

EMAIL PROTOCOL AT WESTCLIFF SCHOOL FOR GIRLS FOR STUDENTS, STAFF AND PARENTS



GUIDELINES FOR EMAIL USE

- Westcliff High School for Girls recognises the value and importance of email communication in today's society but in order to ensure that email use continues to be effective there are some simple guidelines listed below:

PURPOSE AND CONTENT OF EMAIL

- Try to decide if you are sending an email is for information sharing, or some other reason: information sharing is recognised as the best use of email. Be careful with any other purpose, particularly any that involve a reactive response.
- Avoid using email for complaining or venting displeasure. This is not an appropriate use of the medium. Don't use email as an excuse to avoid personal contact. A simple check is to ask yourself if you would say what you have written to the person's face.
- Similarly, humour can also be easily misinterpreted, especially sarcasm- so try to avoid it unless you know the recipient very well.
- Try to keep the email as a whole brief, and include a clear subject line as a header so people can identify swiftly if it is relevant to them.
- Double check everything you write, as errors are harder to spot at certain times of the day, or in the heat of the moment.
- Check who you are sending it to, before doing so. Bear in mind that the 'Reply to All' option should only be selected if you really need everyone on the distribution list to see your reply. It should be used sparingly.
- If you are writing about more than one subject, do so in separate emails- or it could prove confusing, and messages are more easily missed when embedded in a wide-ranging missive. The best approach is to re-read your email before you send it.
- Make sure that it is clear in your email what the purpose of the email is. Do you require specific action, or is the email for information only?
- Please note that defamatory or abusive emails should not be responded to.

EMAILS TO STAFF

- Think carefully about whether you actually need to send that email. Can the answer be found through some other means? Sometimes waiting until you can speak in person can actually be more effective.
- Avoid sending emails to staff to whom it is not relevant. It is easy to set up email groups if you regularly send emails to specific groups of staff. Please try not to use the 'All Staff' email unless it is absolutely necessary- the noticeboard in the staffroom might be a more appropriate vehicle for communication.

EMAILS TO STUDENTS

- Staff should ensure that they are SOLELY using students' school KERIO email addresses. This is for their own protection, and if personal addresses are used this leaves staff vulnerable and thus should be avoided. This is particularly important with sixth form.
- Staff should also consider whether it is really necessary to be contacting students in this way. Would it be more appropriate to see them face to face at the next opportunity? Email should not be used as an excuse to avoid speaking to a student.
- Email is, however, a superb way to send resources to students and to collect work from them. Ensure that you are clear with your students about what is appropriate email use and that formal language and protocols are adhered to.

- Avoid responding to simple student requests. It is important that students still come and speak to us if they have an issue and don't just fill up staff inboxes with simple questions.

EMAILS TO PARENTS

- Schoolcomms is set up to allow emails to pass between staff and parents.
- It is important that in most cases teaching and operational staff do not email parents directly. The exception to this is if parents are requiring purely factual information- in which case, a factual response is acceptable.
- If a parent does send you an email, please ensure that you copy it to either your Head of Department/Subject or the appropriate Year Learning Manager, if you require advice on how to respond.
- Staff should send a 'holding' email immediately to acknowledge receipt, and aim to respond fully to parental enquiries by phone or email within 48 hours on a work-week. Please make sure that full contact details are included in the email.
- Email communication with parents should be as positive as possible. If there is any form of bad news to give, communication should be either by phone, or, preferably, face to face via a meeting organised specifically to address concerns.

STUDENTS TO STAFF EMAIL

- Students should make sure that they are using staff school Kerio email addresses at all times, not their personal ones. They should also consider whether it is really necessary to be contacting staff in this way. Would it be more appropriate to see them face to face at the next opportunity? Email should not be used as an excuse to avoid speaking to member of staff.
- The best use of email is for simple, factual information- emailing staff is a privilege not to be abused, and should be treated as such. Students should ensure that basic rules of politeness are maintained.
- Students should make sure that they include their name and form on all communication- the easiest way to do this is to ensure that they have a clear 'signature' at the base of the email.

PARENTS TO STAFF EMAIL

- Parents should not send an email through their child's Kerio mail email address
- Parents should not email a member of staff directly even if they know their email address.
- When a concern or query arises, parents should communicate either:
 - by phone through the school office, or
 - by using the generalenquiries@whsg.info email address
- Please also make sure that your child's name and form are included in any message, as well as any phone number you wish us to use to establish contact.
- Parents should attempt to refer all school-related matters back to the school, and should do their best not to approach other children or contact other parents directly about such issues. We are interested in working together to create solutions.
- If parents have a complaint to make, they should contact the appropriate Year Learning Manager or Head of Department/Subject to discuss the best way to do this. They may well ask for concerns to be put in writing, and email would be an efficient way to organise this.
- Parents are requested to seek a mutually convenient meeting time with the staff member involved to discuss concerns. It is recommended that parents suggest two or three possible times they are available in a message, and staff will reply at their earliest convenience, within 48 hours.