

MARCELLIN COLLEGE RANDWICK

PROTOCOLS FOR THE USE OF EMAIL AS A COMMUNICATION TOOL



RATIONALE

At Marcellin College 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 relationships between staff, students, parents and the wider Marcellin community.

We acknowledge the potential benefits of staff and parents communicating via email, but also understand its shortcomings. This policy is designed to establish clear expectations for both staff and parents in the use of email as a communication tool.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

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 phone 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, including:

- 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.
- Emails should always be respectful and constructive. If the email relates to a concern or problem, it should focus on understanding the problem and finding a solution.
- Avoid sending negative or confrontational emails. Email is not to be used to vent. Do not say in an email what wouldn't be said to the recipient's face.
- Never write about or seek personal information regarding third parties (staff, students or parents). Personal or sensitive information is best dealt with over the phone or face to face. Where this is not possible in the first instance, ensure any email communication does not pass on any personal or sensitive information to a third party without permission of the sender.
- The tone or intent of emails can easily be misunderstood, especially where humour or sarcasm is involved. Be conscious of this and pick up the phone rather than send an email in this instance.
- Staff and parents are not expected to respond to emails that are contentious. A face to face meeting should 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. Also, 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.
- All emails should, in the first instance, begin with a greeting/salutation.

EXPECTATIONS OF STAFF

- Email should not be used to discuss a sensitive issue 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 properly, the staff member should respond acknowledging that the email has been received and indicate when an informed response will be sent.
- 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 dates.
- Staff are not to respond to abusive emails and should forward them to the Deputy Headmaster.

EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS

- Remember to respect staff personal time. Parents shouldn't send emails outside of work hours and expect an immediate response.
- Please only send non-vital messages by this medium. For example, do not use email to inform a teacher that your son is not to go home on the bus that afternoon, as the teacher may not see the message in time.
- Please do not 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: mcr-secretary@syd.catholic.edu.au

IMPLEMENTATION

Informing parents of teacher email addresses – these are located on the College website <http://www.marcellin.nsw.edu.au/contact-us>

Informing teachers of parent email addresses – these are available to staff through Sentral.

RESPONSIBILITIES

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

It is the responsibility of College Executive to ensure the policy is brought to the attention of:

- parents on enrolment of their son
- the whole school community annually

Policy Review - this policy is to be reviewed annually