

Date ratified at Directors
Meeting
17 July 2023

Review
Resources Committee



EMAIL PROTOCOL AND GUIDANCE

THE TRUST MISSION STATEMENT

*Inspired by the life of Christ we provide an exceptional education in our Catholic schools
which enables our children:*

- to fully embrace all possibilities
- to flourish
- to develop their faith

and therefore to choose a path that enables them to be a positive influence upon our world.

'Prepare the Way' The Gospel of St Mark 1:3

*NB – this guidance has been informed by consultation between Unions, staff and the Trust
and represents best practice, rather than policy*

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If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact the Company Secretary on 01603 611431 and we will do our best to help.

St John the Baptist Catholic MAT Email protocol and advice

Whilst emails are a valuable form of communication, unnecessary emails add to staff workload.

This protocol is designed to make emails manageable for staff by reducing the number of unnecessary emails and setting common parameters to improve their use. It is advisory across our Trust schools, with the aim of reducing inadvertent unnecessary workload.

Key questions before sending an email

1. *Is this email necessary?*
2. *Is email the right way to communicate the message?*
3. *Do I need a reply? If so, it can be helpful to request a response.*
4. *Have you checked the email is going to the email address of the intended recipient, and not another email address that Outlook has automatically filled in?*
5. *Have you used the 'Blindcopy 'Bcc' field' when emailing groups of parents, so that personal email addresses are not shared?*
6. *If sending a group email, or replying to a group email, do I need to send this to everyone in the group?*

Expectations

- People should feel able to send emails **when their working patterns suit them**. However, **no one expects anyone to reply immediately**. Staff are encouraged to add the following text on their signature if they wish:

THINK WELLBEING. *This email was sent at a time and date convenient to the sender; please do not feel under any pressure to respond if this is outside your usual working hours.*

If staff want to send an email outside their normal working hours, they should consider using the **Delay Delivery function within Outlook** (Options – Delay Delivery) so that emails are automatically sent during 'working hours' ('working hours' vary but as a general guide would be between 8:30am to 5:00pm)

- **No one has to respond to emails at weekends or after 5:30 pm.**
- Individuals can **check their emails when they choose**. It is best practice to check them at least once every working day.
- Staff should respond to emails within 24 hours during their working week **where a request for a response has been made**. Some staff may have mutual understandings between themselves of the best time to check and respond to emails- this is not prescriptive. Staff receiving an email from a parent should respond within 24 hours

during their working week, unless in particular cases alternative advice has been given by their line manager or Headteacher. Excessive emails from parents should be brought to the attention of the line manager or Headteacher. Staff can use holding emails if needed when dealing with sensitive and / or emotive issues or where some investigation is needed.

- **Where a request has not been made for a response, there is no need to reply.** Senders will assume that the contents have been read.
- “All Staff” emails should only be used sparingly, and staff should avoid a ‘Reply All’ response
- **Staff should use the staff bulletin** or similar rather than separate emails as the main form of communication for non sensitive information that needs wide distribution.

Top Tips

- Always include a clear and concise subject for the email.
- Make emails as concise as possible.
- Check the email is going to who you intend it to go to, before you press ‘Send’!
- Use the Blindcopy (‘Bcc’) field when emailing parents.
- Never send an email in anger or heightened emotion, take appropriate time to compose a reply
- Reply within the thread rather than sending a new email.
- Part time staff should use out of office automatic replies when they are not working.
- Large files shouldn’t be attached to emails as this slows the system. Large files should be shared on Teams or through a OneDrive link instead.
- Report any emails that are sent to the wrong recipient(s) as soon as possible to the Data Protection Officer who will advise on further action.

Finally

- Training will be provided to staff on the use of emails at induction and upon request.
- Employees should consider removing email alerts from their mobile phones and smart watches unless this helps with their work life balance.
- If you are having trouble keeping up with emails, please let your line manager know.