



NEERIM SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Email Communication Procedures and Policy



1. Rationale

Neerim South Primary 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 the positive partnership between parents 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 and also understand its shortcomings. This protocol is designed to establish clear expectations for both staff and parents in the use of email as a communication tool.

2. Scope

To ensure that the communication of information is carried out respectfully and in a manner that complies with school, departmental and legal requirements.

To have a policy of open and cooperative communication at Neerim South Primary School.

Policy

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 are working and find it difficult to communicate with school staff during regular work hours. Our school community values face to face and phone conversations and prefers these forms of communication when possible.

3. Implementation

3.1 Expectations of Both Staff and Parents

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

- Emails should be brief and informative. Issues that require a level of detailed discussion and confidentiality 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 identifying the desired outcome.
- Avoid sending negative or confrontational emails. Email is not to be used to vent. We do not say in an email what we wouldn't say to the recipient in person.
- Do not 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. (Unless the forwarded email is reporting inappropriate content to Principal or Assistant Principal)
- The tone or intent of emails can easily be misunderstood, especially where humour or sarcasm is involved. Be conscious of this and use phone communication rather than send an email.
- Staff and parents will not respond to emails that are contentious. A face to face meeting will be arranged in this circumstance.
- 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 jokes, 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?
- Staff and parents must be careful not to disclose the email addresses of others without permission to do so.

3.2 Expectations of Staff

- Staff must use a school (system) provided e-mail account for all parent communications
- E-mail messages to parents should be consistent with professional practices for other correspondence. This includes grammar, format and salutation
- All e-mails that reside on the Department servers may not be confidential. E-mail messages may be requested by the public under the Freedom of Information laws and may, unless they are exempt under the law, be open to public inspection
- Care should be given when using student names. Refer to students by first name, initials or your son/daughter depending on the content. Do not discuss non-related students
- 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 Principal
- Email should not be used to discuss sensitive or confidential issues 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 in full, the staff member should respond acknowledging that the email has been received and indicate when an informed response will be sent.
- In the interest of work-life balance staff will generally respond to emails during work hours (8.30am - 5pm) Monday to Friday.
- 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 date.
- If Staff feel that an email is abusive, negative or disrespectful they are not to respond and should forward email to the School Leadership including an explanation of relevant details of concern. The School Leadership will address any such emails forwarded to them directly with the sender in a timely fashion.
- Staff will not email students using DET email account under any circumstances.
- Staff emails will contain an email signature at the bottom of the email
- 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

3.3 Expectations of Parents

- Remember to respect staff personal time. Parents who send emails outside of work hours should not expect an immediate response.
- Only send non-urgent messages by email. For example, do not use email to inform a teacher or office staff that your child's afternoon pick up arrangement has changed, 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 their email and not the school's email address.

3.4 Expectations of Students

- Students are not permitted to email staff using DET email accounts under any circumstances.

3.5 Informing parents of Teacher Email Addresses - The first Class newsletter of each year will include the department email addresses of the classroom teacher. Specialist teachers' email addresses will be available upon request.

3.6 Informing Teachers of Parent Email Addresses – Office staff will compile lists of parent email addresses to be provided to teachers at the beginning of the year.

3.7 Responsibility

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

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

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

Further Information and Resources

- Respect for School Staff Policy
- Communication with School Staff Policy

4. Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the schools five-yearly review cycle or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

5. Revision History

Date	Description	Author
21/10/2019	Approved and Endorsed by School Council	Environment SC