

# Anatomy of an effective email to parents and caregivers

There's an art to writing a good email to your students' families. The most effective emails tend to be short and focus on facts rather than on emotion or opinion. This guide describes key parts to include.



## The recipient's email

Double-check the email addresses to make sure your message gets sent to the right people. If there is more than one family member or caregiver who is very involved in the student's education, be sure to send the email to them as well.

From: A\_Griffin@KSOD.edu  
To: Jones@jones-mail.com  
CC: Case\_Manager@KSOD.edu  
Subject: Reaching out about Kevin's science quiz today

## CC'ing school staff

It's a good idea to CC a student's case manager or 504 coordinator if you're writing about an issue that involves an IEP or a 504 plan. But think carefully about whether to CC them if your communication isn't specifically related to special services. Sending a copy to the case manager can turn a casual message about classroom matters into something more serious, which could affect the trust between you and the student's family.

## Subject line

A clear subject line will help your message stand out. Consider including the student's name and a few words about the reason you're writing.

Dear Ms. Jones,

This is Andrea Griffin, Kevin's science teacher.

The new school year is off to a great start, and Kevin seems to really be enjoying in-class discussions.

I'm writing to let you know about something that happened in class today. During the science quiz, Kevin got angry with another student and confronted him, disrupting class. Kevin told me the other student accused him of cheating because he was using his text-to-speech accommodation. As you and I have discussed before, text-to-speech is essential for Kevin's success in school. However, disrupting class isn't acceptable.

I have already talked with both students, and I plan on talking again with Kevin. I want to encourage him to use his self-advocacy and conflict-resolution skills. But I also want to tell him again that he can always speak with me if there's an issue with other students questioning his accommodations.

Did Kevin happen to share any concerns with you about the situation? Do you have ideas that have worked in the past to help Kevin handle this type of situation?

### Greeting

Use a polite greeting and address recipients by their last names unless they have already told you it's OK to use their first names.

### Introduction

Even if you've met in person, give a reminder of who you are and which class you teach.

### Positive statement (optional)

Try to start with a positive statement about the student's experience in your class. This can help set the tone of wanting to work together to solve a problem.

### Brief statement of the issue

Raise your concerns without being confrontational. If you are bringing up a serious issue, briefly describe your concerns and ask for more information or a meeting. Be respectful and calm. Focus on what you know rather than on what you think the parent or caregiver should do.

### Request for information (if needed)

After stating the issue, ask for more information. Keep in mind that you may not have all the facts yet.

Would it be possible to talk about this either in person or by phone? I'm free to talk any time after 1 p.m. on Wednesday or Thursday.

Thank you for taking the time to answer my email. I look forward to speaking with you. Kevin is off to such a great start. I want to make sure we support him so he can keep making progress.

Sincerely,

Andrea Griffin  
School phone number:  
212-555-5555, extension 15



### Request for a meeting (if needed)

Because it's hard to get the tone right, email is often not the best way to resolve issues. Instead, ask to meet in person or to talk on the phone. Include some times when you're available.



### Polite ending

End your email on a positive note to keep the overall emphasis on working together.



### Signature line

Include your full name and your school's phone number.