

Email Best Practices

NSCC's email service is a College-owned and managed resource and business tool. In addition to becoming familiar with and following the College's Email Policy and Procedures, consider the following Best Practices before sending College email.

- **Remember that your NSCC email messages are considered records.** The Nova Scotia Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPOP) Act gives everyone a right of access to most recorded information held by public bodies like NSCC.
- **Determine who really “needs to know”.** Ask yourself whether the content of your email is relevant or applicable to the vast majority of audience. If it's not, you can probably narrow down the distribution or find another channel.
- **Ask yourself if email is the best communications tool.** Look at other options like digital signage, posters, approved social media channels, or sharing directly at staff meetings or through managers and teams. If you have to send more than 2 -3 emails to clarify an issue or point, consider picking up the phone.
- **If you have specific expectations, let your recipient know at the beginning of your message.** Identify things like your expected response time and if the information is to be shared or confidential.
- **Always fill in the subject line and be as clear and concise as possible.** Identify your department and the nature of your request. (For example: Communications – meeting rescheduled). For ongoing messages or email trails, be consistent in your subject line for easy reference.
- **Short and sweet.** Shorter messages are better and so are shorter, more conversational words. Avoid re-sending an entire

conversation – delete what's not relevant.

- **For urgent requests, consider following up with a phone call.** It is reasonable to believe that emails will be read within one day but not necessarily within minutes or even hours of being received.
- **Use College approved signature lines** and leave off any graphics, links and personal information and beliefs. Sample signature lines are available from OurNSCC.
- **Avoid using background images.** You may like them, but they often distract from your message and make it difficult to read. They also take up unnecessary space.
- **Respect expectations of privacy.** Remember that when you “cc” a recipient, you are sharing their email address with EVERYONE else on the “cc” list. Consider this before hitting “send”.
- **Be wary of “reply all”.** Use this sparingly – there's a huge potential for inadvertently sharing info with unintended recipients.
- **Attachments: Bigger is not always better** – If you are sending a message with an attachment, you could clog up the IT system. Ask yourself if you need to include the attachment, and if so, consider whether the attachment size can be decreased or consider re-directing using a link to OurNSCC or nsc.ca.

Need some help?

Check with Communications or Marketing – staff can offer guidance or even help with the writing.