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A teacher needs to follow certain rules of email etiquette for the following reasons: Professionalism: By using proper email language you will convey a professional image. Confidentiality: When following protocol guidelines, teachers are able to refrain from divulging personal student data Efficiency: Emails that are to the point are much more effective than poorly worded emails. Here are some rules of email etiquette: 1. Be concise and to the point. Do not make an e-mail longer than it needs to be. Remember that reading an e-mail is harder than reading printed communications and a long e-mail can be very discouraging to read. 2. Answer all questions and pre-empt further questions. An email reply must answer all questions, while pre-empting further questions - If you do not answer all the questions in the original email, you will receive further emails regarding the unanswered questions, which will not only waste your time and the other person's time but also cause considerable frustration. Moreover, if you are able to pre-empt relevant questions, people will be grateful and impressed with your efficient and thoughtful responses. 3. Use proper spelling, grammar and punctuation. This is important because improper spelling, grammar and punctuation gives a bad impression. It is also important to conveying a message properly. Emails with no full stops or commas are difficult to read and can sometimes even change the meaning of the text. 4. Use appropriate spacing and emphasis. Sending from a screen is more difficult than reading from paper, the structure and layout is very important. Use short paragraphs and blank lines between each paragraph. When making points, number them or mark each point as separate to keep the overview. Remember that if you use the editing features available in your email program they might not show up in all of your recipients' programs so don't rely on colors, bold, italics, etc for emphasis. 5. Do not overuse the high priority option. The high priority option will lose its function when you really need it if it is over-used. Moreover, even if a mail has high priority, your message could come across as aggressive if you flag it as 'high priority'. Use this sparingly. 6. Do not use CAPITALS for an entire email. IF YOU WRITE IN CAPITALS IT SEEMS AS IF YOU ARE SHOUTING. At the very most, capitals can be used to emphasize one word, but more than that is inappropriate. 7. Don't leave out the message thread. When you reply to an email, you should include the original mail in your reply, in other words click 'Reply', instead of 'New Mail'. Your email program probably also has an option of including the original message (if needed, you might ask your local tech support to set this for you). Using this option makes things much easier for the reader, especially if you include a new recipient (CC) on a reply. The recipient(s) will be able to follow the discussion much more efficiently. 8. Read the email before you send it. A lot of people don't bother to read an email before they send it out, as can be seen from the many spelling and grammar mistakes contained in emails. Apart from this, reading your email through the eyes of the recipient will help you send a more effective message and avoid misunderstandings. Before pressing send, think about how the message will "feel" for your recipient - it is never recommended to make jokes or using sarcasm. It's very easy for email messages to be misinterpreted because of incorrect tone. 9. Do not use CC if sending to a mailing list. When sending an email to a large number of people, some people place all the email addresses in the To field. There are two drawbacks to this practice: (1) the recipient knows that you have sent the same message to a large number of recipients, and (2) you are sharing and publicizing someone else's email address without their permission. One way to get around this is to place all addresses in the Bcc field. 10. Take care with abbreviations and emoticons. In formal emails, try not to use abbreviations such as BTW (by the way) and LOL (laugh out loud). The recipient might not be aware of the abbreviations and these are generally not appropriate in formal communication. The same goes for emoticons, such as the "smiley". If you are not sure whether your recipient knows what it means, it is better not to use it. Do you have any more rules on email etiquette to add to these ten? At the beginning of the school year, I tend to focus my attention on meaningful and practical writing assignments. I find this approach really helps me get an overall sense of who my students are as learners, and as people. This is why I love to kick off the school year by teaching email etiquette!! I believe that learning is most meaningful when it connects to the world outside school. Many middle and high school students haven't yet mastered the art of sending an email, but they are highly motivated to learn! After all, they know that email etiquette is a skill they will carry with them for the rest of their lives. Here's how I approach teaching email etiquette in the middle and high school space - with lots of lessons, engaging activities, practice tasks, and (of course!) a final assignment! I like to begin this writing unit by not only explaining what email etiquette is, but why it is important! This can be a great opportunity for students to brainstorm. I ask them how they think learning about email etiquette could help them in their academic or professional lives. Usually, the responses fit into the following themes: People tend to use digital communication regularly Proper etiquette can lead to fewer misunderstandings A polite email can create a good first impression Email etiquette conveys professionalism Next, I bring the discussion around to the basic functions of email. Here, I like to present a list of when emails should (and should not!) be used. I explain that emails are the best method of communication when making a non-urgent request, attaching a file or document, or asking for clarification. They can also be used as a tool to check in with a person about scheduled plans or an upcoming meeting. I also remind students that emails should not be used when information