**Alderley Edge Community Primary School**

**School Email Policy**

In recent years communications have shifted quite dramatically from pen and paper to email; with email becoming the preferred and predominant mode of communication.

Email provides us with a quick, cheap and easy means of communication. As a result it is used for such a wide range of communications, it has also become increasingly difficult to distinguish between formal and informal communications.

The ease of communication via email has many advantages but these are proving to have ever diminishing returns, as the expectation for almost instantaneous reply, in a well-informed, considered and timely manner appears to be on the increase, with complaints following when this has not been the case.

As a school our first priority is to deliver high quality teaching and learning. Therefore we ask that communication with teachers is directed via the school office admin@aecps.org in the first instance so that the teachers are not distracted by emails during the school day. Often emails sent to teachers can be dealt with by other staff such as administrators or senior managers who may have more flexibility in their working day.

Teachers cannot and are not expected to monitor and manage their inbox during lessons or at other times in the day, when they should be planning and preparing for lessons, assessing work or carrying out school duties, such as attending training.

The school (and parents) expect teachers to be fully prepared, focused and engaged with the children and supporting their learning.

That being said, whilst administration staff, support staff and senior leaders may be able to access emails more routinely, their primary function is to support teachers and children. The school office is an exceptionally busy environment and no one is employed purely to respond to emails. Therefore, replies to emails cannot always be done immediately.

The following outlines the school policy with regard to email communication between home and school.

**Guidelines**

All communication must respect the dignity of the recipient. Emails include those from outsider our organisation as well as internal.

***Emails from outside the organisation***

1. Within 48 hours - receipt of an email will be acknowledged (during term time but not over a weekend, the school holidays or INSET days).

1. Within 5 working days - provide a response to the email by telephone or in writing (including an email). This may include informing the sender that more time is required to provide a full response. If this is the case staff should indicate a timeframe in which a response should be expected.

1. If a member of staff is not able to deal with the email directly then they will pass it on to the most appropriate person and inform the sender that they have done so.

1. Staff will not be expected to monitor or respond to emails out of their normal working hours (including weekends, published school holidays and INSET days). Whilst people compose emails at all sorts of hours to suit their own needs we would ask that emails are not normally sent outside of the school working day (8:00am – 4:00pm). Many of our staff do not work full time and there is no compunction for them to check or respond to emails during their non-working days.

1. Mobile phones and other electronic devices that enable staff to access their school emails when away from school can make it difficult to ‘ignore’ a message from a parent or other professional, leading to unnecessary worry and anxiety on the part of the staff. The school policy is to avoid using personal devices at home for emails. Our expectation is that all staff refrain from having work emails on their personal devices or computers. This is to ease the pressure on staff feeling a constant pressure to reply to emails.

1. Whilst this is rare, if a member of staff receives an email which is of an aggressive tone, sets unreasonable demands or could otherwise be interpreted as harassing, they will refer this to the Head Teacher in the school, who will decide if consideration needs to be given to dealing with further communication under the school’s policy.

***Emails from inside the organisation***

1. Within 24 hours - receipt of an email will be acknowledged (during term time but not over a weekend or the school holidays).

1. Within 3 working days - provide a response to the email by telephone or in writing (including an email). This may include informing the sender that more time is required to provide a full response. If this is the case staff should indicate a timeframe in which a response should be expected.

1. If a member of staff is not able to deal with the email directly then they will pass it on to the most appropriate person and inform the sender that they have done so.

1. Staff will not be expected to monitor or respond to emails out of their normal working hours (including weekends, published school holidays and INSET days). Whilst people compose emails at all sorts of hours to suit their own needs we would ask that emails are not normally sent outside of a member of the school working day (8:00am – 4:00pm). Many of our staff do not work full time and there is no compunction for them to check or respond to emails during their non-working days.

1. Mobile phones and other electronic devices that enable staff to access their school emails when away from school can make it difficult to ‘ignore’ a message from a parent, leading to unnecessary worry and anxiety on the part of the staff. The school policy is to avoid using personal devices at home for emails. Our expectation is that all staff refrain from having work emails on their personal devices or computers. This is to ease the pressure on staff feeling a constant pressure to reply to emails.

1. Whilst this is rare, if a member of staff receives an email which is of an aggressive tone from a colleague, sets unreasonable demands or could otherwise be interpreted as harassing, they will refer this to the Head Teacher in the school, who will decide if consideration needs to be given to dealing with further communication under the school’s Code of Conduct policy.

**Finally**

For urgent communications, contact should be made via the school office using email (admin@aecps.org) and be marked accordingly so the office staff are aware of its importance. There is also an option to phone school directly on 01625 704510.

**Date: January 2022**

**Review Date: September 2024**

**(or to meet new legislation and practices)**