sos 4 students

GUIDE TO
EMAILS AND COMMUNICATION

I wish I had a resource that would help me advocate for my students because I'm not clear about the best wording to take action.

I never know what to say when I have to email my teachers.

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Student

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Student Section 1: What you need to know about

Email Guidelines

- Check your school's technology and communication policy to understand the staff's expectations for communication.
- It's a good idea to keep track of your communication with staff. Check out this template!
- At the start of the year, ask your teacher directly for their email response timeline.
- On average, you should wait 24-48 business hours before following up on an email. Business hours don't include weekends!
- If you have already emailed your teacher and are still unclear on the answer or if the matter you are trying to discuss is private, it may be best to request an in-person meeting (see our "setting up a meeting" template).
- Your emails are a form of professional communication with your teacher, they should not be treated like texts with friends. Make sure you include everything found in the email checklist below...

EMAIL CHECKLIST

- ☐ A GREETING
  - GOOD MORNING MR./MS./MX._____,
  - HELLO MR./MS/MX. _____ ,
  - DEAR MR./MS./MX. _____,
- ☐ THE SPECIFIC NAME OF THE ASSIGNMENT(S) YOU ARE ASKING ABOUT
- ☐ A SIGNATURE WHICH INCLUDES...
  - YOUR FULL NAME
  - YOUR CLASS SECTION/PERIOD

Important note on subject lines!

You should always fill in the subject line of your email; this makes it easier for your teacher to find your email and understand your request. Think of it like the topic sentence of your email.

- Example Subject: Requesting a check-in, Max. W, 3rd period

Example Email

New Message

To MrH@yourschool.edu

Subject MISSING WORK QUESTION- SARA M, 3RD PERIOD

Good Morning Mr. H,

I noticed I have "0"s for the following assignments though they were submitted on May 22nd:

- Ch. 3 Questions
- Civil War DBQ paragraph

Can you clarify when grades will be updated or if there is anything further needed for these assignments so I can better understand my grade in this class.
Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Sara McSara
Early U.S. History, 3rd Period

SEND

Student Section 2: Emails From Students to Teachers

New Message

To

Subject FIRST NOTIFICATION OF ACCOMMODATIONS

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms. {teacher name here}

My name is {your name} and I am in your {class title/period} class.
I wanted to inform you of the accommodations I receive according to my IEP/504.
My accommodations are as follows:

Thank you for your support and I look forward to being in your class this school year.

Sincerely,
{Full name}
{Class period/name

SEND

Why you might send this email

- You 're starting a new school
- You have a new teacher

Search

New Message

To

Subject REQUEST TO USE ACCOMMODATIONS

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms {teacher name here}

I wanted to follow up about the accommodations I receive according to my IEP/504.
My accommodations are as follows:
•

I would like to receive {list} accommodation(s) to support my performance on the upcoming {name of project/test}. Can you please inform me of how and when these accommodations will be met?
Thank you for your support.

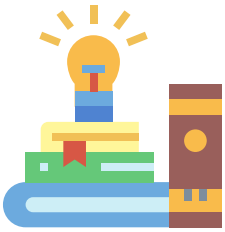
Sincerely,
{Full name}
{Class period/name}

SEND

Why you might send this email

- You want to use your accommodations on an upcoming project/test

Search



Student Section 2: Emails From Students to Teachers

New Message

To

Subject **Clarification of 0s**

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms {teacher name here}

I noticed I have "0"s for the following assignments though they were submitted on (date):

- (assignment 1)
- (assignment 2)
- (assignment 3)

Can you clarify when grades will be updated or if there is anything further needed for these assignments so I can better understand my grade in this class? Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Full name
Class period/name

SEND

Why you might send this email

- Understand your teacher's grading timeline
- Ensure your teacher received your submitted work

Search

New Message

To

Subject **MAKE-UP WORK**

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms {teacher name},

I am currently missing {name of assignment}, however, the window for submission has closed. I'm wondering how I can make up this work to ensure I complete this learning opportunity and receive credit. Can I turn it in late for partial credit or complete an alternate assignment to demonstrate my understanding?
Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Full name
Class period/name

SEND

Why you might send this email

- Earn credit for an assignment you missed
- Demonstrate your commitment to completing work

Search

Student Section 2: Emails From Students to Teachers

New Message

To

Subject **MATERIALS CLARIFICATION**

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms {teacher name},

I would like to prepare for the upcoming {name of project} project and want to understand what materials I will need to complete the assignment. Would you clarify what materials I should acquire on my own and what will be provided? Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Full name
Class period/name

