



The use and presence of email has become ubiquitous in both large organizations and the personal lives of individuals. While no longer a new technology, email's exponential growth has resulted in laws, policies and procedures, and social norms being unable to keep pace. With that, this document considers legal issues and day-to-day workflow challenges that are specific to educators to provide guidance regarding the use of email.

Email and Chat basics

1. Email (Gmail) should never be considered completely secure as email messages, particularly when sent to or from addresses outside @ccsd21.org, will travel unencrypted over the Internet. Emails are always potentially transparent to someone on the Internet unless specifically encrypted, which is very rare. Email and chat messages to and from School District 21 are archived as required by law.
2. Email should not replace face-to-face, telephone, or video/voice chat conversations about complex issues. Email is best used for short, fact-based sharing of information rather than for discussions or decision-making.
3. When chat (Google Hangouts) can be used in place of email to receive quick answers to simple fact-based questions or to provide one way information, chat is preferable. This prevents unnecessary messages from filling a user's inbox.
4. Emails should always include a subject line that clearly identifies the topic of the email. Typically, each specific topic should receive its own email. This allows email threads to stay "on-topic" when individuals respond to an email.
5. Emails should only be sent to those individuals who need to receive the email. The *TO* field on the email should be used to send the email to individuals who directly need the information contained in the email. The *CC* field on an email should simply be used to include individuals who need to be informed without a response from those individuals. The *BCC* field should be used judiciously, if at all.
6. When an email is sent to an entire group, such as a school staff, care should be taken with sending a reply. Replies to the entire group are discouraged. Oftentimes, forwarding the email to specific group members with additional questions or insights is preferred.
7. All CCSD21 staff members should include the following items in their email signature. No other items should be included in an email signature.
 - Full name, Title/Position
 - School using the full school name
 - School phone number (main number) or direct line (if appropriate) (Either ###.###.#### or ###-###-####)
 - School website address

Emailing about students

8. When possible, emails about students are discouraged.
9. When emailing about a student, the use of the student's name, and including his or her full name somewhere in the email's subject or body, is necessary. The use of the initials rather than the name should not be done. In either case, the email is part of the "student record", and the use of initials rather than a name makes it difficult or impossible to identify with certainty that the email is about a particular student.

Emailing with parents

10. The collection of large groups of parent emails should be done via the Student Information Form at the beginning of each school year and entered into the student information system (PowerSchool) by the office staff.
11. When emailing large groups of parents, it is preferable to use a District-provided resource, such as the email functionality of the PowerTeacher Gradebook. If composing an email directly from the email client to a group of parents, the parent emails should be masked by placing them all in the *BCC* field of the email. A staff member's email address can be placed in the *TO* field of the email.