



ORMISTON
SIX VILLAGES
ACADEMY



EMAIL ETIQUETTE AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE WORKPLACE - GUIDANCE

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Email Etiquette and Social Media in the Workplace

Guidance

INTRODUCTION

This Guidance is applicable to any and all staff members of Ormiston Six Villages Academy using corporate email - OSVA Google mail. In following this guidance staff will reduce the likelihood of misunderstanding, or any unintentional rudeness or offence when communicating using email.

It is a legal right for any person to make a request to a school for access to information held by that school. Schools are under a duty to provide advice and assistance to anyone requesting this information. This includes any emails sent using Google Mail. Enquirers do not have to say why they want the information.

The Principal has the right to read all emails sent from the school, irrespective of the recipient.

As an employee of Ormiston Six Villages Academy (OSVA), when sending emails:

<u>YOU MUST</u>
Respond promptly. Check your email account regularly and read and respond to it within two working days, as stated in our school's Partnership with Parents Policy. If you cannot respond fully in this timescale, send a short reply to the sender to let them know you have received the email and will provide a proper reply, providing a date or time when they can expect a reply from you. Keep to this deadline
Assume your emails will be seen by people other than your intended recipients. Write emails as though the public could see them. If the information you are sending is confidential or private, consider other methods of communication
Use language that fits your audience and matches your purpose. Inappropriate language can damage your credibility, undermine your argument, or alienate your audience. It can also damage the reputation of the school
Use professional language that is suitable for addressing a parent / carer. For example, a professional greeting such as "Dear Mr / Mrs" and sign off, such as "Regards / Yours Sincerely" using our professional titles, "Mr / MrsTeacher of...."
Never use jargon or acronyms for a parent without explaining it. Only use teacher jargon or acronyms when you are writing for members of that group
Always read your email before sending it. Once you send something, you've lost control of the information. Also check your intended recipients, particularly when replying
Save any email with a stern message as a draft for a period of time (e.g.24 hours) and then review the content and tone of before sending it. A parent might use the content of an email as the basis of a complaint, so always be careful about any communications. If in any doubt, check with your Line Manager before sending it to the parent / carer
Use other methods of communication if you send a lot of emails to one person. It would be better to use the telephone or preferably have a meeting
Use correct grammar and punctuation. Such things are an important part of written communication, and are particularly expected in schools!
Ignore or delete what is asked of you. It is polite to inform the sender that they have sent the email to the wrong person. Note that to keep, act upon and/or forward an email not intended for you may be breaking the law
Never be rude, abusive or defamatory. As with other forms of communication, it is at least impolite and it may be against the law. Remember, emails are legitimate legal documents that may be used in court
As a guide, only send emails, particularly to colleagues, within the normal working day (Monday – Friday; 08:00 – 18:00; term time). Although we may prefer to work at home and at hours that suit our lifestyle, it is important that we consider the work / life balance of our colleagues
Never read or send emails during lessons. (Exceptions will always apply, for example, during a set test).
Never ignore or delete emails without reading them. At the very worst people may simply stop sending you emails, since they will assume that you are ignoring them. This is a risky strategy for reducing you email intake, as people may stop sending you important information as well

As an employee of Ormiston Six Villages Academy (OSVA), when sending emails:

<u>YOU SHOULD</u>
Have a clear subject, title or topic line. Word it clearly and accurately to represent the content of your message
Set up an automated response when you are away from your email system for any length of time, to tell senders that you are away and when you will be back
Stay organised. Delete unwanted and unimportant emails (keeping in mind any policies required to keep records) and organise and archive your messages in a logical fashion
Express yourself clearly. Even though email is as quick and easy as the telephone it has similarity to letters in its lack of ability to convey a sense of <u>how</u> you are trying to say something. Readers of your emails may easily get the wrong impression, particularly if you use irony or humour in your messages
Only include relevant people in the distribution lists. Avoid the “mob-mail”; an email that includes lots of people in its “to:” and “cc:” lists in order to solicit support or add the threat or weight of authority
Cautiously include personality. Only write in your personal style if you know the person to whom you are sending the mail and you are sure that message will go to no one else
Make it readable. If you change the colour / font, make sure that the end product is easy to read, and always remember your audience, and different devices e.g. tablets.
AVOID USING ALL CAPITALS/all lower case. Using all capitals is the equivalent of SHOUTING. All lower case looks lazy and unprofessional, but has no particular meaning
Use receipts only when necessary. Read and Receive receipts are useful tools for you to know if someone has opened or received your email. However they can be seen as a tool to monitor someone, particularly if placed on every message
Use urgent or importance flags correctly. Flags can be useful to classify the messages. However, marking every email as urgent and/or high importance reduces the likelihood that they will respect that flag in future

Using Social Media

There is widespread use of such sites as Facebook and Twitter amongst teaching and associate staff, and there are a growing number of well established blogs and internet forums that are aimed specifically at professionals working in education.

While most professionals use social media without encountering any difficulties, media interest into examples of unprofessional behaviour online have raised concerns that some professionals working within education may be unknowingly exposing themselves to risk in the way that they are using these applications and uploading personal material onto the internet.

Although we should all be free to take advantage of the many personal and professional benefits that social media can offer, it is important that we are aware of the potential risks involved to us as professionals, to our colleagues and to the institution that pays our salaries,

Remember that people classified as “friends” have the ability to download and share your information with others. Many former pupils still have siblings at the school.

Post only what you want the world to see. On a social networking site, once you post something it may be available, even after it is removed from the site. This includes discussing pupils or colleagues or publicly criticising school polices or personnel.

Visit your profile’s security and privacy settings. At a minimum, we should have all privacy settings set to “**only friends**”. “Friends of friends” and “Networks and Friends” open your content to a large group of unknown people. Your privacy and that of your family may be a risk. People you do not know may be looking at you, your home, your kids, your grandkids, - your lives!

Friends and friending

- You **must not** accept pupils or former pupils as friends on personal social networking sites
- You **must** decline any pupil-initiated friend requests
- You **must not** initiate friendships with pupils
- You **must not** use commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary, or libelous