



Summary

This document sets out the school's rationale and expectations for e-mail communication within the school community. Whilst acknowledging its usefulness, we aim to minimise the use of e-mail to that which is essential. As we wish for all correspondence within the school community to remain professional, relevant and courteous, we have produced a protocol for e-mail communication which we invite all parents, staff and governors to follow.

Introduction

Amport CE Primary School recognises that e-mail can be a valuable and effective communication tool particularly for parents whose working hours restrict their opportunity for face to face contact. 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. However, there is no expectation that staff are obliged to correspond with parents through e-mail. It may be that individual staff may prefer to speak face to face and may request an appointment or make a telephone call.

E-mail is unforgiving. Without facial expression and tone of voice, it is very easy to get it wrong. E-mails are ill-suited to emotive subjects; it is better to speak in person. This protocol has been drawn up to try to ensure that e-mail exchanges within the school community are professional, relevant and courteous, and to reduce the number of e-mails received by staff.

Acceptable Use of Parent Communication

E-mail should only be used for:

- Requesting a meeting/telephone call regarding a pupil 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 reading." This is really helpful and informs the meeting better
- Requesting a meeting / telephone call to follow-up on an issue that has previously been discussed
- Confirming an arrangement to meet
- An admin query that cannot be answered by checking ParentMail

- PTA business: for PTA Committee members to correspond with the Headteacher or the Admin Officer
- Governor business: for Governors to correspond with the Headteacher or the Clerk to Governors

Unacceptable Use of Parent E-mail Communication:

E-mail should not be used:

- To complain (The school has a Complaints Policy)
- To rant or vent about dissatisfaction
- To avoid personal contact
- For any discussion related to other pupils
- For any discussion related to other staff
- To give vital information relating to your child for that day
- To clarify information that is either your responsibility or, that of your child, to find out

Please be aware that any unacceptable use of e-mails outlined above may not receive a response. Neither will defamatory, abusive or offensive e-mails which may be retained and/or reported by the school.

Please also be aware that teaching staff are not able to access e-mails during working hours as they are teaching pupils and do not access their e-mail account during the school day. Staff aim to respond to e-mails within 10 working days. It may take longer to respond in writing. Planning, preparation, assessment and teaching are their priorities, not corresponding via e-mail.

Please be aware too, that it is unlikely that parents would receive a response to an e-mail that has been sent during the school holidays. Staff will aim to add an 'Out of office' message during these periods.

Guidelines for all users:

- Consider **why** the e-mail is being sent. Is it to shift workload from one person to another? Would waiting to speak in person be more appropriate?
- Consider **when** the e-mail is being sent. There should be no expectation that e-mails sent outside working hours should be responded to during these hours
- In the subject line of the e-mail message, please identify the **purpose** of the e-mail eg For Information, for action, and, if appropriate, state your child's name
- It is helpful if the content of the e-mail matches the subject line
- Try to keep the e-mail brief- if it is too long, the reader may choose to not read the whole email
- Check that the e-mail is being sent to the correct person
- If more than one subject is to be discussed, please send separate e-mails as this makes the trail easier to follow

- Be clear about relevant deadlines
- Please send only non-vital messages.
 - For example, do not use e-mail to inform a teacher that your child is to wait for you at the office after school. Instead, please contact the office by phone, so your message is received and clearly understood. Please leave a message if the phone is temporarily unmanned. The message will normally be picked up before the end of the school day. If there are any doubts, please call the office again
- Please remember that e-mails can be subject to FOI (Freedom of Information) requests and are subject to GDPR. Confidential information should be conveyed by phone, personal contact or in writing eg a note or a letter marked 'Confidential - to be opened by the addressee only'.

Additional Guidelines for parents:

- Your child’s academic/learning progress is usually best addressed through a telephone conversation or through a personal discussion with your child's teacher for which appointments can be made upon request
- For all medical or health concerns, please contact the school office by phone
- Please do not send mass e-mails to school staff
- E-mails from staff must not be forwarded to other parents, nor posted or commented on, in whole or in part, on social media

The school maintains e-mail accounts for teachers to facilitate parent/teacher communication and system-wide staff communication. The school reserves the right to block or filter e-mail messages to staff that are not directly related to school business or to the school’s educational vision.

Remember that e-mail may be a quick way to send a message

but it is not necessarily the best way to get a quick reply.

Communicating with Staff

To assist parents with their queries or concerns, this is a guide to know with whom to communicate:

For learning and class related matters, including your child’s homework	The Class Teacher
For administration matters that are not addressed through ParentMail	The Admin Officer
For a behaviour management or well-being matter	The Class Teacher in the first instance, or either the Deputy or Headteacher if further consultation is required
For extra-curricular matters	The Class Teacher or the Headteacher
For more complex pupil matters	The Deputy or the Headteacher
For any safeguarding matter	The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Mrs King

	The Deputy DSL: Mrs Mathias or, in her absence, Miss Croft
For matters regarding school policy	The Headteacher

Safeguarding matters should normally be discussed by phone or face to face with the Headteacher or, in her absence, with one of our two other Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) (Mrs Mathias and Miss Croft) rather than via e-mail. *If the concern puts a child in immediate danger or there is an indication that a child is suffering from significant harm, you must share your concern immediately with Nicky King DSL or Claire Mathias or Claire Croft both DDSL in her absence, through phone call or meeting face to face. In out of school hours and holiday time please ring 0300 555 1384 or 0300 555 1373 In an emergency call 999* However, if e-mail is used, the DSL will respond in line with our safeguarding policy and will take action immediately upon reading the correspondence.

Expectations of Parents

Amport CE Primary School’s expectations of parents who wish to raise a concern or complaint, are:

- Refer concerns promptly, or as soon as possible after the issue occurs, to the relevant person
- Provide complete and factual information about the concern and to refrain from emotive expression
- Maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties
- Acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome that is 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 or apportion blame
- Recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced
- Allow sufficient time for an adequate response
- Understand that any decision made by the leadership of the school is done so with the children’s interests in mind
- Understand that the greater good of the whole school may have to be considered when deciding an individual matter
- If the communication is a complaint rather than a concern, to follow the school’s Complaint Policy
