



Killara Primary School E-mail Protocols for Teacher and Parent Communication

Introduction

Killara Primary School recognises that electronic mail (e-mail) is a valuable communication tool that is widely used across our society. Staff members are provided with DEECD e-mail accounts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of communication both within the organisation and with the broader community. The Principal reserves the right to decide if teachers can use e-mail as a means of communication with parents.

General E-mail Guidelines for Parent Communication

Staff using e-mail to correspond with parents must adhere to the following:

- Staff must use a school (system) provided e-mail account for all parent communications
- Staff must adhere to the Killara Primary School E-mail Retention Policy
- E-mail must never be used to discuss contentious, emotional or highly confidential issues. These issues should be dealt with face-to-face or by phone
- E-mail messages to parents should be consistent with professional practices for other correspondence. This includes grammar, format and salutation
- All e-mails that reside on the Department servers may not be confidential. E-mail messages may be requested by the public under the Freedom Of Information laws and may, unless they are exempt under the law, be open to public inspection
- E-mails should be short and directional in nature and only include facts
- E-mail parents only when they have agreed that e-mail is an appropriate form of communication and they have signed the Killara Primary School E-mail Permission Form
- Only communicate with parents at e-mail addresses listed on the e-mail permission form
- Care should be given when using student names. Refer to students by first name, initials or your son/daughter depending on the content. Do not discuss non-related students
- When any doubt exists, or contents of an email may be deemed to be sensitive, staff must seek the approval of the contents from the Principal
- When sending an email to all parents that have given permission at one time (e.g. as a reminder regarding an event or activity), the BCC (Blind Carbon Copy) facility must be used to list addresses to ensure that privacy is maintained

The School maintains e-mail accounts for teachers to facilitate parent/teacher communication and internal staff communication. The School/DEECD reserves the right to block or filter e-mail messages to staff that are not directly related to School/DEECD business or to the School's educational mission.

Acceptable Use of Parent Communication

E-mail should be used for:

- General information such as; class activities, curriculum, assignments, tests, deadlines and special events
- To arrange for a meeting/telephone call regarding a student issue including a general description of the issue e.g. "I would like to arrange a meeting to discuss your daughter's attendance"
- Follow-up on an issue that has previously been discussed
- On-going communication about a student (as agreed) instead of a Communication Book

Unacceptable Use of Parent Communication

E-mail should not include:

- Any discussion related to other students
- Personal information about other students
- Specifics about a sensitive student issue which was not initiated by the parent or had not previously been discussed with the parent. (e.g. 'I am concerned that your daughter failed the last three tests and was not at school again today.')
- Any discussion related to other staff
- Any sensitive student information that would normally be discussed face-to-face or by phone. (e.g. I am concerned that your daughter may have a learning disability)

Generic Email Response

If a teacher believes that a topic is too sensitive for an e-mail reply, here are some generic responses:

Thank you for your e-mail. Killara Primary School does not use email to discuss sensitive and/or confidential student information. In order to best address your concerns and quickly answer your questions, please feel free to call me at (insert school phone number) and I will be happy to discuss this with you further. Thank you.

Thank you for your e-mail. I feel this concern is too sensitive for email. I would prefer to speak in person regarding this matter. I will call you on (state the date and time) to discuss this matter further. Thank you.



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For Parents

E-mail may be a fast and convenient way for you to send messages, but this may not be the case for many of our teachers. Some teachers read their e-mail messages in the morning before school, some read them at the end of the day, and some read them during the school day. Many teachers prefer to use the phone to speak directly to parents.

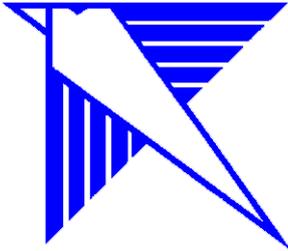
For these reasons, please remember if you choose to send an e-mail message to a member of our professional staff, you may not get an immediate reply. In fact you may not receive an e-mail reply at all, since the staff members will determine how best to contact you: by e-mail, phone, or to schedule a personal conference.

When using e-mail:

1. A signed e-mail permission form must be on file at your child's school. The permission form will indicate the e-mail address(es) that will be used to communicate with school staff. Only authorised e-mail addresses will be used by Killara Primary School staff to communicate with parents. Please send e-mail messages from an authorised e-mail account
2. Please send only non-vital messages by this medium. For example, do not use e-mail to inform a teacher that your child is to wait for you at the office after school or meet you somewhere when the day ends. A teacher may not have time to read your message in a timely fashion. Instead use the telephone to contact the office, to be sure your message is received and clearly understood
3. Your child's academic/learning progress is best addressed through a telephone conversation or by scheduling a personal conference with your child's teacher. An e-mail message on these matters is not appropriate
4. When agreed between the teacher and the parent (following face to face or phone conversation) email may be used as a form of regular communication about a student's day at school (in place of a communication book)
5. Please remember that e-mail is not necessarily confidential and can be subject to FOI (Freedom of Information) regulations. Confidential information should be conveyed by phone or personal contact
6. Please identify yourself in the subject line of your e-mail message and, if appropriate, the name of your child
7. For all medical or health concerns, please contact the school office by phone.
8. Please keep all contacts professional. Jokes, amusing or special stories, chain letters, or commercial solicitations are inappropriate and reduce valuable teaching time
9. Mass e-mail to the school staff must be approved by the Principal before sending the email
10. Emails containing threatening or offensive language will not be responded to

The School maintains email accounts for teachers to facilitate parent/teacher communication and internal as well as system-wide staff communication. The School reserves the right to block or filter email messages to staff that are not directly related to school business or to the school's educational mission.

Remember that e-mail is a quick way to send a message, but it is not necessarily the best way to get a quick reply.



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Killara Primary School E-Mail Authorisation Form

PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION THROUGH E-MAIL:

Although e-mail has become a valuable communication tool, it is important to remember that it is not always a completely secure and confidential method of communication. We would like to make e-mail available as another possible way for parents to communicate with their child's teachers where appropriate. We are, however, concerned about maintaining privacy laws, especially as they relate to student records. We will not send any student information via e-mail unless we have a signed permission form from the parent/guardian. If your e-mail address changes, you are required to fill out and sign an updated form before we send information to the new address. Protocols for parents and teachers will be adhered to, to ensure e-mail communication is appropriate.

Please read the attached protocol and complete and return the following form.



Killara Primary School Email Authorisation Form

Student Name: _____

I have read and understand the E-mail Protocols for Teacher and Parent Communication. I grant permission for information regarding my child to be sent to me via e-mail, at the following e-mail address(es). This authorisation applies for as long as my child is at Killara, unless I revoke it:

Email address(es) _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please send this completed agreement to the school office.

