



## PARENT EMAIL COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

### Purpose

At St Raphael's Primary School, we strive to be proactive in strengthening positive partnerships between the school and our families.

The purpose of these guidelines is to:

- articulate the school's commitment to positive use of email for communication,
- acknowledge the benefits of staff and parents communicating via email, and
- establish clear expectations for both staff and parents in the use of email as a communication tool.

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with 'St Raphael's Parent Protocols Policy', which focuses on the partnership between school communities and parents, and the requirement to maintain positive and respectful relationships in all dealings with each other.

### Email communications

St Raphael's Primary School uses a number of communication channels to provide up-to-date information as it relates to the daily operation of the school, including the SkoolBag app, newsletter and website.

The school also considers email a vital communications tool and recognises the importance of appropriate email content and timely replies. Nevertheless, the high volume of email traffic and the resulting impact on staff workload necessitates some guidelines for all users of the school's email system.

There are some instances where the use of email may not be the most appropriate method of communication. Outlined below are the school's email protocols and a simple guide to good practice email use.

### Standard email protocols

- **Email is not always the best form of communication.** As teachers are generally not online during school hours due to their teaching and meeting responsibilities, emails are not suggested when an urgent or same day response is required. In these instances, parents should phone the school office.
- **Always be respectful and constructive.** It is always worth reminding ourselves about the importance of being respectful and constructive. Nothing should be said in an email that you would not say in person.
- **Ensure the title is relevant.** A relevant title to the email increases the chance that staff will understand the nature and urgency of your email, rather than leaving it for later.
- **Keep it short.** To facilitate a timely response, try to limit emails to less than 150 words. Clearly and concisely outline your question or enquiry to help facilitate a timely response.
- **Include your email signature.** Include your full name at the end of your email, so it is clear who wrote the email and who should be responded to.
- **Is the information available elsewhere.** Before emailing your child's teacher, consider whether the information you are seeking is already available elsewhere, such as in the school newsletter.

- **Use your personal email address that is registered with the school.** For privacy reasons, parents must use their personal email address that is registered with the school. Staff will only respond to email addresses that are previously registered. Similarly, staff must use a school provided email account for all communications with parents.
- **Be careful cc'ing others and forwarding emails.** Only send an email to those whom the message is relevant. For privacy reasons, do not forward email correspondence between yourself and the school to others without permission.

Staff will respond to emails on weekdays between the hours of 8am and 5pm, excluding public holidays and term breaks.

### **Good practice: When to use email**

The use of email is a convenient and efficient way to directly contact your child's teacher and the following usage guide has been developed to assist with your enquiry.

Email is appropriate for:

- **Student absence.** To notify of an absence or upcoming appointment for a child / children. Please note, absences can also be notified by the 'Absence form' on the Skoolbag app.
- **Brief enquiries.** Enquiries about general school matters that can be addressed by teachers quickly.
- **Agreed parent / teacher follow up.** When agreed between the teacher and the parent following a previous meeting, email may be used as a form of regular communication to provide updates.
- **To set up a meeting.** To set up a face-to-face or phone / online meeting for a more detailed discussion about your child or to discuss an issue.

Email is not appropriate for:

- **Your child's academic progress.** This is best addressed through a meeting (face-to-face or via a phone / video conference meeting) with your child's teacher.
- **In depth discussions about your child.** However, email can be used to raise a topic to be discussed at a meeting and to set up a meeting time.
- **Where a same day response is required.** For any same day or urgent messages, please phone the office to ensure your message is received and understood. For example, please do not email the teacher about any changes to student pick up requirements for that day, which may not be seen by the teacher until the following day.
- **Lost property.** We encourage and promote responsibility among all students to look after their school belongings. Teachers will not search for individual items. Should your child misplace something, teachers will encourage them to check the lost property tub opposite the school office, acknowledging that items may take a couple of days to reach the tub. Parents are also welcome to come and check the lost property tub as required.

St Raphael's Primary School values the use of email as a vital communications tool and in strengthening positive partnerships between the school and our families.

We hope that these email guidelines help to clarify appropriate email communication between our school and families.