E-mail Protocols for Parent Communication with Teaching Staff

Introduction

Kinross Wolaroi School recognises that electronic mail (e-mail) is a valuable and effective communication tool that is widely used. Staff members are provided with e-mail accounts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of communication both within the organisation and with the broader community.

KWS staff email accounts follow the guidelines of staff initial, surname then the standard @kws.nsw.edu.au

For example the email account for the fictitious James White would be: jwhite@kws.nsw.edu.au

Acceptable Use of Parent Communication

E-mail should be used for:

- Arranging 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 my daughter’s current progress in woodwork given her recent assessment marks”
- Follow-up on an issue that has previously been discussed

Unacceptable Use of Parent E-mail Communication:

- Any discussion related to other students
- Personal information about other students
- Any discussion related to other staff
- Vital information relating to your child for that day
- Clarifying information when it is the responsibility of your child to find this out

E-mail may be a fast and convenient way for you to send messages, but you need to realise that teaching staff are not able to access emails during working hours as they are teaching, coaching or assisting students. Some teachers read their e-mail messages in the morning before school and some read them at the end of the day. Teachers do not have the opportunity to read emails during the school day. For these reasons, please remember if you choose to send an e-mail message to a member of our professional staff, you will not get an immediate reply.

Guidelines:

Please identify yourself in the subject line of your e-mail message and, if appropriate, the name of your child.

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. A teacher may not have time to read your message in a timely fashion. Instead contact the office by phone, so your message is received and clearly understood.

Your child's academic/learning progress is best addressed through a telephone conversation or by utilising scheduled parent-teacher interviews. When circumstances necessitate, a personal conference with your child's teacher can be arranged.

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 progress at school.

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.

For all medical or health concerns, please contact the school office or Health Clinic by phone.

Mass e-mails to school staff are not allowed. Nor are parents allowed to forward emails from staff onto other parents, nor to post them in whole or in part on social media.
The School maintains email accounts for teachers to facilitate parent/teacher communication and 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.**

**Communicating with Staff**

In an effort to assist parents with their queries or concerns, this is a guide as to whom to communicate with:

- For learning and class related matters: the classroom teacher
- For a behaviour management or well-being matter: the Head Tutor for Senior School or Classroom Teacher for Prep School
- For co-curricular matters: the team coach or leader of that group/ensemble
- For subject related matters: Head of Faculty or Stage Coordinator
- For Boarding matters: the relevant Head of House
- For ICT matters: the Director of ICT
- For overall course matters: the Director of Studies or relevant Prep Co-Ordinators
- For serious co-curricular matters: the MIC of the particular sport or relevant Head of Sport
- For more complex student matters: the Head of Senior School or Prep School
- For matters regarding school policy: school management or staff members, the Principal

**Expectations of Parents**

Kinross Wolaroi School’s expectations of the parent who wishes to raise a concern or complaint, are as follows:

- Do so promptly or as soon as possible after the issue occurs
- Provide complete and factual information about the concern
- Maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties
- Acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- Act in good faith, in a calm and courteous manner
- Show respect and understanding of each other’s point of view and value difference rather than judge and blame
- Recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced
- Allow sufficient time for an adequate response
- Understand that the greater good of the whole school may have to be considered when deciding an individual matter

**Please note**: Later this year or early next year the new LMS will be active which will greatly assist overall communication for parents.

**Brian Kennelly**
**Principal – KWS**
**15 March 2015**