in a professional manner and using correct language.

Use appropriate language in emails and never send a message you wouldn't want to be shown to others including members of staff and parents. Beware sending emails when angry or upset, take care with your tone and don't use capitals as they can be construed as 'shouting.'

With email often being our first point of contact with outside agencies, it is vital we present ourselves as well as we can. As staff at a school, we are expected to have a good knowledge of the English language and spelling. Therefore, we expect some effort to be made to email using correct grammar, punctuation and spelling, especially when interacting with parents or outside individuals.

Write a specific title in the subject line – never leave it blank.

If you know that you are not going to be in school please ensure that you put an out of office notice on your emails to inform others that you are not in school and that your email will not be monitored during this time.