

# 12 TIPS FOR TEACHERS COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS VIA EMAIL

- 1** **Establish guidelines at the start of the year:** Tell parents how you'll be using email and how they can use it. Explain your response time and how parents can contact you for urgent issues (e.g. phone).
- 2** **Don't get into the habit of replying instantly:** Avoid "training" parents to expect an instant response from you via email.
- 3** **Use a professional email address:** Avoid handing out your personal email. Make sure the signature of your work email is short and professional.
- 4** **Make your email easy to read:** Don't make the email longer than it needs to be. Break up text into short paragraphs. Use bold, bullet points, and lists where appropriate.
- 5** **Customise your subject line:** Use a specific subject line that will attract attention (e.g. "Tomorrow's sports day schedule" rather than "Update").
- 6** **Keep a record of communication you might need to come back to:** Any correspondence about "issues" (learning, behaviour, disagreements etc.) should be saved just in case.
- 7** **Use CC and BCC:** CC a school leader into the email if they need to be aware of a conversation (don't use CC unnecessarily). Always use BCC if you email more than one parent so you keep their email addresses private.
- 8** **Avoid unnecessary links and attachments:** Try to summarise all the information in the body of the email. Avoid using PDF attachments or web links if you don't have to.
- 9** **Send unexpected positive notes:** Sending a positive message home about a child every now and then can be extremely powerful!
- 10** **Keep your tone friendly and more polite than you need to be:** Digital communication can be harder to read and you don't want to come across as blunt.
- 11** **Use a phone call or face-to-face conversation when necessary:** It can be best to deal with difficult, sensitive, or complicated issues via a call or meeting.
- 12** **Think before sending:** If you're feeling emotional or unsure, wait before sending. Always think whether your words could be misconstrued. Ensure the tone of all emails is calm. Don't reply to a heated or offensive email -- consult with a school leader.