SEND

Why you might send this email

- Ensure you have enough time to get the necessary materials
- Avoid last-minute shopping/planning for your project

Search

New Message

To

Subject **FINALS PREPARATION**

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms {teacher name},

I would like to prepare for the upcoming final and would like to clarify some details. Can you please provide me with the following information:

- The date of the final
- The percentage or weight of the final in our grade
- The format/style of the final
- If a study guide or outline will be provided

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Full name
Class period/name

SEND

Why you might send this email

- To learn about your final so you can begin preparing for it
- To understand study expectations
- To clarify where/how to access support materials

Search

Student Section 2: Emails From Students to Teachers

New Message

To

Subject Requesting Grade Support

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms {teacher name},

I notice that my grade is low in this class and would like to understand how I can bring it up to passing. Can you help me prioritize assignments for completion or clarify if there is extra credit I can complete?
Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Full name
Class period

SEND

Why you might send this email

- Prioritize your work, especially if you are missing a lot it can help to understand what is most necessary to complete.
- Demonstrate your commitment to completing work

Search

New Message

To

Subject DIRECTION CLARIFICATION

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms {teacher name},

I would like support in understanding the directions for {assignment name here}.
I'm wondering {specific questions here, question examples below}.
Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Full name
Class period/name

- What items are being submitted for this assignment?
- When is each part of the assignment due?
- How can I break this project down into manageable tasks?
- Do you have a suggested timeline for completing this project?
- What part of this project is most important to focus on?
- I'm not clear on how to complete this part of the assignment, can you explain it again for me?

SEND

Why you might send this email

- You are unclear about directions for a task
- You have already tried asking a peer in your class and are still confused

Search

Student Section 2: Emails From Students to Teachers

New Message

To

Subject **FOLLOW UP**

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms {teacher name},

I wanted to follow up on my email from {date} about {topic of email}. Please let me know when I can expect to hear from you about this.
Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Full name
Class period/name

TIP!
Instead of sending a new email, reply to your previous email to continue the same communication chain. This will make it easier to keep track of messages and to document if your teacher is unresponsive.

SEND

Why you might send this email

- You haven't received a response from a teacher (and you waited at least 48 hours)
- Your question/request is urgent

Search

New Message

To

Subject **SETTING UP A MEETING**

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms {teacher name},

I'd like to request a time to meet with you. I'd like to discuss {brief description of the topic}. {This matter is private and I'd like to request an individual meeting}.

Thank you for your support.

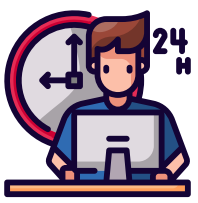
Sincerely,
Full name
Class period/name

SEND

Why you might send this email

- If you are unclear about your teacher's response
- If this topic you'd like to discuss is sensitive or personal.

Search



Student Section 2: Emails From Students to Teachers

New Message

To

Subject EXTENSION NEEDED FOR ASSIGNMENT

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms {teacher name},

I'd like to request an extension on {project/assignment name}. I have been struggling with {reason extension is needed}. I can have the project completed by {new date}.

Sincerely,
Full name
Class period/name

TIP!
*Ask for extensions before the deadline, don't wait until your assignment is already late.

SEND

Why you might send this email

- A deadline is approaching and you are not going to complete the task/project on time.

Search

Student Section 3: Emails From Students to Other Staff

New Message

To

Subject REQUEST FOR ACADEMIC COUNSELOR SUPPORT; UNRESPONSIVE TEACHER

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms {staff name},

I am requesting support in my {class name} class with (teacher name). I have emailed them on the following dates and have not received a response:

- {date 1}
- {date 2}
- {date 3}

In this class, I am concerned about {your concern}. I'd like support from you to communicate with my teacher to ensure this matter is addressed.
Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Full name
Grade level/homeroom

SEND

Why you might send this email

- Your teacher hasn't responded to your communication in at least two to three weeks

Search

New Message

To

Subject REQUEST FOR ACADEMIC COUNSELOR SUPPORT; TEACHER CONCERN

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms {staff name},

I am requesting support in my {class name} class with {teacher name}.
I am concerned about {your concern}. Can we please set up a time to meet so I can discuss my concerns with you?
Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Full name
Grade level/homeroom

SEND

Why you might send this email

- Your teacher is not giving equal support to all students.
- Your teacher has refused to provide you help or follow your accommodations

