

Reading Public Schools

Email Guidelines for Home/School Communication

Email is quickly becoming the primary form of communication between home and school. Due to the nature of a teacher's roles and responsibilities, they do not always have immediate access to email. As email is public record, the guidelines listed below are meant to improve the use of email as an effective communication tool for parents, while maintaining the confidentiality of our families.

- **Urgent information or anything time-sensitive should continue to be relayed to teachers via written notes or telephone calls.** This would include medical concerns, changes in after-school plans, personal issues, and attendance information (absences, tardiness, and dismissals). All of this important information should continue to be directed to the classroom teacher or appropriate school personnel.
- **Responses from teachers to parents can usually be expected within 2 school days.** Teachers will make every attempt to check their email daily, however, depending on their individual schedules, this is not always possible. The set up of our school day sometimes allows for limited email access. Some teachers also may prefer to respond to email by phone or writing a note.
- **Email should be used only for school-related business and only by parents, guardians, and staff.** Student use of e-mail must be in accordance with school level policy.
- **Your child's academic progress, learning expectations, or behavioral issues are best addressed through a telephone conversation or by scheduling a personal conference with your child's teacher.** If you need to have a conversation with a teacher, email may not be the best or most efficient communication tool to address your needs. Lengthy emails may not be effective. If necessary, please set up a meeting or have a phone conversation with the teacher.
- **When teachers are absent from school, substitutes will not be reading the teachers' emails. If a teacher is absent from school, they most likely will not be checking their email on that day.**
- **Because emails can be easily misinterpreted, "tone" and "respect" are paramount in all communications.** Before clicking "send", parents should reread their email at least once to make sure that they are communicating the information accurately and with a neutral respectful tone.

We look forward to the continued use of this communication tool with you and trust that these guidelines will result in the successful implementation of email. Feel free to continue to use notes and/or telephone calls if this is a preferred method of communication.

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Phone Call	Hand-written Note	Email	In-person or Phone Meeting
<p>Level of Confidentiality: HIGH</p>	<p>Level of Confidentiality: HIGH</p>	<p>Level of Confidentiality: LOW</p>	<p>Level of Confidentiality: HIGH</p>
<div style="text-align: center;"></div> <p>Choose this method for URGENT/ASAP communication needs.</p> <p>Front Office personnel will relay your message to the teacher.</p>	<div style="text-align: center;"></div> <p>Choose this method to share time-sensitive information your child's teacher or other school personnel (such as the nurse), need.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - change in after-school plans - medical concerns - personal issues - tardiness or absence reasons. 	<div style="text-align: center;"></div> <p>Choose this method to share information that is not time-sensitive and does not require immediate action or response from either your child's teacher or school personnel.</p> <p>Please be aware that teachers have minimal time to check email during the school day. Also, teachers generally do not check school email if they are absent. For any email requesting a response, please allow 2 days.</p> <p>IMPORTANT: The "Level of Confidentiality" is LOW, because email sent to school employees is retained indefinitely and is part of the "Public Record." If you prefer your communications to a school employee <i>not</i> become part of the Public Record, please communicate via hand-written note.</p>	<div style="text-align: center;"></div> <p>Request an in-person or phone meeting if the topic to be discussed with the teacher or administrator is lengthy and/or complex.</p> <p>Please send a note or email to the teacher/administrator requesting a meeting and allow a reasonable timeframe for the teacher or administrator to contact you and schedule it.</p>

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