

To ensure a good work-life balance and to provide guidance and clarity about appropriate email and communication practices within the Sha Tin College community the following protocols should be adhered to regarding email communication. These protocols relate to communication and email between staff, parents and students, collectively referred to as ‘users’.

- Users should at all times be aware of the professional nature of the relationship.
- Email should be sent between the hours of 7am - 5pm Monday - Friday only. Email can be written at any time and be scheduled to be sent during the appropriate time.
- Users are reminded that they must communicate with each other online in accordance with our *Responsible Use Policy* which includes guidelines prohibiting communications which are offensive or which would constitute bullying.
- Users should always restrict their communication to appropriate platforms and use features such as privacy settings to ensure a clear demarcation between the personal and professional aspects of their online presence.
- Users should address recipients in the same manner they would use to address them when communicating ‘offline’.

## Email Etiquette

- Emails should be started with the recipient’s name and end with the sender’s name.
- Clear and appropriate subject lines/re lines should be used to help recipients identify the content of messages. The word “Urgent” should only be used for genuinely urgent situations.
- Where possible email should be sent to a targeted audience and not to large groups. The ICT team curates email groups annually.
- The use of the ‘To’ field should be directed at the person to whom you are directly communicating or keeping informed. Action may be required from the “To” recipient.
- The use of the ‘Cc’ field is to keep this person informed. No action or response from them is required.
- The use of the ‘Bcc’ field should be when you want a person’s identity kept secret, and is effective when you are sending group emails and you want to guarantee the anonymity of other recipients.
- Do not use “Cc” or “Bcc” as a means of coercion. If you are not getting a reply to your email try a different means of communication.
- Users should not “Reply All” to emails. A response to the sender is sufficient unless instructed otherwise in the original email.
- Do not forward email to someone who was not the intended recipient without telling the original author that you’re forwarding their email.
- Users are encouraged to check that an email is addressed to the appropriate and relevant people before sending.
- Users should make use of the spell-check function.
- Staff should use a formal title and signature when emailing external agencies or professional contacts.

## **Emailing Groups**

- Staff should not send emails directly to large year level groups of parents/guardians without approval of the draft from a member of SLT.
- Students should not email large groups of students or staff. Teachers can help students put notices in the Student Bulletin.
- Users should avoid sending large attachments unnecessarily. It is often better to upload the file to a third party space and provide a link.
- The Student Bulletin in Smart should be used for notices that are designed to be read by a large number of students. The notice should be targeted and only run for a specific time period.

## **Checking and Responding to Email**

- Checking emails in lessons, either by staff or students, should not impinge upon teaching and learning.
- Staff and students should check their email at least once on a working day. Teachers must check email by 8.00am daily to check for cover.
- There is no expectation that staff will check their email during holidays or at the weekends except during crisis or business-critical situations, eg, adverse weather, exam results release or pandemic etc.
- Parents/Guardians are reminded that their nominated contact email on Gateway is the method by which the school will contact them for any non-emergency issue. Parents/Guardians are therefore requested to check their email weekly.
- Staff should use their professional judgement in responding within an appropriate timeframe to emails they receive. If a written response is required within a specific timeframe, this should be specified by the sender of the original email. Where a response is not possible within the required timeframe, a holding email explaining that a further more detailed reply will be sent in due course, is helpful. If a student is in danger or at risk, support should be sought *immediately* from SLT. A reasonable timeframe for a response to an email would usually be within 2-3 days.
- Users should be cautious about responding to email in a heightened emotional state.
- Users should not assume that because an email has been sent that it has been read. Students should not assume that an email sent to a member of staff will be acted upon. Students should give staff sufficient time to respond to email.

## **WhatsApp**

- Staff should not use WhatsApp for professional communications. Google Chat must be used instead. Staff who are exempt from this should seek the approval of the Principal.