Search

Student Section 3: Emails From Students to Other Staff

New Message

To

Subject **REQUEST FOR LEARNING SPECIALIST SUPPORT**

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms {staff name},

I am writing to request support with my {name of assignment/class}.
I am struggling with (Pick from the list below, then delete the rest)

- Focusing in class
- Completing my assignments
- The amount of work assigned
- Understanding directions
- Studying for a test
- Staying organized

It would be helpful if I could receive (Pick from the list below, then delete the rest)

- Tips and ideas to support my learning
- Advice and strategies to prepare for my test
- Help in understanding this assignment
- Support to finish assignments
- Assistance with organizing my work (online or in backpack)

When can we meet to discuss these concerns?
Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,
Full name
Grade level/homeroom

Why you might send this email

- You are consistently struggling in a class or classes
- You need extra time or help with your classwork
- You struggle to understand how to complete your work
- You are struggling to keep up with your work

Search

New Message

To

Subject **FOLLOW-UP**

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms {staff name},

I wanted to follow up on my email about {topic of the last email}. Please let me know when I can expect to hear from you about this.
Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Full name
Class period/name

TIP!

Instead of sending a new email, reply to your previous email to continue the same communication chain. This will make it easier to keep track of messages and to document if your teacher is unresponsive.

SEND

Why you might send this email

- You haven't received a response from a teacher/specialist (and you waited at least 48 hours)
- Your question/request is urgent

Search

Student Section 3: Emails From Students to Other Staff

New Message

To

Subject REQUEST FOR MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR SUPPORT

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms {staff name},

I am experiencing (anxiety, sadness, difficulties with peers, etc.). Can we please set up a time to meet so I can discuss my concerns with you? Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Full name
Grade level/homeroom

SEND

Why you might send this email

- You are experiencing increased anxiety or notice changes in your well-being
- You want support with peer interaction/social skills
- You want to request more support outside of school

Search

New Message

To

Subject REQUEST FOR DISABILITY SERVICES (COLLEGE)

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms {staff name},

I am hoping to learn more about the available support services on campus. I qualified for an IEP/504 in high school and would like to learn if any of my accommodations transfer as well as what paperwork is necessary. Can we please set up a meeting time to discuss my options?

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Full name

SEND

Why you might send this email

- You want to verify qualification for support services in college
- You want to set up accommodations at your college
- You want to learn more about disability services offered at your college

Search

Students Section 4: Emails from students to non-school adults

New Message

To

Subject APPLICATION FOR JOB/INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms {staff name},

I am writing to submit my application for the {insert name of job/internship} position with {name of organization/company}. I have attached my resume and cover letter as requested.

I look forward to connecting about this opportunity, thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Full name

SEND

Why you might send this email

- You are applying for job/internship

Search

New Message

To

Subject INQUIRY ABOUT VOLUNTEER/INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms {staff name},

I am hoping to learn more about {insert name of job/internship} position with {name of organization/company. I am wondering {insert questions here, double check any information on the job listing to ensure you are not asking something they've already posted}.

- Is this a temporary or short-term position?
- What specific qualifications are you looking for in an applicant?
- Will there be an opportunity to continue this position in the future?
- What are the responsibilities and time commitments associated with this position?

I look forward to connecting about this opportunity, thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Full name

SEND

Why you might send this email

- You want to learn more about a job/internship/volunteer opportunity

Search

To access these templates in Google document form please visit this link:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VK-A_ywIVkaI_MHpYcfbGKRetAfhKRG0uD1S5FRIb8Y/edit?usp=sharing

Why use a communication log?

A communication log can help with...

- Keeping track of teachers you have/haven't talked with (online and in-person)
- Documenting your attempts at communication (in case there are issues in the future, you'll want to prove that you've made efforts).
- Use as a note-catcher in case you forget what was discussed in a meeting
- Document the next steps you need to take after communicating with your teacher.

