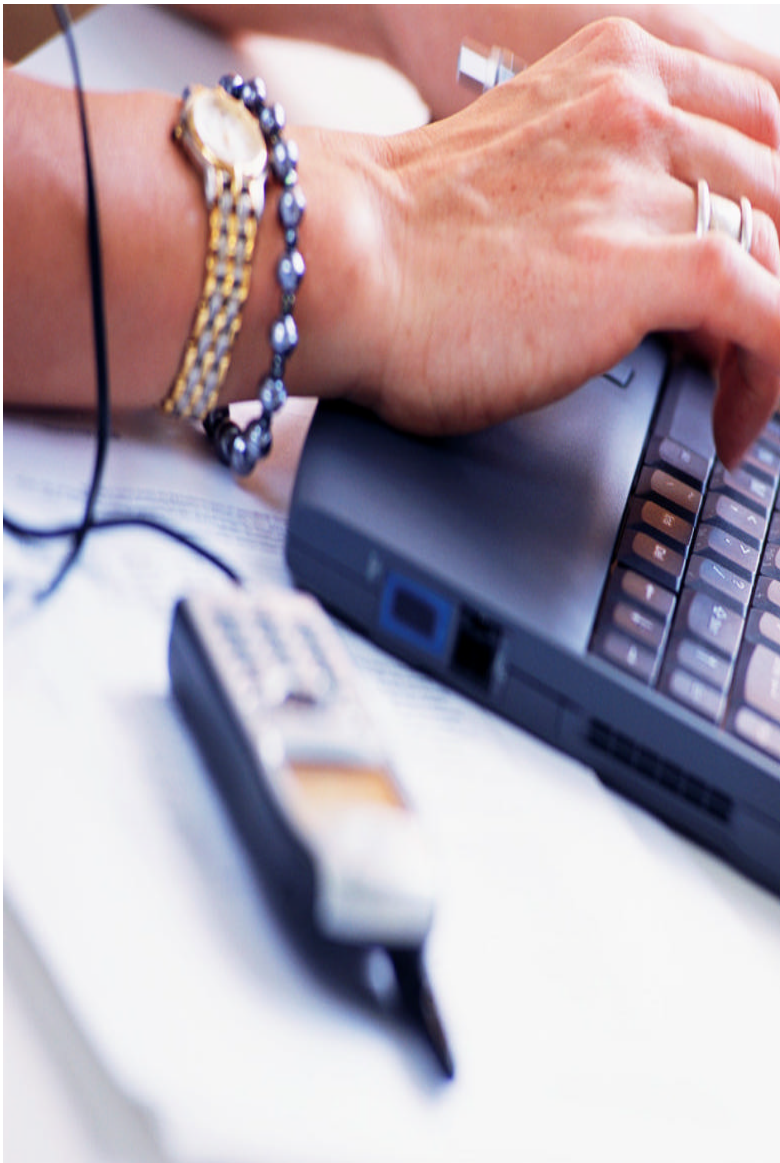




WETASKIWIN REGIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools

Communication Procedures Handbook



Wetaskiwin Regional
Public Schools

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INTRODUCTION

There are currently four ways to contact a WRPS site or Division administrator. You can meet face to face or phone the administrator and if they are not available you can leave a message via voicemail or email. Our current practice is that administrators must endeavor to provide a response to any messages left by an employee of WRPS in one (1) business day. That response may be as simple as providing an acknowledgement of the message and provide a time when you will be able to provide a full answer.

If the matter is of an important nature and you require support during the business day you should redirect your telephone call to the site receptionist who will have an appropriate person contact you. This means that all administrators must inform their receptionist of how they can be contacted when they are away from the office or who their designated replacement is while they are away and unable to support. Each site will develop a process that works for their receptionist/s. It is the responsibility of the receptionist or an admin assistant to contact the administrator/designate. The receptionist is not to provide contact information to the caller. This ensures that personal information is not given out inappropriately and is a much more effective way of ensuring that the message is received.

