
Emailing Protocol Policy (between staff and parent/guardians)



Rationale

At Scoresby Secondary College we are committed to open, honest and timely communication. We are also committed to communication reflecting our school values (Integrity, Nurture, Success, Pride, Innovation, Respect, Excellent – INSPIRE). In adhering to these values we are committed to communication being respectful, mature, measured, sensitive and constructive.

Aim

We aim to strengthen the goodwill and the positive partnership between parents/guardians and the school to enhance the wellbeing and learning opportunities for our students. We acknowledge the potential benefits of staff and parents communicating via email, but also understand its shortcomings. This policy is designed to establish clear expectations for both staff and parents/guardians in the use of email as a communication tool.

Guidelines

Email is an environmentally friendly way of communicating that can save time when used effectively. We acknowledge that email is very convenient for parents who may find it difficult to speak to school staff during regular work hours. However, our school community also values face to face and phone conversations and understands that these forms of communication are preferred in many situations.

Implementation

- All staff at Scoresby Secondary College will follow the protocols for the use of email as a communication tool between staff and parents/guardians
- All parents/guardians at Scoresby Secondary College will follow the protocols for the use of email as a communication tool between staff and parents/guardians
- Staff will use emails in a manner consistent with DET, VIT and Childsafe requirements
- Parents/guardians need to be aware that staff are free to check and read their email at any time, to best suit their preferred working time. Parents/guardians also need to be considerate of part-time staff. Although they are free to check their emails on their non-working days, they are not expected to respond to emails on these days
- Parents/guardians may send emails anytime, however emails that are sent to staff outside of business hours are not required to be responded to until during Monday-Friday 8:00am-4:30pm
- Parents/guardians should send emails intended for school staff to the teacher's school email address (teacher's code @scoresbysc.vic.edu.au)
- 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 two working days
- The blind copying of third parties into email communication is not to occur. The email must address the intended audience

- When staff are on extended leave, staff will activate an auto-reply message detailing relevant leave dates to ensure that any emails sent to them are responded to and people are aware of who to contact during their absence
- Staff will not respond to abusive or confrontational emails and will instead forward them to the assistant principal and/or principal
- Parents are asked not to discuss in detail their child's academic progress, learning expectations, or behavioural issues via email. These are best addressed over the phone or in person
- Staff and parents/guardians will only communicate non-urgent, essential messages to one another via email. 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.
- Emails that are intended for the office staff should be sent directly to the school's email address, that being: scoresbysc@edumail.vic.gov.au
- Staff on leave (including school holidays, long service leave, sick leave etc.) are not expected to check their email
- Staff will ensure all email communication is professional and courteous
- Staff will adhere to all DET guidelines and policies governing the use of DET email
- Staff and parents/guardians will adhere to appropriate email etiquette

Email Etiquette

When communicating via email, staff and parents 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 specific 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 in an email what we wouldn't say to the recipient's face
- 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
- Staff and parents are not expected to respond to emails that are contentious. A face to face meeting should be arranged in this circumstance
- Make sure the purpose of your email is clear eg: do you require specific action or is the email for information only
- Staff and parents must be careful not to disclose the email addresses of others without permission to do so

Evaluation

Education Policy Committee will review the Email Protocol Policy (between staff and parent/guardian) every 3 years and bring any recommendations to School Council.

This policy was ratified at School Council in: November 2017
To be reviewed: November 2020