can easily be found elsewhere, or when a matter is truly urgent. Sometimes, it can be fun to do a little role-playing during this part of the lesson! Students could act out situations when sending an email would be inappropriate (for example, when they are feeling angry or upset, or when the recipient is only a few steps away!). Before we get into the nitty-gritty of actually composing an email, I find it helpful to review basic email terminology and mechanics. I like to begin the email etiquette lesson with a quick discussion about email addresses and professionalism. Sometimes, I share some funny fictional email addresses (spaghettimonster@gmail.com) alongside some more serious ones (first.lastname@gmail.com) to help explain how to choose an appropriate email address. If time permits, this is also a natural opportunity to talk about how other people may be included in an email, and to explain the To, CC and BCC fields. Depending on who your learning goals are for this lesson, you might also want to spend some time talking about email attachments (photos, PDFs, and other documents), appropriate fonts, and overall notes on style and tone. The best piece of advice I share with students is to leave the "To" field blank until the email is ready to send. This way, the recipient only sees the email the writer wants them to see (and not one that was mistakenly sent too soon!) In this segment of the email etiquette lesson, it's time to review the "anatomy" of an email! First, I review the greeting. This is another chance to discuss professionalism and tone, and for students to brainstorm their own friendly salutations. Next, we go over the introduction. I explain that an introduction may or may not be necessary, depending on the context of the email, and whether the recipient knows the sender already! After the introduction, we move on to the email body itself. Students should understand that this is the "why" of the email - in other words, the purpose of the message itself. I find students tend to benefit from a real-world example, so I like to ask them to imagine they are emailing their teacher. In this example, they might wish to include some specific information, such as: Why are they sending the email What actions they have already taken to address the issue they are writing about Next steps (what they currently need support with or would like their teacher to do) Finally, the closing provides another opportunity for teaching email etiquette. I find students often enthusiastically brainstorm different ways to "sign off" the email! To reinforce the different email anatomy sections, the end of the lesson is the perfect time to distribute a handout that summarizes email writing tips, as well as how to create appropriate subject lines. After the previous email etiquette lesson, it's time to get your middle schoolers up and moving! I love using collaborative tasks to reinforce my teaching about email etiquette. These activities allow students to talk through their ideas, and to demonstrate their understanding of tricky concepts, like tone. Working in pairs or small groups, students refer to two different handouts. One is a graphic organizer, divided into two columns ("Ready to Send" and "Not Ready to Send"). The other contains several examples of sentences from various emails. Students must work together to cut each sentence out and categorize it into the appropriate column. For an engaging bonus, each of the sentences is also labelled with a capital letter. If the sentences are placed in the correct columns, students should be able to unscramble the letters to reveal two mystery words related to email! Next, I like to engage students in an email editing task. The one I use is an interactive activity students can complete alone, or in their pairs or small groups. To begin, distribute a sample email that contains style and tone errors (as well as some spelling and grammar mistakes, and even an emoji or two!). Using colored pencils or highlighters, students must identify the errors in the message, and then make revisions in the margins of the handout to ensure the email is ready to send! Once everyone in the class has finished the task, I reveal the errors, as well as comments on the various sections of the email that need to be improved. I sometimes like to use this task as an exit slip or self-check to determine if my students need any further email etiquette review lessons before moving on. An email analysis activity is another way to incorporate movement while teaching email etiquette! I like to set this learning task up as six numbered stations around my classroom. Students can circulate through the stations in any order they choose, and may work alone or collaboratively on this activity. First, I print multiple copies of each email and ensure they are in the correct stations. Then, I give each student (or group, if they are working together) a graphic organizer, where they can track their thoughts on each email. From here, they can evaluate whether the email is ready to send, and offer their own suggestions for improvements that can be made. I find an email rewrite task really helps students who get "stuck" with writing tasks. For this activity, I prefer that students work independently (so I can check on their progress and overall understanding). Start by distributing a pre-written email from a student to a teacher - in the example I use, the tone is far too casual! Once my class has identified the main issues with the email (tone, word choice, and capitalization, and grammar errors), I invite them to rewrite the email more effectively. This can be the push some students need to really demonstrate understanding of email etiquette! Finally, students can show off what they know by writing their own email. This final writing task can be approached in a few different ways. If it's the beginning of the school year and I don't know my students very well yet, sometimes I give them the task of sending me an email to provide specific information about themselves as learners. This is also a great opportunity for them to ask any questions about ELA class. Alternatively, I provide students with a selection of topic prompts. These can be presented in a variety of ways. Students could draw