

Pembridge Hall

Policy on the Use of Email for Parental Communication

Introduction

Pembridge Hall recognizes that electronic mail (e-mail) is a valuable communication tool that is widely used across our society. Staff members are provided with school e-mail accounts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of communication both within the organization and with the broader community. The Headmaster of Pembridge Hall reserves the right to decide if teachers can use e-mail as a means of communication with parents.

General E-mail Guidelines for Parent Communication

Staff using e-mail to correspond with parents must adhere to the following:

- Staff must use a school provided e-mail account for all parent communications.
- Staff must adhere to the E-mail Retention Policy.
- E-mail must never be used to discuss contentious, emotional or highly confidential issues. These issues should be dealt with face-to-face or by phone.
- E-mail messages to parents should be consistent with professional practices for other correspondence. This includes grammar, format and salutation.
- All e-mails that reside on the AlphaPlus servers may not be confidential. E-mail messages may be requested by parents under the Privacy laws.
- E-mails should be short and directional in nature and only include facts.
- E-mail parents only when they have agreed that e-mail is an appropriate form of communication and they have signed the Pembridge Hall E-mail Permission Form.
- Only communicate with parents at e-mail addresses listed on the e-mail permission form.
- Care should be given when using girls names. Refer to girls by first name, initials or your daughter depending on the content. Do not discuss non-related students and never use the girl's surname.

Alphaplus Group maintains e-mail accounts for teachers to facilitate parent/teacher communication and internal staff communication. The company reserves the right to block or filter e-mail messages to staff that are not directly related to school's core.

Acceptable Use of Parent Communication

- E-mail should be used for general information such as; class activities, curriculum, assignments, tests, deadlines and special events.
- To arrange for 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 son's/ daughters behaviour.
- Follow-up on an issue that has previously been discussed.

Unacceptable Use of Parent Communication

E-mail should not include:

- Any discussion related to other students.
- Personal information about other students.
- Specifics about a sensitive student issue which was not initiated by the parent or had not previously been discussed with the parent. (e.g. 'I am concerned that your daughter failed the last three tests and was not at school again today.')
- Any discussion related to other staff.
- Any sensitive student information that would normally be discussed face-to-face or by phone. (e.g. I am concerned that your daughter may have a learning disability.)

Generic Email Response

If a teacher believes that a topic is too sensitive for an e-mail reply, here are a few generic responses:

Thank you for your e-mail. Pembridge Hall does not use email to discuss sensitive and/or confidential student information. In order to best address your concerns and quickly answer your questions, please call the school secretary on 02072290121 and book a meeting where I will be happy to discuss this with you further. Thank you.

Thank you for your e-mail. I feel this concern is too sensitive for email. I would prefer to speak in person regarding this matter. I will call you on (state the date and appropriate time) to discuss this matter further.

Thank you.

Headmaster