Making effective use of email between CSF departmental staff and schools

Keep it short!

It's easier to handle short concise messages. Do you have to use attachments? They can 'clog up' your recipients' mail boxes.

Confidential?

Do not use email for confidential material. Email across the Internet is not secure and it is so easy to address a message wrongly.

Urgent!

There's no guarantee that your recipient will treat a message as urgent. For urgent messages perhaps a phone call would be more appropriate?

Business or Personal?

The CSF and school email systems are provided for business use. Personal messages would overload them with inappropriate material.

Why have I been sent a copy of this?

Consider who needs to be sent copies of your messages. Much time can be wasted on email that has little relevance to the reader. Make it clear why colleagues have been "copied".

Keep a record

It's everyone's responsibility to ensure that important communications are stored/archived for future reference.

Avoid stress – follow the guidelines!

To help ensure a consistently high standard please report any instances of poor email practice to CSF Communications (csf.communications@hertscc.gov.uk).

Thanks for your answer but what was my question?

It's usually best to reply to messages "with history" as this will remind recipients of their original message to which you are now responding.

Nice style!

It's usually best to use in email a style and language similar to that you would use in letters. This helps to maintain a consistent standard and reduces misinterpretation.

Viruses!

It's best not to pass on messages about viruses. They are mostly hoaxes, 'clog up' mailboxes and both the CSF and school email systems are, in any case, well protected.

Questions Questions ....

Messages on multiple subjects that require multiple responses can be difficult to deal with. Short, single issue messages, are usually friendlier for your recipients.

Speedy replies

Try to respond to email messages within 5 days. Where that isn't possible send an acknowledgement, or use "Autoreply", with an indication of when a full response will be made.

What's this one all about?

Use the "Subject" line to summarise clearly the content of your message and if an urgent response would be appreciated. Get to the point of your message as quickly as possible.

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Further guidance for CSF departmental staff

Please DO …

- monitor your team/unit generic email account on a daily basis. These accounts allow schools to make contact quickly without knowing individual names. They also guarantee that messages are dealt with during staff absence. Messages arriving at the generic account should then be forwarded to the most appropriate officer.

- use the school's 'Head' email address for items that are for the headteacher's eyes only. For ALL other messages use the school's 'Admin' email address.

- notify Chris Seviour (chris.seviour@hertscc.gov.uk) of any schools appearing to 'struggle' with email and for whom some support might be appropriate.

Please DO NOT …

- attempt to use the group email lists within Lotus Notes.   The weekly Bulletin remains the way in which CSF will communicate with all schools and groups of schools. Before using a group list of school email addresses you will require the authorisation of your Assistant Director and this will be granted only in exceptional circumstances.

- use email to transfer printing costs to schools. If schools are likely to need printed copies of bulky documents these should be printed and distributed through the Schools' Post.

- use email to distribute policy documents to schools. These should be published on the Hertfordshire Grid for Learning and schools advised via the weekly Bulletin.