

Dear Carmel parents and students,

As we consider in more depth the issues that affect people's wellbeing, it has become clear that we need to set some explicit boundaries regarding email communications. Everybody has the right to certain times of the day, week and year when they can switch off their email and think about other things. Nobody should be expected to be readily accessible at all times.

Equally, we all have the right to receive a response to any queries we have, within a reasonable timeframe. We have therefore put together a policy to make our expectations regarding emailed communications explicit.

We have thought about how long it is reasonable to wait for an answer to a query and what times of day are reasonable to receive emails. We have decided that emailed queries should receive a response within two business days. Many will be replied to more quickly than this, but this is the expected maximum wait time. We have also decided that 7pm is a reasonable time after which people should not receive emailed communications. Experience suggests that sometimes emails written and sent at 2 o'clock in the morning might have been better re-read and sent the following day!

The policy applies equally to students, staff and parents. Please find a copy of the policy attached (and a summary for busy people below).

Many thanks in anticipation of your support.

Best wishes,
Julie

Summary for busy people:

* Email is not always the best form of communication:

For absences, call reception (High School - 9276 1644 or Primary School – 9276 1900)

For urgent messages to students, call reception (numbers above)

For complex or sensitive issues, book a time for a meeting (online or face to face)

* Responses to emailed queries will be within two business days

* Please don't send emails after 7pm

* Please don't email during Shabbat or chaggim (festivals)

* Emails must always be polite, appropriate and related to school matters

Email Communication Policy

Issue Date: February 2023

Review Date: February 2025

The Carmel School Purpose:

To provide students with an excellent education where they connect meaningfully with their Jewish identity and embrace the opportunity to make a difference.

At Carmel School, we understand the importance of fostering open and respectful communication between parents/guardians and school staff. This Policy provides clear expectations regarding the appropriate use of email communication.

It should be noted that emails are not always the most appropriate means of communication, for example phone calls or face-to-face meetings may be more suitable for sensitive or complex issues.

Emails are also not the most appropriate means of communication for urgent messages to students, which should be relayed to school receptionists, because staff who are in class working with students will not be checking their emails regularly during the school day.

Appropriate content, tone and language

All email communication will be conducted in a professional and respectful manner. Abusive or disrespectful language will not be tolerated.

Communication should be limited to school-related matters and used for administrative and informational purposes only.

Appropriate response times

Carmel School staff will provide an initial response to emailed queries within two business days. We ask that parents and guardians also reply to school emails in this timeframe.

Some issues will require longer than this to investigate and solve; the initial email response can provide an approximate time in which the staff member believes the results of their investigation can be shared.

Appropriate times for email communication

Emails will not be sent:

1. After 7pm

Our focus on wellbeing has highlighted the need to provide times when staff and parents do not feel obliged to be attending to emails. Receiving an email in the evening can lead to poor sleep patterns and it is not reasonable to expect issues to be resolved at this time. Please do not send emails after 7pm.

For those whose personal circumstances mean that they work better late at night and who wish to write emails after that time, the 'delay delivery' function can be utilised; the emails will then automatically be sent the following morning.

2. During Shabbat

As a Modern Orthodox Jewish school, from sundown on Friday until nightfall on Saturday, school emails will not be sent, nor received. Please respect this and do not email during this time.

Shabbat has the added advantage of providing all staff, whether observant or not, with a period of rest from school email.

3. During Chaggim

There are periods of chaggim (Jewish festivals and holidays) during which emailed communication is inappropriate. These include the following days, together with the afternoon and evening before the festival:

- * The first two and last two days of Pesach
- * The two days of Shavuot
- * The two days of Rosh Hashana
- * Yom Kippur
- * The first two and last two days of Succot

Please respect this and do not email during this time.

4. During a period of staff leave

Staff on leave will put in place an out of office message, stating that they are on leave and when they will return and respond to emails.

If you feel that our email communication policy has been violated, you should in the first instance get in touch with the Head of Primary or the Head of Secondary who will investigate any issues which have arisen.