

# Home & School Associations and Email – Guidelines

Email has become the communication tool of choice for many individuals and Home & School Associations. As this form of communication is public, easily distributed and easily copied, it is inherently useful and perilous. OFHSA has produced this tip sheet to provide you with general guidelines to make your use of email constructive, effective and polite. Please also refer to OFHSA's tip sheet on *Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL): H&S and the CASL*. Emails can be *CEM's (Commercial Electronic Messages)*.

## Use discretion about when to use email

- ❖ If you wish the conversation to be private, have a face-to-face or use phone.
- ❖ To avoid misunderstandings of content or tone, have a face-to-face or use phone.
- ❖ Do not use email to deliberate or think aloud. It is difficult to moderate or control the direction of discussions held via email. Have a meeting.

## The subject line and body of the email

- ❖ Clear subject lines allow the reader to know what to expect and help with later searches.
- ❖ Subject lines should distinguish one email from another.
- ❖ Keep to one subject per email. This helps to keep the chain of messages easier to manage and search.
- ❖ Make your message concise. If it is too long for an email, consider another form of communication.
- ❖ Before sending, check for clarity: Does the message say what you wanted it to? Is there humour or comments which may be easily misinterpreted?
- ❖ Check spelling and grammar. Do not rely on spell check.
- ❖ Use a privacy disclaimer.
- ❖ Include your contact information.
- ❖ Include an unsubscribe mechanism if part of a distribution list.

## Use of cc and bcc

- ❖ Copy only those people who really need to be copied on a message. Don't clog the Inbox of others thinking 'they can delete it if they don't want it'.
- ❖ When communicating with a large group (all association members), use the bcc line to keep email addresses private.
- ❖ When forwarding an email, protect the names and addresses of previous recipients by cutting them from the message. Only the text of the message should be forwarded.

## Some things to consider

- ❖ Do not forward messages that are inflammatory, meant to be private, or will provoke a harmful response.
- ❖ Do not send an email when you are feeling upset or angry. Step away from the computer, set down the mobile phone, go for a walk....just take a break. Read and re-read the email. Consider the consequences of sending: an email is a permanent recording.

*Reference: Michaluk, D., (2013). Healthy Email Use for Corporations: Ten Tips. The Ontario Electrical Contractor, Spring 2013. Retrieved from [www.ecao.org/pub\\_news.asp](http://www.ecao.org/pub_news.asp)*

