

Anatomy of an effective email to your child's teacher

The teacher's email

Double-check the teacher's email address.

From: Jones@jones-mail.com
To: A_Griffin@KSOD.edu
CC: Case_Manager@KSOD.edu
Subject: Kevin Jones, 7th Grade Science: Lab Report

Dear Ms. Griffin,

This is Andrea Jones, Kevin's mother. Kevin is in your 7th grade science class.

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

Positive statement (optional)

If possible, try to start with a positive (and true) statement about your child's experience with the teacher. This can help set the tone of wanting to work together to solve a problem.

CC'ing other people

Think carefully about whether to CC the principal. Sending a copy to the teacher's boss will turn your message into something very serious.

If you're writing about something that impacts your child's IEP or 504 plan, CC the case manager or 504 coordinator. For major issues, be sure to read about dispute resolution.

Subject line

Use a clear subject line so your message doesn't get lost in the shuffle. Consider including your child's name and a few words about the reason you're writing.

Greeting

Use a polite greeting and refer to the teacher in the same way your child does.

Introduction

Even if you've met the teacher in person, say who you are and the class your child is in.

I'd like to mention that today, when Kevin came home from school, he was very upset. He told me another student accused him of cheating because he used a spelling and grammar check app on his smartphone to write his lab report. He said that when he took his smartphone out to explain this, you told him to put it away.

Kevin has trouble with writing, especially on lab reports with science terms. He uses the app to make sure he doesn't have errors. So I'm encouraging him to speak with you tomorrow about how he felt when the other student accused him of cheating.

I'd also like to touch base with you soon to learn more about what happened.

Would it be possible to talk about this, in person or by phone? I'm free this week 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.

Sincerely,

Andrea Jones
cell: 212-555-4567

Brief statement of the issue

Aim for short emails. Be respectful and calm. Raise your concerns without being confrontational.

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.

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.

Signature line

Include your full name and your phone number.

Polite ending

Aim to end your email on a positive or at least neutral note. This can help keep the relationship on a good footing.