



# Email Protocol Policy

Boort District P-12 School is committed to open, honest and timely communication. We are also committed to communication being respectful, measured and constructive. In adhering to these principles, we aim to strengthen the goodwill and the positive partnership between parents and the school, to enhance the wellbeing and learning opportunities for our students.

## PURPOSE

The aim of these guidelines is to:

- clearly articulate the School's commitment to positive use of the email system for communication
- to acknowledge the potential benefits of staff and parents communicating via email, but also understand its shortcomings
- establish clear expectations for both staff and parents in the use of email as a communication tool.

## DEFINITIONS

*"School"* means Boort District P-12 School

*"Parent"* means parent, guardian, carer

## PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Email is an environmentally friendly way of communicating that can save time when used effectively. We acknowledge that email is very convenient for parents who are working and find it difficult to catch up with school staff during regular work hours. Having said that, our school community values face-to-face and telephone conversations, and understands that these forms of communication are preferred in many situations.

While communication via email is valued, the increasing volume and response expectations necessitate the development of some common practices.

The primary responsibility of all teachers is to teach, and dealing with electronic communication (via messages/emails) unless urgent, must take second place.

### Email Etiquette

- Emails are at their best when they are brief and informative. Make sure the purpose of your email is clear...do you require specific action or is the email for information only?
- At the beginning of an email, the sender can use 'No reply necessary' to convey an information sharing email only.
- Emails work best when they are positive. Avoid sending negative or confrontational emails. Email is not to be used to vent. We never say in an email what we wouldn't say to the recipient's face.
- Never write about or seek personal information regarding third parties (staff, students or parents).
- Emails containing personal information should not be passed on to a third party without permission of the sender.
- Avoid writing in capitals.

- Staff and parents are not expected to respond to emails that are contentious or require ongoing dialogue. A face-to-face meeting should be arranged in this circumstance.
- When emailing a group, staff and parents must ensure they do not disclose the email addresses of others without permission to do so. (Blind CC should be utilised) Staff are to receive information on how and why to use Blind CC.

### **Expectations of Staff**

- Email should not be used to discuss a personal issue or which was not initiated by the parent or had not been previously discussed with the parent.
- When an email is received from a parent that requires some time to gather information and reply properly, the staff member should respond, acknowledging that the email has been received and indicate when an informed response will be sent. It could be marked as “Read” or a “Receipt” asked for.
- Staff will aim to reply to parent emails within 2 working days.
- When on leave, staff will activate an auto-reply message detailing relevant leave dates. Staff to receive PD on this process.
- Staff may choose to send or respond to work related emails at a time of their own choosing, but there is no expectation to respond to these emails outside of school hours. (8:30-4:30).
- Forward offensive or abusive emails to the school principal.
- Office staff respond to email inquiries seeking straightforward information and refer the parent to appropriate staff if more complex information is required

### ***Rushed responses to emails are never a good idea***

- If emails cause any unease, or if you are unsure of how to respond, seek advice and share concerns with the Principal or Assistant Principal. See BDS Parent Concerns and Complaints Policy.

### **Expectations of Parents**

- Please only send non-vital messages by this medium. For example, do not use email to inform a teacher that your child is not to go on the bus that afternoon, as the teacher may not see the message in time. Remember that given work demands, teachers may not get to read emails until late in the day.
- Please don't seek to discuss **in detail** your child's academic progress, learning expectations or behavioural issues via email. These are best addressed over the phone or in person.
- Emails that are intended for the office staff should be sent directly to the school's email address, that being: [boort.district.p12@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:boort.district.p12@edumail.vic.gov.au)
- Remember to respect staff personal time, including weekends and holidays. Parents shouldn't expect an immediate response to emails sent outside work hours.
- It is the responsibility of every parent to keep the school administration up-to-date with current email addresses.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

- Email addresses will be accessed by the XUNO portal.
- This policy will be sent to all parents every year.
- This policy will be available on the school website.
- Customised email responses will be developed for staff use such as:

*-Thank you for your email. Please direct this enquiry to the school administration team.*

*-Your email has been received. I will endeavour to contact you within 48 hours.*

**Reference:** Please refer to the school's *Information Privacy Policy* available on the school website [www.boortds.vic.edu.au](http://www.boortds.vic.edu.au) as a link to the Department of Education Policy and Advisory Library.

## REVIEW AND POLICY HISTORY

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Date</b>
These guidelines are due for formal review in May 2023 although it may be changed at any time as required after approval by the Principal.	
Approval Date	<b>November 6<sup>th</sup> 2023</b>
Next Review date	<b>November 2025</b>