If the matter is considered an emergency and requires immediate support the "Emergency Procedures" will be implemented as described below.

If the matter is urgent but neither important nor an emergency a voicemail message should be left or an email sent and contact should be expected with in one (1) business day.

Finally if an administrator is away and unable to reply to the message within one (1) business day their voice mail and email should provide a message that indicates that they are unavailable and provide directions as to who and/or how their call can be redirected.



E-MAIL PROCEDURES

Writing E-Mail

Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools considers email as an important means of communication and recognizes the importance of proper email content and speedy replies in conveying a professional image and delivering good quality service. Therefore Wetaskiwin Regional Public School Division expects users to adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Writing emails:**
 - Write well-structured emails and use short, descriptive subjects.
 - Wetaskiwin Regional Public School's email style is informal. This means that sentences can be short and to the point. You can start your e-mail with 'Hi', or 'Hello', 'Dear' and the name of the person. Messages can be ended with 'Sincerely', 'Thank you', Regards. The use of Internet abbreviations and characters such as smiley's is not encouraged.
 - Signatures must include your name, job title and organizational name. Please include your web URL. A disclaimer will be added underneath your signature (see Disclaimer)
 - Use the spell check before you send out an email.
 - Do not write emails in capitals.
 - Do not use cc: or bcc: fields unless the cc: or bcc: recipient is aware that you will be copying a mail to him/her and knows what action, if any, to take.
 - Standardize addressing. **To:** line is an action line. If you require a response and action from that individual, ensure that they are listed on this line. **CC:** line is considered an information line. If you have information to share that does not require a response or action. Include that individual on this line. **BCC:** (blind copy) ensure that a message is forwarded confidentially and should be treated as such.
 - If you forward emails, state clearly what action you expect the recipient to take.
 - Only send emails of which the content could be displayed on a public notice board. If they cannot be displayed publicly in their current state, consider rephrasing the email or using other means of communication such as the telephone
 - Only mark emails as important if they really are important.
 - Ensure the use of subject lines. This allows the recipient to more effectively manage incoming messages and prioritize their e-mail.
 - Do not use alternate stationary choices.

Disclaimer

The following disclaimer will be added to each outgoing email: This can be permanently put in place using auto signature.

NOTE: THIS MESSAGE IS INTENDED ONLY FOR THE ADDRESSEE, IT MAY CONTAIN PRIVILEGED OR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.

If you are not the intended recipient of this message, you should not: read it, distribute it, copy it or take any action in reliance on the content of this communication. If you have received this communication in error, please notify us at once by reply E-mail, then permanently delete the original, your reply and destroy any copy or printout.

Replying to E-mail

- Email should be answered in a timely manner that befits the required action, however users must endeavor to answer priority emails within 1 business day
- Priority emails are emails from WRPS employees and partners.
- Do not use the "reply to all" function unless you want to send your reply to the complete list of recipients. This includes all "CC's" and "To" line recipients. Make certain you address your reply to the appropriate recipients only.
- Ensure that out of office replies are in place if you are away for an extended period of time. ie: vacation or LOA. Give other options to the sender in terms of who is handling your responsibilities while you are away. Remember to remove this feature as soon as you return.

Maintenance

- Delete any email messages that you do not need to have a copy of, and set your email client to automatically empty your 'deleted items' on closing.
- The mailbox size is limited and you will be notified by email when you reach the limit.

E-Mail Options

- Use calendars and tasks to schedule appointments and meetings.
- Allow access to your calendars so others can schedule appointments and address staff location.
- Use a single source calendar for access to personnel that schedule boardrooms, in-services, courses etc.

Email is a business communication tool and users are obliged to use this tool in a responsible, effective and lawful manner. Although by its nature email seems to be less formal than other written communication, the same laws apply. Therefore, it is important that users are aware of [Administrative Procedure 140: Technology Acceptable Use](#).

You must have no expectation of privacy in anything you create, store, send or receive on the company's computer system. Your emails can be monitored without prior notification if Wetaskiwin Regional Public School's deems this necessary. If there is evidence that you are not adhering to the Administrative Guidelines the Wetaskiwin Regional Public School's reserves the right to take disciplinary action.

