Email Etiquette

Appropriate Uses for Email:

- Scheduling and confirming appointments and meetings
- When ensuring timely communication
- Conveying accurate information, data, and attachments to all that needs to know
- Supporting flexible work arrangements (e.g. telecommuting)
- When asking for broad input – allowing people to reflect Before responding to a query

Appropriate Email Etiquette:

- Be concise. Make the subject line descriptive so recipient can prioritize. Start with a greeting and end with a closing including signature, contact details (Greetings; Hello; Thank you; Best Wishes, etc.).

- Mark only to relevant people who need to take action on the mail. Copy using “CC” to those whom the mail is “information only”.

- Use blind carbon copy (Bcc) when you need to send out a mass email, not everyone needs to know all the recipients.

- Avoid longer messages as recipient is less likely to read them carefully. Be sure to underline or bold important message and/or action items.

- Respond in a timely manner (24 hrs. if possible), if you require more time, respond with when you can get back to them.

- Check for confidential information before forwarding.

Inappropriate Uses for Email:

- In place of staff meetings, one-on-ones or avoidance of face-to-face interactions
- Calling out or criticizing someone in a mass email
- Forwarding without consent (explicit or implicit)
- Addressing a conflict instead of face-to-face interaction
- To discuss controversial or confidential topics- there is no expectation of privacy in emails

Inappropriate Email Etiquette:

- Emailing when angry or emotional: if needed, take a few deep breaths and wait on the response for 24hrs.

- Never try to resolve conflict via email. Back and forth email discussions over a situation can make it worse. Pick up the phone or set up a time to talk in person.

- Over-use of priority flags on emails: Carefully prioritize your requests. If too many are marked priority the recipient may become overwhelmed.

- Unnecessary uses of reply-all: Use the “reply-all” only when it is relevant to everyone. If not, reply only to the original writer. Ask yourself, “Do all these other people need to hear my reply?”

- Watch Your Tone: without body language and tone it can be mistaken for rudeness.

- Typing in ALL CAPS can be read as shouting, aggressive or too assertive. Use exclamation points and emojis sparingly.

Gentle reminder: Stop before sending an emotionally charged email. Step away to pause/breathe then proofread. What you write could show up on the front page of tomorrow’s news.