Email Communication Protocols

Background

Redlynch State College is 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.

Purpose

The aim of these guidelines is to:
- clearly articulate the School's commitment to positive use of the email system for communication
- to acknowledge the potential benefits of staff and parents communicating via email, but also understand its shortcomings
- establish clear expectations for both staff and parents in the use of email as a communication tool.

Procedures for Implementation

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 catch up with school staff during regular work hours. Having said that, our school community values face-to- face and telephone conversations and understands that these forms of communication are preferred in many situations.

Expectations of Both Staff and Parents

When communicating via email, staff and parents are expected to adhere to email etiquette.
- 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.
- At the beginning of an email the sender can use 'No reply necessary' to convey an information sharing email only.

❖ Emails should always be respectful and constructive. If the email relates to a concern or problem, it ought to be focused on understanding the problem and finding a solution.

❖ Emails work best when they are positive. Avoid sending confrontational emails. Email is not to be used to vent. We should 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.

❖ The tone or intent of emails can easily be misunderstood. Be conscious of this and pick up the phone rather than send an email in this instance; or send an email to request a time to meet/speak.

❖ Staff and parents are not expected to respond to emails that are contentious or require

ongoing dialogue. A face-to-face meeting should be arranged in this circumstance.

❖ Email is not 'instant messenger' and a response is not guaranteed the day it is received. Responses to emails within 48 hours is reasonable for non-urgent matters. Consideration needs to be made to staff who work scheduled days. If a staff member works two days a week, then the response time may be longer given they are not on site again for up to another week.

❖ Make sure the purpose of your email is clear…do you require specific action or is the email for information only?

❖ When emailing their class group, staff and parents must ensure they do not disclose the email addresses of others without permission to do so. BCC feature should always be used when sending an email to a large number of people. Staff must also ensure they draw the most up-to-date parent email list from OneSchool as we have a high number of students coming and going.

Expectations of Staff

❖ Email should not be used to discuss a sensitive issue which was not initiated by the parent or has 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, staff will activate an auto-reply message detailing relevant leave dates.

❖ Staff who work scheduled days must ensure their email footer includes the days they are scheduled to work.

❖ Staff may choose to send or respond to work related emails at a time of their own choosing, but there is no expectation these responses will be sent outside of school hours. (8:00-4:00).

❖ Staff should use the RSC standardised signature format for emails sent from staff accounts.

❖ Staff will not respond to offensive, contentious or abusive emails and should forward them to the Principal.

Expectations of Parents

Please only send non-vital messages by this medium. For example, do not use email to inform a teacher that your child is not going to OSHC that afternoon or will be leaving early. 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@redlynchsc.eq.edu.au

❖ Remember to respect staff personal time, including weekends and holidays. Parents shouldn't send emails outside of work hours and expect an immediate response. Replies will be sent during a staff member's work time.

❖ It is the responsibility of every parent to keep the school administration and class teacher up-to-date with current email addresses.

❖ Unfortunately we are unable to receive absence notification via email. Absences can be notified via the absence line at 4039 9294, QParents, or by replying to the absence text message.

Implementation

❖ This policy will be sent to all parents and staff every year.

❖ A disclaimer will be attached to the bottom of the email signature of all staff reminding parents of this policy.

These guidelines are due for formal review by the School Council although it may be changed at any time as required after approval by the Principal.

ADOPTED DATE: 05/11/2020

DUE FOR REVISION: 05/11/2021

REVOKED/SUPERSEDED: Click here to enter a date.