

Email Etiquette

In the past five years, e-mail has become an exponentially important mode of communication. When used effectively, it can open lines of communication from your classroom to parents, colleagues, administrators and more. The following tips will guide you in composing effective e-mails, as well as familiarize you with some of the “dos and don’ts” of e-mail communication.

1. Keep it simple.
 - E-mails that are too long or too complex become difficult to read and process. Make points, ask questions or respond to inquiries in as concise terms as possible.
2. Keep it professional
 - Avoid informal salutations. Simply the recipient's name or “hello all” is sufficient. Salutations set the tone of the e-mail, and informality can result in reduced attention to the e-mail's contents.
 - Avoid use of smileys in professional correspondence.
 - Identify your audience. Close colleagues may be addressed differently than administrators or school board members. Before composing your e-mail, think about how you would speak to the recipient in the hallway at school. Then, write your e-mail to mirror that tone.
3. Use proper grammatical conventions
 - Avoid over-punctuation. “Oh no!” conveys the same thought as “oh no!!!!!!” but does so in a more professional manner.
 - Proofread all e-mails before sending. Incorrect spelling, improper grammar and incorrect word usage all diminish the value of what your e-mail has to say. To maintain credibility, carefully proofread all correspondence, or have someone else proofread it for you.
 - Avoid use of abbreviations such as “LOL,” “ROFL,” “IMHO,” etc. Many people will not know what they mean, and they lend a casual tone to correspondence in which they are used.
4. Be careful
 - Remember that once an e-mail is sent, it cannot be retrieved. E-mail is a form of writing, and creates a record of whatever you say. Be careful not to lose your temper in an e-mail, it can cause rifts that can't be mended.
 - Do not include sensitive information in e-mails. E-mail is not always a secure mode of communication. You have no idea how many people have access to your recipient's inbox, e-mail, e-mail programs, etc. Do not include things like credit card numbers, social security numbers, personal, or secret/sensitive information.
 - When in doubt of an e-mail's contents, don't send the e-mail. Opt for a phone call or personal visit instead. If this is not an option, have someone else read the e-mail for you and offer opinions. It's always better to be safe than sorry.