



ST. PETER'S COLLEGE

FAITH, EDUCATION & SERVICE

September 2022

Staff Email Policy

1. PREAMBLE

St. Peter's College is committed to providing effective, efficient, safe and professional communication between all members of the community including staff, students and carers. The rationale of this policy is derived by the work of the Consultative committee as per the Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited Schools and Secretariat Agreement 2022

<https://intranet.doscel.catholic.edu.au/employee-relations/DOSCEL-Agreement-2022>

St. Peter's College grants access to staff to a St Peter's College email for legitimate work and education related purposes.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that employees at St. Peter's College are able to maintain a work/life balance and to provide effective communication procedures to support transparency, collaboration and resource management for improved student learning outcomes.

This policy is developed as a collaboration of work undertaken by St. Peter's College staff. It is aligned to views expressed from a St Peter's College focus group and by staff in the Diocese of Sale which supports the direction of DOSCEL (*as per communique of April 2020*).

3. PRINCIPLES

- All members of the St. Peter's College community are responsible for communicating respectfully and effectively.

- The College supports the right of all members of the College community to be heard.
- All staff, volunteers, contractors and clergy will work within the expectations set out in the St. Peter's College Child Protection and Safety Policy and Code of Conduct.
- Appropriate structures will be maintained to ensure that effective avenues of communication are available. ie SPACE, Staff Bulletins, Newsletter, Email.
- Feedback is recognised as an important factor in College improvement.
- Effective communication requires a commitment to being informed, constructive and considerate of outcomes.
- All members of the community have legal and social obligations with regards to electronic communication, as referred to in the St. Peter's College ICT policy.

4. DEFINITIONS

BCC: Blind Carbon Copy - this email field is used to send a recipient a copy of the email however you do not want the other recipients to see that you sent it to this contact.

CC: Carbon Copy - this email field is used to send a recipient a copy of the email for their information; and you want everyone to explicitly see this email.

DOSCEL: Diocese Of Sale Catholic Education Limited.

EMAIL: Messages distributed by electronic means from one computer user to one or more recipients via a network.

SCHOOL BUSINESS HOURS: 8:00am and 5:00pm.

5. PROCEDURES

St. Peter's College maintains that school staff should only respond to emails on their workdays between school business hours of **8:00am and 5:00pm** and, will endeavour to respond to emails within 24 - 48 hours for the following reasons:

- To enable staff to manage their workload, including management of work-life balance and staff wellbeing.
- To establish consistent expectations across St. Peter's College for staff, students and parents.
- To set consistent professional expectations for staff which also meet community expectations.
- To promote Child Safety.

- To ensure appropriate boundaries which protect the professional reputation of staff.
- To meet the needs of part-time staff.

Staff members who wish to undertake work late at night or early in the morning (which could include drafting emails), have the flexibility to manage workload and other personal responsibilities. The emails can be drafted at whatever time suits the staff member and scheduled to be sent in school business hours.

Staff are not expected to respond to emails outside of school business hours i.e during weekends, public holidays and term breaks.

St Peter's College Marketing Manager includes a byline statement in staff email signatures as follows;

'St. Peter's College staff access their work emails normally between 8:00am-5:00pm and will endeavour to respond to emails within 24-48 hours. However, staff are not expected to respond in this timeframe during weekends, public holidays and term breaks'.

Part time staff members are expected to include the days they are working in their email signature.

St Peter's College guidance for Staff emails:

The underlying principle should be to determine if email is the best form of communication for the purpose of the sender and the recipient. Often a phone call or speaking to a colleague directly may actually be more efficient.

When sending an email, the onus is on the sender to provide an adequate time for the recipient to respond appropriately e.g. sending an email at 4:45pm to advise of a meeting at 9:00am the next morning is not adequate notice for the recipient. Similarly, expecting or asking for a response within a specific timeframe may not allow for all recipients to respond when taking into account their other work and personal commitments, so a reasonable timeframe needs to be provided.

Staff should keep these points in mind when emailing colleagues:

- The greeting in the email should indicate who a message is directed to, and from whom a reply might be expected. Addressing emails needs careful consideration to ensure the information is sent to those for whom it is intended. For emails that are intended for more than one person, it is important to specifically target this appropriate audience, rather than sending emails to 'All Staff' or general groups. For example when communicating via email to the teachers of a particular student, the use of the teacher group provided in SPACE is most appropriate.
- The carbon copy, Cc, option can be used to inform other people of your communication with an intended recipient. It is used when a reply is not expected / required by the sender.

- The blind carbon copy, Bcc, option is used for the specific purpose of protecting the identity/privacy of an email address. This feature is mainly used when sending an email to more than one person while keeping each recipient's email private. This is done by placing individual addresses in the 'Bcc' (Blind Carbon Copy) field rather than the
- Care should be taken in responding to internal emails address to "All Staff" as any responses sent by pressing the "Reply to all" button will be address to ALL Staff would the issue be better addressed via a face-to-face discussion, Zoom or telephone call?
- Is email the best way to send a document out for discussion?
- It is rarely necessary to 'reply all'. Usually, it's better to reply and manually add other people who need to see a message.