prompts out of a hat, choose them from a list, or receive one at random! They can refer back to their email writing checklist as they put their email etiquette lessons to the test! There you go! I hope you have a great time teaching email etiquette in your classroom, and that your students have fun putting their learning into practice! Looking for more great back-to-school activities? Check out my post on 5 Back to School Essentials for Middle School ELA. Related When I first started teaching, I remember receiving the advice (more than once!) to avoid the teachers' lounge. They would tell me to stay away because it was a negative environment where people only go to complain. Of course, being a new teacher, I just smiled and nodded, but I always felt that was unfair advice to give someone starting out. If all of the positive and optimistic teachers are told to stay out of the lounge, of course, it is going to be a negative place! Maya Angelou said that "What you're supposed to do when you don't like a thing is change it," and I think this is true! If you want the teachers' lounge to be a positive space, you first have to encourage the positive staff members to go there. You also have to create a space for teachers that promotes collaboration, inspiration, celebration, and humor! Below you will find 10 ideas to make your teachers' lounge a more positive space. 1. Set up a Staff Kudos Board! Once had a principal who left notes of appreciation (and a small treat) in the teachers' mailboxes for little things she had noticed teachers doing (staying late at school working, helping out at an after-school event, giving extra help at lunch, etc.). It was such a small gesture, but it had a dramatic impact on the morale of the staff. Bring this kind of positivity into your teachers' lounge by setting up a Staff Kudos Board where staff members can give kudos to their colleagues to congratulate, support, or show appreciation. 2. Teacher Quotes Brighten up your teachers' lounge with posters that have inspirational and humorous quotes related to teaching. You can also pick up some cheap frames from a dollar store to make the posters really pop (see the picture below with frames that were \$3.00 each!). Print and laminate teacher quote bookmarks to have available in the staff room for teachers to take as a gift! You just need to make a little paper pocket, stick it up on the wall, and put the bookmarks in it for teachers to grab! 3. Birthday Celebrations Celebrate staff birthdays by setting up a birthday bulletin board display in your teachers' lounge. In each of the months, have a picture of the staff member so people can easily see whose birthday is that month! 4. Teacher Of The Month Celebrate staff members by setting up a Teacher of the Month bulletin board display in your lounge. Put a picture of the staff member up and fill out this sheet with information on why this teacher was selected, what words describe them, and a funny memory. Also included is a space for a colleague and a student to write a quote about the teacher! At the end of the month, laminate the sheet and give it to the teacher to keep. 5. Monthly Potlucks In my experience, yummy food always brings out the best in people. Make the last Friday of every month (or every second month) the teachers' lounge! Put out a potluck sign-up sheet on the Monday before the potluck. Download these free potluck forms by clicking here. 6. Jokes Robert Orben said, "If you can laugh together, you can work together." It is so true that laughter can transform the atmosphere of a teachers' lounge and bring staff members closer. To encourage a little laughter, have a bulletin board dedicated to all things funny. You can print out teacher memes, education-related comic strips, or even have a cheesy joke of the week display. 7. Memory Board One way to get positive discussions going in your staffroom is to create a memory board where pictures are posted of teachers and school events from years past. This allows staff to reminisce about good times and even share a few laughs about old hair or fashion styles. You might also want to put up current pictures so newer staff members are also included. Allow teachers to add pictures to the board throughout the year! 8. Share Teaching Ideas Set up an area in your staffroom where teachers can share teaching ideas, websites, articles, lesson ideas, videos, or books with their fellow colleagues. I use the title Teaching Tidbits and leave cards where teachers can jot down their suggestions and post them. 9. Wall Calendar Have a big calendar on the wall where teachers can add information about upcoming school or social events that teachers are invited to attend. This will make staff members feel like a community and keep everyone in the loop on what is going on and what is coming up! 10. Create an Atmosphere Setting up a cozy and warm atmosphere can help change the tone of a staffroom. This one can be trickier because it does require some money (which we all know is not always at our disposal), but if you can find some cash in the budget, here are a few ways that you can easily spruce up your lounge. Add a fresh coat of paint (consider choosing a warm color or painting one wall with a pop of color). Put center pieces or runners on the staffroom tables). Add comfortable/flexible seating (if you can't afford bigger items, consider adding comfy pillows to existing seating). Have plants that are easy to keep alive. If possible, avoid fluorescent lighting in favor of lamps with a warmer light. Let's make the teachers' lounge a place that you can proudly recommend to new teachers as a place of collaboration, positivity, and support. Grab the Teachers' Lounge Decor Bundle by clicking here. For other practical teaching tips and ready-to-use resources, click here! Related Mrs. Kinsley, Why didn't you put in my late work yet? I turned in 7th hour today, and my dad is on my case. I'm going to be grounded all weekend if you don't put it in asap. Did you lose it? Pete! [Insert sign of frustration.] Emails like these are all too common at the secondary level. I used to get upset after reading one. I'd think, The nerve! How disrespectful. Stewing over it got me even more worked up. 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