

GUIDE TO BETTER COMMUNICATION

PROVIDING WORLD CLASS CUSTOMER CARE



Brevard
Public
Schools

2021



At Brevard Public Schools,

Our mission is to serve every student with excellence as a standard. As an organization, we share the vision to enhance students' lives and provide the highest quality education in a culture of dedication, teamwork and learning.

Effective communication is essential for every BPS employee, as it helps ideas spread, ensures collaboration, resolves issues among peers, and fosters relationships. It is our responsibility to approach every interaction with exemplary customer care.

This handbook is designed to help support you in your job, whether you engage with students, families, staff, or the community at large. It includes important information on our policies and procedures and shared expectations for internal and external communication regarding our use of the telephone, email, social media and face to face communication.

Every one of us serves as a bridge to our community. Therefore, we have an obligation to model consistent practices, as we present a positive and professional face to our customers every day.

Thank you for your selfless dedication to the many stakeholders we serve, and for representing Brevard Public Schools with pride.



Sincerely,
Dr. Mark Mullins
Superintendent





World Class Customer Care

Expectations for exemplary customer care include consistent practices of all employees with Brevard Public Schools. This guide is intended to provide Brevard Public School District employees valuable information regarding customer service practices. The goal of the district is for all employees to sustain a positive and professional approach when communicating with internal and external customers.

Providing excellent customer service to all district customers is essential to the district's mission "to serve every student with excellence as the standard." In order to achieve this mission, the district has created recommendations that include simple, but effective courtesies to follow when interacting with customers.

The following pages will include guidelines for providing exceptional customer service through effective communication and proper phone and email etiquette, as well as important communication protocols. These standards set expectations for all district employees in their interactions with customers.

School Board of Brevard County

Superintendent

Dr. Mark Mullins

School Board Members

Misty Belford, Chairperson

Matt Susin, Vice Chairperson

Jennifer D. Jenkins

Cheryl McDougall

Katye Campbell

We strive to communicate with these agreed norms:

Timeliness—ready, prompt, suitable, useful

Accuracy—correct, precise, dependable

Correct target—intended audience receives message

Appropriate tone and style—writer's attitude toward reader and message is appropriate

Meaningful—serious, important, purposeful, quality

Concise—brief but to the point

Accessible—reachable, attainable, approachable, obtainable, available

Our mutual commitments include:

Our communication will provide regular updates on the initiatives and changes that affect employees.

We will provide opportunities for employees to ask questions, contribute ideas and give/receive feedback.





***We commit to delivering
timely and accurate
communication to
all staff members.***

Professional Office Practices

When we think of customer service, we often think about the communication and information we provide to our community, our parents and our students. All of Brevard Public Schools employees are our customers as well. We must give serious consideration to the needs we all share and the services we must provide to one another.

- Put a smile on your face and in your voice when you are on the telephone.
“Good Morning! I am Charlie Smith. How may I help you?”
- Take ownership to be sure that a caller or visitor gets to the correct person or department.
“Mrs. Ward, I believe our Benefits Department can help you. Let me connect you.”
“Mr. Smith, our school psychologist can answer your question. He’s not available right now. May I connect you with his voice mail so that you may leave a message or can I take a message for you?” or “Mr. Smith, I can get an answer for you and call you back with the information if you prefer.”
- Keep your work space ready for action. Set up needed references so they are readily available.
- Dress to impress your coworkers of the professional that you are.
- Professionals do not eat, drink or chew gum while on the phone. Food on your desk should not be visible. Phones need to be answered promptly.
- Your language with internal customers should show courtesy, but remain timely with an awareness and sensitivity to others working in the immediate area.
- Treat your internal customers with the same tact and timeliness as you do the public.
- Never represent yourself as an expert or guess at an answer. Pride yourself in your accuracy, even if you will need time to research your information.
- Listen actively and without interrupting. Ask questions. Take time to clarify.

