

BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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BCPS Email Etiquette

Sending Messages

Subject Line

- Use the subject line to indicate the main topic of your email.
- Use a title that can be used for retrieving/filing as needed.
- Blank subject lines will not be useful to the reader or for filing.
- Use a title that immediately focuses the reader's attention.
- Avoid the use of names of individuals in a subject line.

Urgent Flag

- Use in special circumstances only – this should not be the default setting.

To

- Send the message “To” the individual that is intended to “act” on the email.
- Before sending, make sure that your list of senders is exactly as you intend.
- Do not send unnecessary emails.

CCs/BCCs

- Copy an individual on the message when that individual is not required to “act” on the email.
- Make sure you only “CC” individuals who need this information.
- Do not “CC” individuals who are not directly necessary.
- Use BCC when the name of the recipient is not to be known to other recipients.

Reply

- Remember, the email history is included – this may be helpful, or you may not want the next reader to see that history. As the history gets long, you may be forwarding information to new eyes.
- Do not reply at all if you were only a “CC” on an item, unless you need someone else to “act.”

Reply All

- Do not use this button unless you have carefully reviewed your email and verified that ALL users must see your response.

Forward

- If forwarding a message with an attachment, make sure that the attachment is enclosed before sending your message.
- Do not forward miscellaneous junk mail or humorous messages.

- If you forward a message as a “CC,” make sure to indicate to that individual that it is for their information only, no action necessary.
- Remember, your message is easily forwarded to other parties.

Confidentiality

- **Do not** put confidential information in an email message.
- Never put someone’s name as a subject of an email message. Never include someone’s social security number in an email message.
- If you do not want messages sent from your computer by unauthorized individuals, do not leave your computer unattended while logged into email. (Use a screen-save protection or log out).
- Student behavior and employee performance information related to specific individuals should never be included in an email, but should be communicated by phone or in person.

Content

- Information that requires immediate action should not be communicated by email.
- Use the automatic spelling verifier.
- Before sending, reread messages for content, grammar, and punctuation.
- Be cautious when using humor. Consider your audience before sending, and realize that humor may be lost in the written form.
- Never send anything with inappropriate content or even inappropriate words.
- Do not use an extremely large or small font.
- As with general correspondence, appropriate use of color, bolding, and italics may be helpful.
- Do not embarrass yourself or someone else – as with other correspondence, think twice before clicking the send button.
- Do not use the designer background formats. Although they look nice, background colors and patterns require additional server disk space, therefore increasing operational costs.
- Do not send or receive personal mail, as this is a violation of the Acceptable Use Policy. Remember, all emails are retrievable. Keep emails clear and concise. Lengthy items may be better as an attachment.
- Email should not be used for: highly complex issues; issues that require discussion among multiple parties; confidential issues; emotionally charged issues; etc.
- Email is good for: short answers; providing a written record of the communication; approval and disapproval; forwarding information; documentation of action items; follow-up to meetings and distribution of minutes and notes; confirming meetings; answering requests for information; etc.
- Do not use email to “flame” or berate others.

Managing/Reading Messages

Subject Line

- Use the subject line to help you find an old message.
- Use the subject line to save time – read only the last email in a series if the history has been maintained.

Urgent Flag

- Respond to urgent messages immediately – even if it is to tell the sender that it is not urgent.
- Out of Office Indicator – use the out of office indicator when your email will not be checked for over 24 hours.

CCs

- If you only receive the message as a “CC,” then don’t respond as the “To” and consider that no response may be the right action.

Reply

- Remember, the email history is included – this may be helpful, or you may not want the next reader to see that history. As the history gets long, you may be forwarding information to new eyes.
- If you are not going to be able to answer an email fairly quickly, respond with a generic message letting the sender know when your response will be coming. If someone else will respond with the requested information, make that clear in your response.

Reply All

- Do not use this button unless you have carefully reviewed your email and verified that ALL users must see your response.

Forward

- If receiving a forwarded message that indicates an attachment, make sure that the attachment is enclosed.
- Email is an effective and documented method of delegating tasks to the appropriate staff. However, make sure that the action you are requesting is clearly and concisely stated.

Confidentiality

- There are no confidential emails!!!
- **Do not** put confidential information in an email message.
- If you don’t want emails read from your computer, do not leave your computer unattended. Use a screen-saver protection or log out or lock the computer.
- Remember to update your password periodically.
- Student behavior and employee performance information related to specific individuals should not be put in email, but should be communicated by phone or in person.

Content

Time Management Tips

- As with paperwork, don't keep rereading the same email. Process the email by answering, filing, or deleting.
- For reading large numbers of emails after being out of the office, sort them by subject and read the last email, as it may include the whole history of the transaction, allowing you to delete previous emails.
- Sort emails by sender to take care of certain individuals (your supervisor) in priority order.
- To find old emails or delete emails, make use of the sort by date, by subject, by sender, etc.
- Within your working unit, establish protocols for email use. What your supervisor wants to see, what correspondence you want to see, and what you do not want to see, etc.

Storage

- BCPS' Electronically Stored Information (ESI) automatically deletes email on a rolling basis every 90 days.
- Individuals are allotted a finite amount of mail space and it is the employee's responsibility to manage that space.
- Employees who save email beyond the 90 days will be personally responsible for searching and retrieving the email in the event of a lawsuit. Saving email beyond the 90 days is an unauthorized practice that could result in discipline.

General

- Use email to communicate information, not to accumulate information.
- Do not use email as a substitute for face-to-face conversations. Managers and co-workers need to be actively involved with their staff as appropriate.
- Take action on email directed to you personally.
- Check and respond to email within 24 hours. Use out-of-office assistant when this is not possible.
- The Outlook Calendar should be used to record all appointments, planned leave time and for scheduling all internal meetings.