

SCVUSD No.35 Email Professional Practice

A. Respond Within 24 hours

It is important to acknowledge receipt of an email within 24 hours. If you require more time, let the sender know you're reviewing the email and when you will get back to that person.

Responses can be quite short. Examples: "thank you," "got it," "will get back to you when I've been able to give it more thought." Finally, this includes scheduling requests through Google Calendar. It is important to respond in a timely manner whether you can, cannot or "maybe" attend an event to which you are invited.

B. Allow Time to Respond

When requesting a response or action, provide at least 24 hours advance notice. This is particularly applicable when sending email announcements regarding release times, lists of students to be released, and other school-wide announcements.

C. Maintain a Professional Tone

When writing an email, maintain a professional tone. Be crisp, concise and focused in your delivery. Every word matters. Brevity is best – keep the length to 1, maybe 2, paragraphs. If more are needed, consider a face-to-face discussion rather than email. Finally, keep in mind that email is intended for communication, not documentation.

D. Subject Line

Include a descriptive, concise subject line. Do not leave this blank.

In addition, before sending a scanned document directly from a scanner, change the subject line to reflect the document title rather than the scanned document number. Best practice: first send the scanned document to yourself, rename the document, and send attachment in a separate email with a clear subject.

E. Use Spell-check

F. Work Products

Assume the messages you send and receive are permanent and public. If confidentiality and privacy are important, it may be advisable and more appropriate to use other communication vehicles, such as phone or inter-office/US mail.

G. Avoid sarcasm

Avoid sending an email when emotional or angry. Sit on it for a couple of hours giving you time to reflect and calm down. Avoid the use of emoticons. Never use ALL CAPS, or all lower case letters.

H. Greeting

Start with a greeting (Hi, Hello, Good Morning, etc.) and end with a closing (Thanks; Thank you; I appreciate your time; until then; best wishes, etc.). If sending to more than one person and an action is requested of one or more, be specific in the greeting as to whom the action is requested. Provide the name of the person(s) to whom you are asking a specific response.

I. Signature

Include a signature with your name, position, phone extension (if applicable), and District disclaimer (required, per district legal counsel), which is:

NOTICE: This e-mail (and any attachments) may contain PRIVILEGED OR

CONFIDENTIAL information and is intended only for the use of the specific individual(s) to whom it is addressed. It may contain information that is privileged and confidential under state and federal law. This information may be used or disclosed only in accordance with law, and you may be subject to penalties under law for improper use or further disclosure of the information in this e-mail and its attachments. If you have received this e-mail in error, please immediately notify the person named above by reply e-mail, and then delete the original e-mail. Thank you.

J. Extended Discussions

Never try to resolve a conflict with email. Back and forth emailing is almost guaranteed to make the situation worse. If you find yourself replying for the third or fourth time, pick up the phone, walk down the hall, or set up a time to talk.

K. Reply All

Think twice before hitting "reply all." Ask yourself, "Do all of these other people really need to read my reply?" If not, reply only to the original writer.

L. Blind Copying

If you find that you are blind copying in order to hide something, then don't blind copy. There are few instances in a transparent culture to use the blind copy.

Best practice to use Bcc when sending an email is if you are sending something to a lot of people who do not necessarily know each other, do not already have everyone's contact information, or who may not want to participate in a robust email discussion. As a rule of thumb, if the number of recipients exceeds 30, then you should Bcc.

M. Communicating with Governing Board Members

Do not initiate emails with SCVUSD Governing Board Members. To avoid creating an environment in which the Open Meeting Law may be violated, all communication with governing board members is to be done through the Superintendent's office. Send all communication up the chain of command to the Superintendent.

N. Clean out your Inbox constantly: OHIO

When you open an email, you have four options: Read enough of it to realize that you do not need to read it, read and act right away, read it and act later, or read it later (worth reading but not urgent and too long to read at the moment). Choose among those options, with a strong bias toward the first two. Remember OHIO acronym: Only Hold it Once.