Phone Etiquette

Callers will disrespect and distrust people who answer with “I don’t know” or “It isn’t my department.” Customers will become frustrated and angry by “No.” Avoid arguing, criticizing or using comments like “Calm down.” “You are right.” “That is bad.” “That’s not my fault.” “I do not make the rules.” “That’s the policy.” “Why didn’t you,” “You should have,” “You need to.”

Instead use:

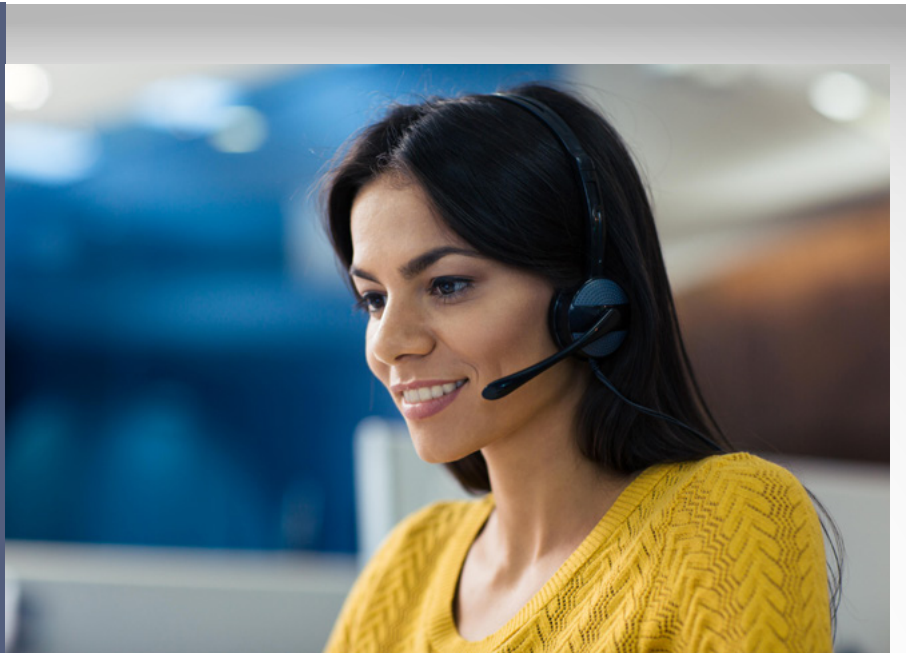
“I’ll find out.” “Let me look into this and get back to you.” “I will need to research some information and get back to you.” “I will need to get you in touch with the person who can help you.” “I understand.” “Let’s see how we can solve this.” “I want to help you.”

Handling Dissatisfaction

- Listen (Be patient, attentive, friendly)
- Express empathy
- Do not interrupt or argue
- Take notes, stay focused and relaxed
- Clarify problem
- Express what you can and what you cannot do
- Review actions to be taken and follow up

Don’t

- Be aggressive
- Extend excuses
- Trivialize issue
- Speak down to complainer
- Express “know it all” attitude
- Show anxiousness to end call
- Engage in opinions or conversation



Technical skills are secondary to people skills, motivation, attitude, and desire to help. We cannot get upset, moody, or lose our temper. If we treat every person twice as well as we would like to be treated, we will communicate an invaluable message. People who feel valued will communicate that message to the community. Smile and enjoy interacting with people.

Every time we make or receive a call at work, we are representing Brevard Public Schools as well as ourselves. The impression we create will be a lasting one. The telephone is a basic tool. A ringing telephone may seem like an interruption; however, it is important to remember that the caller on the other end needs information or has information to share. We all must be conscious of the calls we make. They should be important and necessary.

Answering courtesies:

Greet the caller and state your name.

State your organization or department.

Offer your assistance.

Actively listen without interrupting.

Leave the customer with a positive feeling.