Link to google doc printable version:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/14gt5ArejkYKFm7ZmOQrkT-8nVNfAD8zLYJGDRqrYN84/edit?usp=sharing

Date	Type of Communication and With Who: • Phone • Email • Meeting	Notes: • Reason for communication • Important Information discussed, takeaways • Resources, etc	Follow-up: • What needs to be done? • Who must complete it? • Due by date
Example 5/24	• In-person Meeting, English Teacher	• Grade update, some missing work, what can be done • Missing 2 homework assignment (See Canvas assignments 5/1, 5/3) • Missing test on The Great Gatsby	• Me- Turn in missing assignments by Friday for partial credit • Me- Makeup test on Tuesday after school in English

Example 5/28	• Phone call with college advisor, Nancy	• Summer plan
		  ◦ Need to start focusing on which colleges are best for my major
		  ◦ Look at locations (Do I want to be local or move?)
		• Program offerings
			• Me- Research and pick 5 colleges I'm interested due 6/12 at next meeting
			• Nancy- will also provide 5 colleges she recommends at next meeting

Student Section 5: Communication Log

Date	Type of Communication and With Who: • Phone • Email • Meeting	Notes: • Reason for communication • Important Information discussed, takeaways • Resources, etc	Follow-up: • What needs to be done? • Who must complete it? • Due by date

Parent Section 1: Family Rights in the SPED World

Your Rights:

- To participate in all student-related processes
- To receive prior written notice to changes or updates
- To consent to assessment/services
- To refuse consent to assessment/services
- Nondiscriminatory assessments
- Receive independent educational assessments
- Access child's educational records
- Stay in the current program while settling disagreements
- Receive medication
- File a complain
- Be informed of school discipline
- Be informed about alternative placements and private schools

To read more about each, check out California Department of Education

To read frequently asked questions, check out this article from Parental Readiness and Empowerment Program

Education Codes: Important Timelines

Requesting assessment/referral for your child
Within 15 calendar days from the receipt of the written referral, the school must provide your family with a proposed assessment plan (pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 56321).

Guardian response to the assessment plan
A guardian shall have at least 15 calendar days from the receipt of the proposed assessment plan to arrive at a decision, pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 56321.

Determination of services meeting after assessment
Once a child has been referred for an initial assessment, these determinations shall be made, and an individualized education program team meeting shall occur within 60 days of receiving parental consent for the assessment, pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 56302.1, except as specified in subdivision (b) of that section, and pursuant to Section 56344.

Holding a Meeting for Initial IEP
A meeting to develop an initial individualized education program for the pupil shall be conducted within 30 days of a determination that the child needs special education Section 300.323(c)(1) of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations and in accordance with Section 56344.

Requesting a meeting
The school must reply to your written request and hold a meeting within 30 days pursuant to Section 56343.5.

Access to student documents
The guardian shall have the right and opportunity to examine all school records of the child and to receive complete copies within 5 business days after a request is made by the parent or guardian, either orally or in writing, and before any meeting regarding an individualized education program of his or her child or any hearing or resolution session in accordance with Section 56504 and Chapter 6.5 (commencing with Section 49060) of Part 27.

Parent Section 2: Emails from Parents to Teachers

New Message

To

Subject **NOTIFICATION OF ACCOMMODATIONS**

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms {teacher name},

My name is {name} and my child is in your {class name/period}class. I wanted to inform you of the accommodations they receive according to their IEP/504.
Their accommodations are as follows:

•

•

Other important information to know about my child includes {information}.
I've noticed that my child has been successful in past classes when {success tips}.
The best way to contact me is {contact info}. If you have any questions about their accommodations, please contact {resource teacher name}.
Thank you for your support and our family looks forward to working with you this school year.

Sincerely,
Full parent name

SEND

Why you might send this email

- Your child is starting a new school
- Your child has a new teacher(s)

Search

New Message

To

Subject **CONCERN ABOUT STUDENT GRADES/PROGRESS**

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms {teacher name},

I notice that my child's grade is low in your {class name} class and would like to understand how we can better support them. Can you help us prioritize assignments for completion or clarify if there is extra credit they can complete? Additionally, if there are any other concerns that may help us better understand our child's learning experience, please let us know.
I can be reached via email or phone; the best times to contact me are {days/times}.
Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Full name
Contact information

Why you might send this email

- To help your child prioritize their work, especially if they are missing a lot, it can help to understand what is most necessary to complete.
- Determine if your student needs further support (modified accommodations, tutoring etc).
- To create a shared dialogue with the student, teacher, and family and ensure all parties have access to the same information

Search

Parent Section 2: Emails from Parents to Teachers

New Message

To

Subject CONCERN ABOUT STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms {teacher name},

I have noticed that my child's behavior in your classroom may be affecting their academic experience. Specifically, I am concerned about {state concern}. Can you provide insight that may help us better understand our child's learning experience or how we can continue this conversation at home?
I can be reached via email or phone; the best times to contact me are {days/times}.
Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Full name
Contact information

SEND

Why you might send this email

- Determine the causes of student behavior
- Address the concerns as a team in order to create a wrap-around approach that includes home consequences
- Determine if the student needs greater support (tutoring, counseling services, change of seating etc.)

