

Practical guide to emailing

When communicating via email, staff are expected to adhere to email etiquette, including:

- Emails are at their best when they are brief and informative. Issues that require a level of detailed discussion should be dealt with in person or over the phone.
- Emails should always be respectful and constructive. If the email relates to a concern or problem, it ought to be focussed on understanding the problem and finding a solution.
- Avoid sending negative or confrontational emails. Email is not to be used to vent. We never say anything in an email we would not discuss with the recipient.
- Never write about or seek personal information regarding third parties (staff, students or parents). Likewise, emails containing personal or sensitive information should not be passed on to a third party without permission of the sender.
- The tone or intent of emails can easily be misunderstood, especially where humour or sarcasm is involved. Be conscious of this and pick up the phone rather than send an email.
- Group emails have the potential to waste the time of many, so avoid sending emails to anyone for whom it is not relevant. It is also courteous to avoid time wasting emails, including chain letters and commercial solicitations.
- Make sure the purpose of your email is clear. Do you require specific action or is the email for information only?
- Be careful not to disclose the email addresses of others without permission to do so.
- Email should not be used to discuss a sensitive issue which was not initiated by the parent or had not been previously discussed with the parent.
- When an email is received from a parent that requires some time to gather information and reply properly, the staff member should respond acknowledging that the email has been received and indicate when an informed response will be sent.
- When on leave, activate an auto-reply message detailing relevant leave dates.
- Do not respond to abusive emails - forward them to the Head Teacher.
- When any doubt exists, or contents of an email may be deemed to be sensitive, staff must seek the approval of the contents from the Head Teacher.
- When sending an email to all parents that have given permission at one time (e.g. as a reminder regarding an event or activity), the BCC (Blind Carbon Copy) facility must be used to list addresses to ensure that privacy is maintained

BEST PRACTICE FOR THE USE OF EMAILS

- Always double check that the email address has been entered correctly
- Consider whether it is essential for information to be sent by email
- Use a return receipt function to see who has read the email and when
- Ensure person-identifiable information is reduced to a minimum
- Replace the names of individuals with initials (person-identifiable)
- Always encrypt or password protect emails containing person-identifiable information
- When emailing person-identifiable information outside of any secure email group place person-identifiable information in an attachment rather than being in line text