

# DOMINIC COLLEGE

*A Catholic School in the Salesian Tradition*



## ELECTRONIC MAIL POLICY

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Approved By	
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Related Documents	Communication Policy and Procedures Use of Electronic Facilities Policy

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## 1. RATIONALE

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Dominic College is committed to open, respectful, and timely communication that is measured, sensitive and constructive. In adhering to this commitment, we aim to strengthen our communication through goodwill and positive relationships between members of the College community to enhance shared commitment to the mission and vision of the College.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

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Dominic College recognises that electronic mail (e-mail) is a valuable communication tool that is widely used across our society. Students and staff members are provided with e-mail accounts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of communication both within the College and with the broader community. Parents are expected to have an email account to support regular information from and communication with the College.

Parents and students have access to staff email to support effective communication and likewise staff have access to parent email.

Email is a way of communicating that can save time when used effectively. It is very convenient for parents and staff alike who find it difficult to catch up with each other face-to-face during regular work hours.

Whilst E-mail is a fast way for College community members to send messages, our community values face-to-face and telephone conversations, and these forms of communication are preferred in many situations.

## 3. PURPOSE

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The purpose of the policy is to:

- Articulate the College's commitment to the positive use of the email system for communication;
- Acknowledge the potential benefits of staff and parents communicating via email, but also understand its shortcomings;
- Establish clear expectations for both staff and parents in the use of email as a communication tool.

#### 4. MUTUAL EXPECTATIONS

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Members of the College community manage the reading of and responding to email in many different ways. Some teachers for example, read their e-mail messages in the morning before school, some read them at the end of the day, and some read them during the school day. Many teachers prefer to use the phone to speak directly to parents.

If choosing to send an e-mail message to a member of the Dominic College staff, a reply might not be immediate.

An e-mail response may not be provided at all if the staff member determines that the best reply is to contact parents by phone, or to schedule a meeting.

#### 5. EXPECTATIONS OF BOTH STAFF AND PARENTS

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When communicating via email, staff and parents are expected to adhere to email etiquette, including:

- Using a salutation (e.g. Dear Ms Jones).
- Being brief and informative.
- Recognizing that issues that require a level of detailed discussion should be dealt with in person or over the phone.
- Using the phrase: 'For Your Information' (FYI) or 'No Reply Necessary'(NRN) at the beginning of an email to indicate it is an information sharing email only.
- Being respectful and constructive.
- Avoiding inclusion of people to whom the email may not be relevant or necessary.
- Respect each other's personal time, including weekends and holidays and not expect an immediate response.

#### 6. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

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- Protecting individual privacy when emailing a group, staff and parents must ensure they do not disclose the email addresses of others without permission to do so. (Blind CC should be utilised)
- Respecting personal or sensitive information in an email, means they should not be passed on to a third party without permission of the sender.
- E-mail is not necessarily confidential and can be subject to FOI (Freedom of Information) regulations.

## 7. EXPECTATIONS OF STAFF

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- College staff will aim to reply to parent emails within two (2) working days.
- When an email is received from a parent or staff member that requires some time to gather information, consult with others and reply properly, the staff member should respond acknowledging that the email has been received and indicate when an informed response might be expected.
- When absent from the College for an extended period of leave, staff will activate an auto-reply message detailing relevant leave dates and who to contact in their absence.
- Staff may choose to send or respond to work related emails at a time of their own choosing, but there is no expectation to respond to these emails outside of school hours Monday – Friday in Term time: (8:30 am - 4:00 pm).
- Email should not be used to discuss a sensitive issue which has not been initiated by a parent or has not been previously discussed with the parent.
- Staff who are in designated Positions of Responsibility will check their email regularly other than when they are on Personal Leave, Annual Leave, Long Service Leave etc.
- Staff will not respond to offensive or abusive emails and will forward them to their immediate supervisor who will determine if the Deputy Principal and/or Principal of the College should be involved.
- Staff are to use the centralized staff communications such as the Daily Staff Bulletin and Weekly Staff Bulletin to convey messages to all staff, 7-10 staff, K-6 staff or K-10 staff to reduce the cognitive load of teachers especially.

## 8. EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS

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- Parents are expected to have an individual email address.
- Parents are expected to keep the College Administration up-to-date with current email addresses.
- Parents are asked to reply to staff emails within two (2) working days unless there are mitigating circumstances.
- Parents are asked to respond to emailed excursion permissions within five (5) working days.
- Parents are asked to only send non-vital messages by email. Personal messages to be passed onto children are not part of the College's communications system as the teacher/staff member may not see the message in time.
- Information about but not discussion in detail of, a student's academic progress, learning expectations, or behavioural issues may be sent via email. However, these are best addressed over the phone or in person.