



# COLLEGE EMAIL POLICY FAMILIES AND STUDENTS

## Context

St Columba's College is a Mary Aikenhead Ministries College in the tradition of the Sisters of Charity. We are called to develop in each member of our community a contemporary understanding and application of the charism of Mary Aikenhead and the spirituality of the Sisters of Charity, and the Mary Aikenhead Ministries' mission, vision and values of justice, love, compassion and hope.

## Introduction

St Columba's College recognises that electronic mail is a valuable communication tool that is widely used across society. Staff members are provided with College electronic mail accounts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of communication both within the organisation and with the broader community. The Principal reserves the right to decide if teachers can use electronic mail as a means of communication with families.

*Please note that electronic mail refers to both email messages and any messages that may be delivered through the College Parent Portal (SEQTA Engage).*

## General Electronic Mail Guidelines for Family Communication

Electronic mail may be a fast and convenient way for families to send messages, but this may not be the case for many of our teachers. Some teachers read their electronic mail messages in the morning before College, some read them at the end of the day, and some read them during the College day. Many teachers prefer to use the phone to speak directly to families.

For these reasons, please be aware that if families choose to send an electronic mail message to a member of our professional staff, they may not receive an immediate reply. In fact, an electronic mail reply may not be received at all, since the staff members will determine how best to contact you: by electronic mail, phone, or to schedule a personal conference.

Specifically, whilst families may send an electronic message to a teacher at a time that is convenient for them, it is unreasonable to expect a reply outside of normal business hours (8.15 am to 4.30 pm Monday to Friday). Teachers will endeavour to read and acknowledge the message within two business days. Please also be aware that part-time staff members may take longer to respond to emails based on their hours of work.

The College maintains mail accounts for teachers to facilitate internal system-wide staff communication and as a tool for family/teacher communication. The College reserves the right to block or filter email messages to staff that are not directly related to College business or to the College's educational mission. ***Emails containing threatening or offensive language will not be responded to and further action will be taken.***

### When using electronic mail:

1. Only authorised electronic mail addresses will be used by St Columba's College staff to communicate with families.
2. Please send only non-vital messages via this medium. For example, do not use electronic mail to inform a teacher that a student is to wait for a caregiver at the office after school or meet you somewhere when the day ends. A teacher may not have time to read the message in a timely fashion. Instead, please contact College Reception, to be sure the message is received and clearly understood.
3. A student's academic/learning progress is best addressed through a telephone conversation or by scheduling a personal conference with the student's teacher. Using electronic mail to discuss these matters is not appropriate.
4. When agreed between the teacher and the parent/legal guardian (following face to face or phone conversation) an electronic message may be used as a form of regular communication about a student's day at College.
5. Please remember that electronic mail is not necessarily confidential and can be subject to FOI (Freedom of Information) regulations. Confidential information should be conveyed by phone or personal contact.
6. Caregivers are asked to identify themselves in the subject line of the electronic mail message and, if appropriate, the name of the student.
7. For all medical or health concerns, please contact College Reception.
8. Please keep all contacts professional. Jokes, amusing or special stories, chain letters, or commercial solicitations are inappropriate and reduce valuable teaching time.

### For Students

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Student Digital Citizenship Expectations.

Students should not expect teachers to be "on call" for email communication outside of the stated times of 8.15 am and 4.30 pm. While some teachers will communicate with students outside of these times, that is their preference, and not an expectation of the College.

Students are expected to be organised and well-planned to minimise the "last-minute" questions that could arise from leaving study and preparation to the last minute.

Students should only communicate with College staff members using the electronic means provided by the College, that is, the College provided email address, and/or SEQTA.

#### APPROVAL AND REVIEW

<b>Date of Approval:</b>	December 2022
<b>Approval Authority:</b>	College Leadership Team
<b>Delegated Contact Person:</b>	Principal
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	December 2023 (with the Consultative Committee)