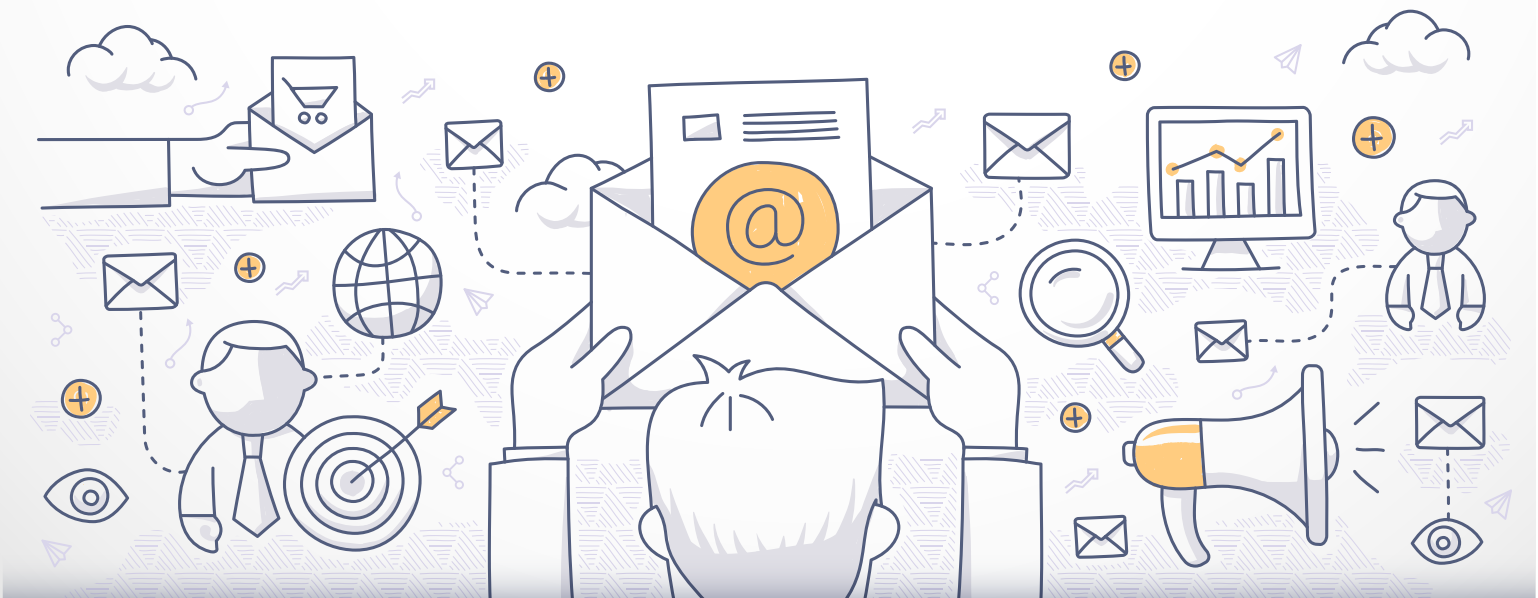
Every employee who takes a message for an administrator or co-worker, must take down accurate information and deliver it in a timely fashion. The primary form of written communication internally is email.

We utilize the best method of communication to reach our target audience.

- Be patient and ask questions to clarify information.
- Obtain full name and spelling, name of company or student referenced.
- Ask for and repeat back telephone number (all 10 digits).
- Ask for any information the caller would like to leave so you can be accurate in your email message.
- Include time, date, and your initials for the receiver's reference.
- Read over your message to edit and revise for correctness. Use proper spelling, grammar and punctuation. Your errors are a reflection on the district. Read your message before you send it!
- Response to email communication should have a reasonable expectation of 24 hours.

