

# E-MAIL ETIQUETTE & GUIDELINES

## Overview

When parents and faculty stay in touch—through telephone calls, conferences, notes, letters, and emails—students benefit. Parent interest and involvement in their child’s education is key to student success.

As the use of email has become more commonplace in today’s society, the need to delineate certain guidelines regarding this means of communication has emerged. These guidelines are necessary to ensure the confidentiality and professionalism of its content, particularly as it relates to identifying student information. Privacy and confidentiality of information contained in emails is not guaranteed.

Parents may authorize the use of email for otherwise confidential information and must recognize that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Information contained in the email is on a “need-to-know basis” and is intended for the sender and recipient(s).

## General Email Guidelines and Etiquette

FOLGER MCKINSEY considers email as a means of communication between home and school and recognizes the importance of proper email content. An email is also considered professional communication, so it is important for all parties to maintain professionalism when communicating via email.

Therefore, Folger McKinsey Elementary School expects the following regarding email guidelines:

- It should be understood that expectations of civility in communications at FOLGER MCKINSEY are the same for email as for face-to-face communication. Respect for one another should be evident in tone and language, as well as content. Email, as written communication, lacks the other important aspects of personal interaction, such as facial expression and tone of voice. It is important that your message text is clear and to the point.
- Unfortunately, email does not convey tone and affect, and may cause the message to seem abrupt or confrontational when used in haste or anger. Therefore, email may not be the best means to facilitate discussions on issues of significant concern. Such issues are best left to a personal meeting. As such, use e-mail to simply request a meeting to discuss a situation or concern; do not detail a situation via e-mail.

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- Write as if you were speaking to someone, but don't write anything you wouldn't say directly to them.
- A hostile email is only going to exacerbate the situation and make the recipient defensive.
- Compose a clear and concise message explaining the issue, stating a concern, or asking a question.
- This is also an opportunity for parents and faculty/staff to demonstrate **mature behavior, by modeling adult working relationships based upon civility, honesty, and respect.** Remember, people can quickly send an email in a moment of anger, so take your time to respond once you have carefully thought about your response.
- Respect confidentiality. Avoid sending sensitive or confidential information via email.
- Be polite, avoid sarcasm.
- Reread what you have written after you have composed your email to ensure all of the above-mentioned guidelines have been followed. Remember that anything you write in an email provides the recipient with a permanent written record. Review your message once more before sending it to be sure that you are communicating both, the message you intend, and one that follows for a productive partnership.
- Do not "Respond to All" if you just need to communicate with the original sender.
- Do not forward anyone's email address without their knowledge and permission.
- Expect a response in a reasonable amount of time (within 48 hours). Parents, please be aware that each teacher works with a large number of students each semester and school year and she/he has very limited time during the school day to access e-mail. Please allow them an adequate amount of time to respond to emails as they receive them.