



Yeronga State School

Email Communication Protocols

At Yeronga State School we are committed to open, honest and timely communication. We are also committed to communication being respectful, measured, sensitive and constructive. In adhering to these principles we aim to strengthen the goodwill and positive partnership between parents and our school, to enhance the wellbeing and opportunities for our students.

We acknowledge the many benefits of staff and parents being able to communicate by email, but also need to recognise its shortcomings. These protocols are designed to be shared with our school community, in order to establish clear expectations for both staff and parents in the use of email as a communication tool.

General Principles

Email is an environmentally friendly way of communicating and it can save time when used effectively. We understand that email is a very convenient tool for parents who are working and find it difficult to establish contact with school staff during regular work hours. In acknowledging that it should be noted that our school community highly values face to face and phone conversations and understands that these forms of communication are preferred in many situations.

Expectations for Staff and Parents

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

- Emails are best when they are kept brief and informative. Issues that require a level of detailed discussion should be dealt with in person over the phone.
- Emails should always be respectful and constructive. If the email relates to a concern or problem, it needs to be focussed on understanding the problem and finding solution.
- Avoid sending negative or confrontational emails. Email should not be used to 'vent'. It is recommended not to say in an email what we would not say to the recipient in person.
- Do not write about or seek personal information regarding third parties (i.e. staff, students or parents). Likewise, emails containing personal or sensitive information should not be passed on to a third party without the permission of the sender. When emails are sent to a group where the addresses of the different members of the group are unknown to each other, then addresses need to be placed in the bcc line.
- Be aware that the tone or intent of emails can be easily misunderstood. Be conscious of this and pick up the phone rather than send an email if unsure.
- Staff and parents are not expected to respond to emails that are contentious. A face to face meeting should be arranged in this circumstance.
- Avoiding send group emails and only send them to the relevant recipients.

- Make sure that the purpose of your email is clear i.e. do you require specific action or is the email information only.
- Staff and parents must not disclose the email addresses of others without their permission to do so.
- Always follow this 'rule of thumb'- give waiting and thinking time before sending an email if you are feeling emotional or unsure. Think about whether your words could be misconstrued and ensure that the tone of your email is calm.

Expectations of Staff

- 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.
- Staff will aim to reply to parent emails within 2 working days.
- When on leave, staff will activate an auto-reply message detailing relevant leave dates.
- Staff are not to respond to abusive emails and should forward them to the school principal.
- Customise your subject line and give a specific title so that the topic is clear for participants.
- Avoid unnecessary links and attachments. Try to summarise all of the information in the body of the email.

Expectations of Parents

- Remember to respect staff personal time. Parents shouldn't send emails outside of work hours and expect an immediate response.
- Avoid sending time sensitive messages by email, as they may not be read in time by the recipient. Please only send non-vital messages by this medium. For example, do not use email to inform a teacher that your child is not to go home on the bus that afternoon, as the teacher may not see the message in time. Remember that given work demands teachers may not get to read emails until late in the day.
- Please don't seek to discuss in detail your child's academic progress, learning expectations, or behavioural issues via email. These are best addressed over the phone or in person.
- Emails that are intended for the office staff should be sent directly to the school's email address, that being: admin@yerongass.eq.edu.au

RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff and parents are responsible for using email in accordance with this policy.

It is the responsibility of school leadership to ensure the policy is brought to the attention of:

- Parents on enrolment of their child.
- The whole school community annually.

Policy Review – This policy is to be reviewed annually.



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