Professional email practices both internally and externally include:

- Reply and acknowledge that you have received it and if you cannot respond immediately, let the receiver know you will respond as soon as you research the information needed.
- Keep messages concise and to the point.
- Answer questions and clarify.
- Write in a professional tone even if you are personal friends with the employee.
- Do not write in CAPITALS; IF YOU WRITE IN CAPITALS IT SEEMS AS IF YOU ARE SHOUTING.
- If you are providing a phone number and/or address in your email, proofread them for correctness.
- Keep it simple. Avoid fancy backgrounds, signature images, and emoticons.
- When forwarding messages, forward only what you want the reader to see, eliminating lengthy contact information.
- If you are going to be out of the office for more than 24 hours, use the "Out of Office Assistant."
- Do not use email to discuss confidential information. Do not write anything you do not want sent to the media.
Remember that under Florida's public records law, all BPS emails are public information.
- Be professional, positive, and follow up with a phone call if necessary. Keep it formal.

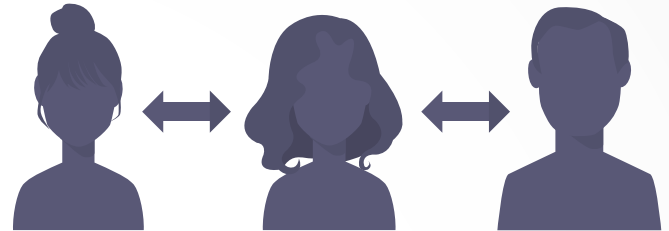
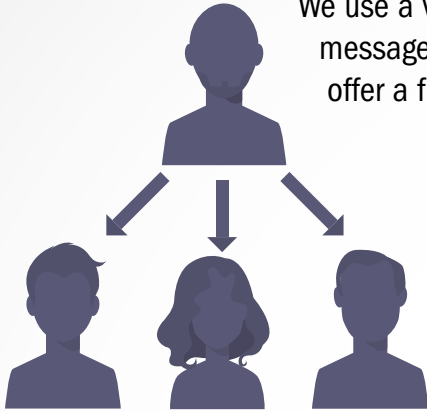


Communication Protocols

As an organization, Brevard Public Schools employees value the importance of timely communication and the commitment we share to take action promptly. We consider our joint commitment to communicate information externally and internally, as well as horizontally and vertically to reach the target audience.

We value and respect time constraints and commitments of others.

We use a variety of means to communicate important messages, exchange resources, and solicit informative feedback. It is our goal to offer a framework of flow of communication as an example of our commitments.



Scope	Message	Who Delivers	Venue	Audience	Frequency
District Office	Office updates State mandates Recognition BPS metrics	Superintendent Cabinet	Email, LTM, LTP Video Meetings	All employees	Weekly Monthly Quarterly
Department	Office updates Calendar events News, trends	Directors Managers Supervisors	Email LTM, LTP PLC's/LTM Staff Meetings	School admin. Resource personnel BPS teams Dept. staff	Weekly/Biweekly
School	Critical incidents Awards/ recognition Best practices School initiatives	School admin. Teacher leaders Support teams	Staff Meetings Internal comm. Newsletters Bulletin boards	All school staff	Weekly/Biweekly
Teams	Trends/Issues Data Analysis Staff Develop.	Teacher leaders Curricular coaches Support teams	On site meetings PD days Early release days	All grade level/ department staff	Weekly/Biweekly

We celebrate our diversity everyday in our schools. A professional and friendly tone of voice and a smile is a language all its own and is recognized all over the world.

Apologize to a caller or visitor if you are having some difficulty understanding his or her speech. Be patient and allow caller or visitor ample time to talk. Often non-native speakers must first translate their message in their head from their native language into English. You may think you know what they mean, but allow the speaker to finish their thought. If you will need someone else to help them, show your confidence in getting them help as you smile.

Be aware of people. Try to understand why they do what they do and say what they say. You do not need to agree, just genuinely listen to understand first.

When we give respect to what we do and how we do it, people respond respectfully. Show that respect by listening, showing empathy, clarifying and following through. Do what you say you'll do and positively encourage by example.

Think about the others you work with and how what you do affects them. We all have different strengths and weaknesses.

Be conscious of your own and how you affect the performance and workload of others. Give great service!

We uphold to the highest level of customer service by exceeding our customer expectations.