Search

New Message

To

Subject MEETING REQUEST

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms {teacher name},

I'd like to request a meeting with you to discuss {concern}. My goal for this meeting is {goal}.
I think it may be beneficial if the following people are present {people's names}.
My availability is {days/times}.
Please let me know your availability so we can schedule a meeting soon. I can be reached via email or phone; the best times to contact me are {days/times}.
Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Full name
Contact information

SEND

Why you might send this email

- Express concern about lack of student support/progress
- Update the team on home changes that may be affecting student's academic performance

Search

Parent Section 2: Emails from Parents to Teachers

New Message

To

Subject FOLLOW UP ON REQUEST

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms {teacher name},

I wanted to follow up on my email about {topic} that was sent on {date}.
Please let me know when I can expect to hear from you about this.
Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Full name
Class period/name

SEND

Why you might send this email

- You have not received a response from a staff member in at least 48 business hours.
- Your request is urgent

Search

Parent Section 3: Emails from Parents to Other staff

New Message

To

Subject **REQUEST TO UPDATE ACCOMMODATIONS/MODIFICATIONS**

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms. {teacher name},

I am the parent of {child name} in {X} grade, I'd like to request a meeting to discuss amending my child's IEP/504.
My concerns are {list concerns}.
I think it may be beneficial if the following people are present {list names}.
My availability is {days/times}. Please let me know available meeting times so I can plan accordingly.
I can be reached via email or phone; the best times to contact me are {days/times}.
Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Full name
Contact Information

SEND

Tip:
It's a good idea to send a summary of your proposed changes to the student's accommodations/ modifications ahead of time so the staff members have a chance to review them prior to the meeting. An SOS coach can help you prepare appropriate suggestions once a meeting has been confirmed.

Why you might send this email

- Your student is consistently struggling in a class or subject area (even with the current interventions in place)
- Your student and/or family is unsupported by school staff.

Search

New Message

To

Subject **REQUEST FOR COUNSELOR SUPPORT**

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms. {teacher name},

I am the parent of {child name} in {X} grade, I'd like to request a meeting to discuss further support for my child. I am concerned about {list concerns}.
I think it may be beneficial if the following people are present {list names}.
My availability is {days/times}. Please let me know available meeting times so I can plan accordingly.
I can be reached via email or phone; the best times to contact me are {days/times}
Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Full name
Contact Information

Why you might send this email

- You have concerns about your student's social-emotional well-being
- Your student is expressing a desire for emotional support
- Your student is experiencing high amounts of anxiety or changes in their overall well-being/mood
- You'd like referrals to more specialized, outside of school providers.

Search

Parent Section 3: Emails from Parents to Other staff

New Message

To

Subject REQUEST FOR MEETING WITH ADMINISTRATION

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms {teacher name},

I am the parent of {child name} in {X} grade, I'd like to request a meeting to discuss further support for my child. I am concerned about {list topics}.

(State the communication you have already attempted with teachers/learning specialists that didn't yield proper support or ways your child's needs have not been met yet).

I believe this is an urgent matter and I think it may be beneficial if the following people are present {list names}.
My availability is {days/times}. Please let me know available meeting times.
I can be reached via email or phone; the best times to contact me are {days/times}
Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Full name

SEND

Why you might send this email

- Teachers/staff members have been unresponsive to your communication (wait at least 3-4 weeks before requesting administration support).
- Teachers/staff members have been unwilling or unable to provide support to your student.
- You have a concern about bullying or inappropriate peer interactions.

Search

New Message

To

Subject REQUEST TO CONNECT STUDENT'S PROVIDERS

Good Morning/Afternoon Mr./Ms {teacher name},

I am the parent of {child name} in your {name/period} class. My child is currently working with an outside {learning specialist, tutor, therapist, etc.} who is requesting an opportunity to connect with you. We hope that by creating this connection, we can create a more unified team to support {child's name}. If you consent to this, please provide your preferred email address and/or phone number as well as the best time for them to reach you.

If you would like to discuss this further, I can be reached via email or phone; the best times to contact me are {days/times}
Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Full name

SEND

Why you might send this email

- Your child works with multiple providers
- One of your child's providers has requested to speak with the school/teacher

Search