



Greensborough  
COLLEGE

## Email Protocol Policy

### Rationale

There are 3 forms of communication that can be used, face-to-face, telephone or email. Email is a fast and effective communication tool, which needs to be used appropriately. It is important that several things be considered before an email is sent to staff, students and parents. Clear guidelines need to be established to ensure that communication between staff, students and parents is appropriate. Care must be taken when writing emails as they are void of important cues such as facial expression, hand gestures and vocal intonations, which all help give context and meaning to words. When words are all that can be communicated, care must be taken to ensure they are the correct ones.

Outlined below is a guideline to appropriate email etiquette, how email should be used to communicate between staff and their students and parents.

### Personal Use

Users may use Department ICT resources for personal reasons provided the use is not excessive and does not breach this policy. Excessive personal use during working hours covers personal use which satisfies the following criteria:

- It occurs during normal working hours (but excluding an employee's lunch or other official breaks);
- It adversely affects, or could reasonably be expected to adversely affect, the performance of the employee's duties; and
- The use is not insignificant.

The Department may seek reimbursement or compensation from a user for all or part of any costs where the user has caused the Department to incur costs due to excessive downloading of non-work related material in breach of this policy.

Subject to limited personal use, social networking, on-line conferences, discussion groups or other similar services or tools using Department ICT resources must be relevant and used only for Department purposes or professional development activities. Users must conduct themselves professionally and appropriately when using such tools.

Unless otherwise approved, for ICT security reasons Department email addresses should not be used to subscribe to private subscriptions and other like services (e.g. on line ticket services, bill payments) and should never be used as "recovery email" addresses for any other services. Subscribing to mailing lists and other like services using Department ICT resources must be for Department purposes or professional development reasons only and a different password must be used for all such purposes.

Users should be aware that the provisions applying to access and monitoring of Department ICT resources also apply to personal use.

## General Email Etiquette

General principles that should be adhered to when composing an email include;

**1. Emails should be polite and respectful**

Start emails with a greeting which include the recipient's name. Refrain from using 'one liners' such as ok, yes or thanks.

At the beginning of the email you can use 'No reply necessary'

**2. When writing an email it is important to consider your audience**

**3. Written responses should be properly formatted**

**4. Keep emails short.** (to the point – use of dot points can help)

Due to how different email providers and web browsers display text, sentences and paragraphs should be kept short to avoid words trailing off the screen, or the recipient having to scroll down.

**5. The subject of the email should be short and relate directly to the content**

For time critical emails – start the subject with URGENT

**6. Let people know their email has been received**

Emails can automatically be classified as spam and get re-directed to your spam or trash folder.

**7. When emailing a group eg. parents Blind copy (bcc) should be utilised** so receivers do not know each other's email addresses

**8. Avoid writing in capitals**

In email, writing in caps can be perceived to be shouting, especially if it is bold and underlined as well.

**9. Irony and sarcasm should be avoided**

Emails do not carry vocal intonations facial expressions and hand gestures which help show one is being sarcastic, and often this meaning is lost in only written format.

As a general guideline, email should be used only as a way to deliver information. It should not be used as a forum to discuss ideas or concerns. Below are some suggestions of how staff, parents and students should be using emails within the school.

## Guidelines for Use of Email

### Staff Email

- Staff should use the GC standardised signature format for emails sent from staff accounts.
  - It is expected that emails will be checked within a 24 hour time frame during the school week.
  - Staff may choose to send and respond to work related emails at a time of their own choosing, but there is no expectation to respond to these emails outside of school hours.
  - Staff should not respond to rude or abusive emails – refer to Leadership or Principal Class.
  - Teachers may choose to respond to work related emails outside of school hours, but there is no professional expectation to do so.
- Staff to staff use

Staff can use the Staff Distribution List (DL) for the following;

- Calling for expressions of interest for a whole school activity
- Communicating whole school timelines and processes
- Communicating Daily Organisation information, general day to day communications and instructions for events – to lead towards the paperless office
- School operations and emergency situations

- Reminder of events and meetings

Staff are requested to create smaller Distribution Lists for the following;

- Delivering information about a student
- Requesting a time to meet

Where possible we should try to limit emails. It is too easy to send an email and not follow up. Some items are better to be discussed than emailed.

If a staff member wants to reply to a broadcast email they should reply directly to the sender.

- Staff to students use
  - To send resources
  - To request work or remind about events or overdue work
- Staff to parents use
  - To deliver purely factual information, for example a reminder of an excursion
  - CC coordinators when responding to parents' concerns
  - Any serious concerns about students that need to be addressed with the parents should be done by phone or through a meeting. Emails should be positive.

### **Student Email**

- Students are to communicate with their official Greensborough College email address.
- Students are to use emails to convey information. This includes submission of work or request for information.
- Students can use email to request a time to see the teacher, but it should not be used to avoid conversations with the teacher if there is a concern.
- Teachers will check their email within 24 hour time frames in the school week, but they are not expected to return emails outside of school hours, although they may choose to do so.
- If students receive inappropriate or abusive emails from another student they should report it to their Year Level Coordinator.

### **Parents to Staff Email**

- When emailing a staff member, please ensure to include the student's full name.
- Emails can be used to request information on a simple matter, or to request a time for a telephone call or meeting for more detailed or complex matters.
- Teachers may choose to respond to work related emails outside of school hours, but there is no professional expectation to do so.

**Please note: DET Acceptable Use Policy will be followed to deal with the use of email for any inappropriate or illegal activities, for example, defamation, unlawful discrimination or vilification, harassment, sexual harassment, stalking or privacy violations.**

### **EVAULATION**

This Policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Ratified by School Council September 2018