VOICE MAIL PROCEDURES

Wetaskiwin Regional Public School's considers voicemail as an important means of communication and recognizes the importance of proper voicemail content and speedy replies in conveying a professional image and delivering good quality service. Therefore Wetaskiwin Regional Public School's wishes users to adhere to the following guidelines.

Managing Your Personal Mailbox

- When you are at your desk, try to avoid having your calls diverted to voice mail. If callers reach your voice mail every time they call you, you send the message that you are too busy to help them.
- Check your mailbox for messages several times a day.
- Return calls promptly - do not leave callers wondering whether you got their message. All messages from WRPS employees and partners should be returned within one business day.
- Keep your greetings as brief (yet complete) as possible. Remember that you always have the option of reviewing and re-recording your greeting.
- Make your greeting friendly. A positive tone sends the signal that you welcome messages and will return them.
- In your greeting, ask callers for relevant information such as name and phone number and the purpose of the call.
- Change your greeting if you are going to be unavailable for an extended period. Let your callers know when you will return or who else can help while you are gone.
- Ensure that callers can go back to the operator at all times- and tell them how to do it. "Press zero for the operator".
- Even if you do not immediately have the answer to their query, or the information they need, let them know that you or your team are working on it.

Leaving a Voicemail Message

- Be prepared to leave a message with every phone call. The odds are 4 to 1 you will not get through to the person you are calling. Therefore, have a message in mind when you place the call.
- Briefly explain who you are and the nature of the call. Get to the point. Don't ramble or repeat yourself. Messages should be kept to 30 seconds or less. Studies have shown that listeners will "tune out" after 25 seconds.
- If you need to speak with someone regarding a topic that will be long and detailed consider leaving a subject matter only message. For example, "Bob, I need to speak to you about ... at your earliest convenience." Do not leave a long-winded message as a substitute for a conversation.
- Do not leave bad news or messages of a personal nature in voice mail. Some messages are not appropriate for voice mail.
- Be careful what you say and how you say it. Don't say something that you may regret. The voicemail system does not allow you to take back a message once sent. Be careful who might hear your message. The voice mail systems allow messages to be forwarded to others. You may never know who will get a copy of your message.
- If you are leaving a message for someone who may not know you or remember your name you might mention it again at the end of the message with your phone number.
- Always slow down your speech when leaving information that needs to be written down. When spoken properly it is not necessary to repeat it.
- If you want a callback leave a date and time that you expect to be available. Voice mail is an opportunity to reduce phone tag by arranging a callback time.

Maintenance

- Keep your mailbox clean. Mailboxes can fill quickly, and if your mailbox is full, anyone trying to leave you a message will hear "mailbox for (name) is full. You are being transferred to the attendant." (Callers will be transferred to your receptionist.) Contact your Voicemail Administrator if you need to increase the size of your mailbox.

Voicemail Options

- Use voicemail options as you see fit. When delivering a message ensure that only URGENT messages are tagged as such. If all messages are tagged urgent, then the perception is that none of them are urgent.
- If you require notification that a message has been received and listened to tag it CERTIFIED
- If you require that your message not be forwarded tag it PRIVATE

Voice messaging has proven to be an indispensable business tool for Wetaskiwin Regional Public School's. Like anything else it can be abused and misused. The frustration we often feel is not so much with the technology as it is with the abuse. Perhaps the most frustrating element of voice mail is when we find people that "hide behind their mailbox," or don't return phone calls. We all need to occasionally "turn off our phone" so that we can have some uninterrupted time. This is understandable and tolerable. However, we hope this is the exception, not the norm. It is hoped that everyone that uses voice mail will use the technology as it is intended, an enhancement to better communication, not a barrier.



EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Individual	Responsibilities
Call Received	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish that the situation is an emergency • Don't lose the call • Collect relevant information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is the nature of the problem? ○ What is the time line (time pressure)? ○ Who has already been notified? ○ Is evacuation/transportation an issue? • Enact Critical Incident Communication Protocol (see below) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The site supervisor will contact the Superintendent (or in his absence one of the Associate Superintendents). ○ The site supervisor will utilize their emergency fan out list to contact relevant stakeholders. ○ The Superintendent will notify the Trustees and Senior Administration as necessary. ○ The Board Chair and/or Superintendent will act as Media spokesperson as necessary.
Superintendent or Designate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes team to go to the site • Before leaving for the site brief the Associate Superintendent: Business who will coordinate from Division Office
At the Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the situation • Provide direction and support to the administration/staff at the site • Site team makes contacts with Directors of Transportation and Facilities • Identify a school contact to remain with the system team • Interface with external agencies and media (team leader – most senior person present) • Provide updates to the Division Office contact
Division Office Phone Responder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remains at Division Office until relieved or emergency ends and may involve others in responding to calls based on prepared statement • Direct receptionist to direct all calls to the person (or persons) responsible for communication at the office • Inform Division Office staff of the situation and the procedure to follow • Field phone calls and inquiries relating to the emergency • Develop statement for release to parents, press based upon information received from the crisis site (as early as possible and on school letterhead) • Notify trustees of the situation • Notify other schools (as appropriate) of the situation • Direct the media to the team leader for anything more than the generic statement • Information provided to callers, schools, trustees and office staff should be written and consistent

Critical Incident Communication Protocol

Definition: Critical Incidents are those events that impact the safety and security of our students, employees and facilities. The following incidents are considered critical incidents for the purposes of this communication protocol:

Criminal Activities and or behaviors:

- Significant Acts of Vandalism
- Arson
- Dangerous trespassers and/or hostile intruders
- Break and Enter
- Theft of significant amounts of cash or property
- Acts of Violence - including physical and sexual assault

Emergency Evacuation, Lockdowns and Shelter in place

- Fire
- Bomb Threat
- Dangerous Intruder
- Toxic spills and/or emissions
- Tornados

Injury and Death

- Serious injuries
- Sudden Death

Building Security and Occupant Safety

- Fire
- Flood
- Loss of Power and other utilities

Natural Disasters

- School Closure due to inclement weather

Communication Protocol:

A. During the school day:

1. The site supervisor will contact the Superintendent (or in his absence one of the Associate Superintendents).
2. The site supervisor will utilize their emergency fan out list to contact relevant stakeholders.
3. The Superintendent will notify the Trustees and Senior Administration as necessary.
4. The Board Chair and/or Superintendent will act as Media spokesperson as necessary.

B. After School Hours

1. If a Student or Employee is Seriously Injured, Dies suddenly, and/or is the victim of an act of violence:
 - i. The first person to be notified of the incident will contact the site supervisor.
 - ii. The site supervisor will contact the Superintendent (or in his absence one of the Associate Superintendents) and utilize their emergency fan out list to contact relevant stakeholders.
 - iii. The Superintendent will notify Trustees and Senior Administration as necessary.
 - iv. The Board Chair and/or Superintendent will act as Media spokesperson as necessary.

2. If a facility is impacted by the incident the on-call maintenance personnel is contacted through either the Division's answering service's 24-hour monitoring service or by pager.
 - i. The attending maintenance personnel will contact the Director of Facilities.
 - ii. The Director of Facilities will contact the Site supervisor and the Superintendent (or in his absence one of the Associate Superintendents).
 - iii. The Site Supervisor will utilize their emergency fan out list to contact relevant stakeholders as necessary.
 - iv. The Superintendent will notify Trustees and Senior Administration as necessary.
 - v. The Board Chair and/or Superintendent will act as Media spokesperson as necessary.

- C. If the matter is related to inclement weather or any other incident involving transportation the Director of Transportation will enact her phone fan-out list.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions or comments about these procedures, please contact your director/supervisor.

For more information regarding the Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools Communication Procedures Handbook please contact the Associate Superintendent: Instruction.

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