



Internal email protocols

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Email is an excellent and essential form of communication that can speed up and simplify how we communicate. However, there is a concern that the volume and form of email use means that it is increasingly difficult to process our inboxes, and spot and reply in a timely fashion to important emails.

It is good practice to review how staff email is working and develop some protocols to support ongoing good use.

Face-to-Face communication

Our school community values in-person conversations and understands that these forms of communication are preferred in many situations. Email should only be used when in-person meetings are not practical.

Email Etiquette - Sending

It is important we develop greater *intention* when it comes to email.

Structure of email

- The subject of the email should be short and relate directly to the content
- Emails should be polite and respectful; they are at their best when they are brief and informative.
- Email is not suitable for urgent or critical matters; speak in-person to an appropriate staff member or a phone call could be made to the office, Principal, Deputy Principal or Nurse, other member of staff as appropriate.
- For matters of controversy or a serious matter, to avoid miscommunication or escalation, it is always better to meet with the person directly rather than send an email.

Teachers email

- Information must be relevant to **all** those receiving the emails
- Care should be taken not to inadvertently forward emails to a larger group that were intended only for an individual or smaller group.
- The *teachers* email group distributes email to all teachers. It should only be used when you want to contact every individual teacher; you must be certain that every single person needs the information that is on that email.
- Alternative methods should be used to communicate work left for classes in the case of teacher absences rather than a mail to the *teachers* group.
- For events/activities look to send one email only.
- Information may be sent to Nicola for the staff memo or newsletter or to the Principal for assembly notices or use at staff meetings. For an assembly announcement, please put 'Assembly' in the subject. Matters for the webpage or social media should be sent to pr@midletoncollege.ie.
- The *teachers* email group should not be used for missing students – instead look to contact the Principal, Deputy Principal nurse or office.

cc and bcc

- **Carbon copy (cc)** only people who have an immediate need for the information.
- If may be useful to setup a filter so that emails in which you are a cc or bcc recipient, show up a different colour.
- **Blind carbon copy (bcc)** protects people's or groups email addresses. When emailing a group e.g. parents, bcc should be used. Similarly, when using class or year group email addresses, bcc must **always** be used. This prevents revealing the form of the group email address and prevents issues arising from the recipients accidentally using *Reply All*.

Schedule send

- If emails are not critical, *schedule send* should be used so that emails arrive between 8.00am-6.00pm.

Email Etiquette - Replying

- To avoid clogging up inboxes, replies to emails on an event/activity should be directed to the sender only, or the specified email address in the body of the email.
- When exchanged emails with someone over a certain topic and want to continue discussing that topic – it is good practise to reply within the thread, rather than sending a fresh email
- If sending an email on a new matter, don't reply to an email sent on a different topic, send a fresh email with a clear subject line.
- Staff are not expected to respond to abusive or confrontational emails and should forward them to the Deputy Principal or Principal.
- It may be helpful to put NRN (No Response Necessary) on the top of emails where you don't require a reply.
- Teachers may choose to respond to work related emails outside of school hours, but there is no professional expectation to do so.

Rules of Use

Privacy

- Always keep in mind that email is considered an insecure method of communication and that, if you are sending personal information via email, persons other than the intended recipient may see that email. Email is neither private nor secret. It may be easily copied, forwarded, saved, intercepted, archived and may be subject to a data access request or discovery in litigation. The audience of an inappropriate comment in an email may be unexpected and extremely widespread. Individuals and/or the School may be liable for what is written or said in an email message.
- When handling sensitive, personal or confidential email you should observe the following guidelines:
 - When sending personal information via email, put the word CONFIDENTIAL in the title
 - If you receive personal information in an email, do not forward that email to anyone who does not have a need to see the information
 - When the purpose of the email has passed (i.e. the information is no longer needed), delete the email from your inbox
- To ensure compliance with GDPR, delete emails from your deleted items folder regularly, this will ensure that personal information that may be in your deleted items, that is no longer required, will be removed.
- All personal data contained in emails is accessible under GDPR – emails should be regarded as potentially public information. Never use your personal email for school purposes. If you do so, then personal information is that account may also may be accessible under GDPR.
- Ensure your email is not accessible from a shared computer or on your phone if it is used by others.
- Care should also be taken when printing sensitive emails – under GDPR, the school is responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of a student's personal data.

Acceptable use

- Email is provided as a work tool and must only be used in conjunction with the execution of your role in the College. It is unacceptable use of email to:
 - Use it to defame, comment or call into question the good character of any person
 - Use it to bully (in line with the definition in our Anti-bullying & Dignity at work policy) any member of the College Community
 - Use it for any activity not connected with Midleton College business
 - Use it to misrepresent the College, or infer responsibility held by you, or commit the College to any activity outside of the scope of your role in the College without prior permission of College Management.
- Do not click open attachments, or links, on unsolicited emails especially from an unknown person. Caution should also be exercised even if attachments are received from a known source but are unexpected or have an unexpected title.
- Email passwords should not be saved on a web browser or other application. 2-step verification should be activated on work email accounts.
- Emails containing sensitive information should not be forward to external email addresses.
- All emails distributed via the school's email system are the property of Midleton College.
Before an email is forwarded or sent, review the tone to ensure that it can't in any way be interpreted as insulting, disruptive or offensive by any other person.

Email Training

Training resources will be provided in the following areas – staff should ensure that they are comfortable using these email features.

- Reply v's Reply All
- cc/bcc
- Schedule send
- Filtering
- Email signatures
- Email folder structures