

# Communication Policy

Heritage Christian Online School (HCOS) will make every effort to meet the following protocols in their communication to parents and students as well as between other HCOS teachers, staff and administration:

Communicate in a positive, polite and supportive manner, always keeping in mind the Christian nature of our school, its teachers, staff and families.

1. In cases where the communication may reflect frustration or conflict then the HCOS teacher or staff are advised to include their administration in the communication.
2. This does not preclude communication that may be corrective in nature as a teacher often needs to correct a student. It does mean that such communication will be done respectfully and with positive reinforcement.

The school's preference for communication is first email, then phone.

3. It should be noted that this is a preference only. If at any time a parent or student cannot make contact via email for technological reasons or for the necessity of clarity that comes with direct voice-to-voice communication, the HCOS teacher or staff will indicate an appropriate time to speak on the telephone. If the teacher or staff cannot be reached directly then contact will be arranged through the HCOS office.
4. All HCOS teachers and staff are responsible to manage their email in an organized fashion within their email program.
5. All HCOS teachers and staff will confine their email communication to their onlineschool.ca email address and not use private email addresses for school business. If confidentiality is an issue then the preferred mode of communication should be made through phone contact, not email.

A one to two day turn around in all communication is expected, with the exception of weekends and holidays where the time line will extend.

6. All teachers, staff and administration must check their email daily with exception of weekends and holidays.
7. All teachers, staff and administration are expected to make timely responses during standard business hours.
8. HCOS teachers, staff, parents and students should avoid the use of urgent markers in email (Importance: High!) unless the issue is truly urgent or time sensitive.
9. A returned message does not mean that the issue is necessarily resolved within the timeline; it only means that communication has been returned. In the cases of marking papers, sending materials, and resolving tech support, the communication will try to specify projected time lines for resolution. In the case of extended time away from school responsibilities for travel, conferences, or health issues the teacher or staff person will communicate to both the HCOS administration first for authorization and then their families and students.
10. It is understood that in the case of emergencies grace will be extended to teachers and staff and administration will notify families of a plan for communication.

In the case where communication is not being followed through in a timely manner as outlined in the previous points the parent or student should notify the HCOS office that they have not had a timely communication from their teacher.

11. Initially this contact should be for the purposes of re-establishing communication and resolving the particular communication need.
12. If the communication issue is not resolved satisfactorily then school leadership should be contacted.

The online courses have forums associated with each class. These are monitored by the teacher and the same rules apply to these forums as per an email.

13. Teachers and staff should set up each forum so that they receive email notification when a student makes a post.
14. Teachers are responsible to check their students' contributions to the forum and ensure that they meet the appropriate communication standards as outlined at the beginning of this document.

Chat-room/forum protocols should also fit within the guidelines stated at the beginning of this document. The teacher is responsible to monitor communication within their group discussion.

15. Online class teachers will communicate via Zoom/Skype with their students during posted office hours to answer questions and give instruction or special help.
16. If the teacher can't make the posted office hours, they will communicate to the class when the rescheduled time will be. They will also post any news items within their course menu.

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