



Communication with Parents or Guardians

How to communicate quickly with parents or guardians can be found in the **Going Beyond** folder for Chapter 12 or scan the QR Code in the book.

Communicating with parents and students has never been easier. Use the Internet to your advantage to convey words of welcome before students arrive in your classroom. Let everyone know you're wired for teaching and learning.

Bring your classroom to parents and guardians and let them be an observer to all that goes on. You don't have to be a technology expert to make it happen. Involve the students in the planning and dissemination of information. Parents and guardians will appreciate the immediacy of the contact and you will appreciate the time-saving benefits of using the Internet as a tool of engagement.

Here are some ways to get started.

1. Before school begins, send an email introducing yourself to parents and guardians. These are items to include in the email:

- A picture of you
- An audio or video welcome
- A picture of the classroom
- Beginning and ending time of school
- General curriculum for the first month
- Best ways to get in touch with you
- Ways you'll communicate with them
- Expectations of students
- Homework policy
- Special supplies needed
- Dates to save on their calendars
- Eagerness you have for the upcoming school year
- An attachment letter of welcome to the student

This letter includes the first homework assignment to be brought to class on the first day of school. Make it fun and easy.

2. Most school districts host teacher-made websites. Use the site to share homework, projects, and what students are learning. If your school doesn't host a site, most teenagers know how to make one—if you don't. Ask for help. Start small—just post homework and expand as you get comfortable with the technology. Free and easy-to-use sites for creating sites are PBworks, Wix, WebStarts, Weebly, and Protopage.

3. Host a webcam session. Create a link for parents to login “live” to watch a lesson being presented, the culmination of a class project, or a special celebration. Keep the camera off except for times you want to broadcast.

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4. Use your interactive whiteboard to accumulate and store work and messages. At the end of the day, download, save, and email to parents. For those without email, print it for students to take home to share.
5. Blog. In simple terms, a blog is a website where you write your thoughts on an ongoing basis. The latest information shows up at the top, so your visitors can read what's new. You can choose whether you want to accept comments on your blog site or use it as a one-way street of communication. WordPress and Google's Blogger are popular blog creation sites.
6. Tweet. Twitter enables users to post a limited number of characters of text per tweet and can serve as an informative bulletin board for both parents and students.

The technology is there for you to use not only in the classroom as a teaching tool, but also as a means of keeping the lines of communication open with parents and guardians wherever they may be in the world.