Expectations of St Peter's College Staff

- Email should not be used to discuss a sensitive issue, unless Staff need it to be recorded in writing.
- Staff will aim to reply to emails within 24 - 48 hours and in school business hours i.e.8:00am and 5:00pm
- 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 business hours i.e. 8:00am and 5:00pm.
- Email should be used for work related purposes only.
- Staff are not to respond to offensive or abusive emails and should forward them to the Principal or Head of Campus (HOC).
- Staff to inform the Principal/HOC and IT if they become aware that they have mistakenly sent an email containing sensitive information to an incorrect recipient.
- Email communication should be in keeping with the St. Peter's College Style Guide.

Staff must not use email in the following ways

- In a way that may be considered offensive, defamatory, obscene, pornographic, discriminatory, insulting or disruptive to any other person.
- To access, view, download, print or send messages or attachments (including to home email address), which include:
 - Language that is not appropriate in the workplace.
 - Sexually explicit messages or pictures.
 - Offensive or inappropriate cartoons or jokes.
 - Ethnic or racial slurs.
 - Any material, which contains disrespectful comments about people with disabilities, or people's sexual orientation, or any person's physical attributes.

St. Peter's College understands that staff cannot always control the messages that are sent to them. Furthermore, staff must discourage third parties (such as family, friends or workmates) from sending inappropriate messages to them.

St Peter's College staff should be aware that

- The content of both work related, and personal email may be monitored by St Peter's College to ensure compliance with this and other policies and to support operational maintenance, auditing and security activities.
- All emails and attachments, stored on the College's system are the College's property and may be viewed by the College.
- Staff are to only use their St Peter's College provided email account when communicating with students and parents/guardians or when communicating as an employee of St Peter's College.
- Staff are to only email students by the use of the student's St Peter's College provided email account.

Guidance for Staff emails from St Peter's College staff survey and consultation

A poorly worded or aggressive email can lead to a breakdown in communication. The following email etiquette can enhance communication.

- Be positive, courteous, and diplomatic. An email and attachments can be easily forwarded.
- Be calm and choose your words carefully. Don't write and send an email when in an emotional state which may compromise rational thought.
- Forwarding emails should be avoided and only used when requiring further information. If the sender intended another recipient, they would have added them to the recipient list.
- Emails should be short, directional in nature and only include facts.
- Care should be given when using student names. Refer to students by first name, initials or your son/daughter depending on the content. Do not discuss non-related students.
- Check your email at least once daily to see if you have any messages.
- Include a concise description line in the message.
- Make sure the purpose of your email is clear e.g. do you require specific action or is the email for information only. Take care not to express views that could be regarded as defamatory.
- Aim to reply to emails within 24 - 48 hours and in school business hours. If the response requires more thought or time, simply respond by acknowledging the person's email and let them know when they can expect to receive a response.
- Avoid using email to send or forward material that could be construed as confidential, political, obscene, threatening, or offensive.

- Only send emails to essential recipients. Always ask yourself who the key audience is and limit the number of people who receive your email.
- If sending an email about a student, ask yourself if this needs to be addressed to 'All Teachers CRA' or could this be sent to just the required staff such as 'Year 7 Teachers CRA'.
- 'All Staff' emails are only sent by or from the guidance of - members of the Leadership Team.

Emails from St Peter's College students

Students need to be aware that staff are free to check and read their email at any time, to best suit their preferred working time. However, emails that are sent to staff outside of school business hours (**8:00 am to 5:00pm**) are not expected to be responded to until school business hours. This needs to be a consistent message from all staff to make sure students do not expect it from some staff and not other staff.

6. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- That all staff are aware of their responsibilities when using email as a tool of communication.
- That staff are aware of the requirements for using email between staff at St Peter's College.
- That staff have an improved work-life, balance
- Staff members are expected to include a byline statement in their email signature as follows.
- 'St. Peter's College staff will access their work emails normally between 8:00am-5:00pm and will endeavour to respond to emails within 24-48 hours. However, staff are not expected to respond in this timeframe during weekends, public holidays and term breaks.
- Part time staff members are expected to include the days they are working in their email signature.

7. REFERENCES

1. [Child Protection & Safety Policy](#)
2. [DOSCEL Commitment Statement to Child Safety](#)
3. DOSCEL communication April 2020, extract as follows;

'Significant concerns have been raised in relation to the workload of school staff, Deputy Principals and Principals across Victoria, and a workload review commenced in 2018. One major workload concern related to the

expectation of staff to be available for a significant part of the day due to technological advances (such as email and other school applications), and that staff felt that they were expected to send or reply to emails outside of work hours. This impacts not only on workload but wellbeing and work-life balance.

This view was also expressed in the focus group discussions with teachers and staff in the Diocese of Sale. A key theme was that if a staff member stepped outside of these boundaries, other staff members felt pressured by students and parents to also follow. It is important that there are consistent boundaries across all schools and that staff members are not expected to reply to emails outside of ordinary working hours other than in the case of a genuine emergency’.

4. St. Peter’s College Style Guide (current).

8. RELATED POLICIES

1. [ICT Policy](#)
2. [SOCIAL-MEDIA-PROTOCOLS-GUIDELINES-AGREEMENT Final-September-2022.doc.pdf](#)
3. [DOSCEL Child Protection & Safety Policy](#)
4. [DOSCEL Privacy Policy](#)

9. REVIEW

*This policy will be reviewed every **THREE** years or earlier to take account of any changed technology, legislation, expectations or practices.*

Implementation Date: June, 2020
Review Date: June, 2023