

ICS Milan Protocol and Guidelines for Email TEACHER to PARENT COMMUNICATION

INTRODUCTION

1. ICS Milan recognises that electronic mail (email) is a valuable communication tool that is widely used across our society. Staff members are provided with ICS Milan email accounts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of parent/teacher communication and internal staff communication.
2. 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.

GUIDELINES FOR EMAILS INITIATED BY STAFF

When using email to correspond with **parents**, staff are asked to be mindful of the following:

- Only use the school system provided email account for parent communications.
- Contentious, emotional or highly confidential issues are always best discussed face to face. Use email to set up the meeting only. When any doubt exists, or the contents of an email may be deemed to be sensitive, it is important that staff seek the approval of the contents from the Executive Principal before sending the email.
- Whole class emails need to be passed via the Executive Principal before being sent out. Simple reminders for parents should be passed to Head of Phase for approval.
- Use the **BCC** field when emailing more than one person.
- Email messages to parents need to be consistent with professional practices for other correspondence. This includes grammar, format and salutation. Address the parent(s) by surname. Do not use first names. Use 'Dear' and avoid casual forms of address such as 'Hi, hello'. Sign off formally with e.g., Yours sincerely, best regards, kind regards etc. Do not sign off with 'cheers, all the best or Thanks'
- All emails that reside on the school server may not be confidential. This means that email 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.
- Keep emails succinct and avoid assumptions.
- Use the most current class list to ensure up-to-date email addresses are used.
- Refer to students by first name for 1:1 emails to parents e.g. 'William has ...' and use 'your child. or your son/daughter' depending on the content.' when sending a group email to parents.
- Do not discuss non-related students.
- Please be reminded that some parents may not check emails daily, thus your message may not be received in a timely manner.
- Please be aware of the potential for a very large number of emails that families may receive from the school in any one week and keep your correspondence to a minimum.

The school email can be used for:

- General information such as; class activities, curriculum, projects, tests, deadlines and special events.
- To arrange 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.
- To follow-up on an issue that has previously been discussed

Always avoid:

- Initiating an email or responding to one if you are feeling emotional or “triggered”
- Any discussion or personal information related to other students, parents or staff members
- Any sensitive student information that would normally be discussed face-to-face. (e.g. I am concerned that your child may have a learning disability)
- If you have any doubts about sending an email, forward the email to the Head of Phase before sending.
- If you have received an email that triggers strong emotions, **DO NOT RESPOND IMMEDIATELY.** Wait until at least the following day and speak with the Head of Phase for support before sending a response.

Email Response Time

Staff are expected to reply to all parent emails within 24 hours, either to resolve the issue or else to explain that you will need some time to gather the requested information and will be back in touch within X days (not more than a week).

Staff to Staff emails

When using email to correspond with **other members of staff**, all staff are asked to be mindful of the following:

- Only use the school system provided email account for school related communications.
- Contentious, emotional or highly confidential issues are always best discussed face to face. Use email to set up the meeting only.
- Email messages to fellow staff members need to be consistently respectful.
- All emails that reside on the school server may not be confidential. This means that email 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.
- Use the CC field when emailing more than one person, so that all recipients are aware who has received the correspondence. This will ensure clarity when staff members are required to discuss issues.