

Internet and Email - Appendix 2

Employee Agreement for the use of school technology



Purpose

To remain competitive, better serve our pupils and provide our employees with the best tools to do their jobs Baynards Primary School for and on behalf of Essex County Council makes available to our workforce access to one or more forms of electronic media and services, including computers, e-mail, telephones, voicemail, fax machines, external electronic bulletin boards, wire services, online services, intranet, Internet and the World Wide Web.

The school encourages the use of these media and associated services because they can make communication more efficient and effective and because they are valuable sources of information about educational issues, ideas, technology, and new products and services. However, all employees and everyone connected with the organisation should remember that electronic media and services provided by the school are school property and their purpose is to facilitate and support school business. All computer users have the responsibility to use these resources in a professional, ethical, and lawful manner.

To ensure that all employees are responsible, the following guidelines have been established for using e-mail and the Internet. No policy can lay down rules to cover every possible situation. Instead, it is designed to express the philosophy of the school and set forth general principles when using electronic media and services.

Prohibited communications

Electronic media cannot be used for knowingly transmitting, retrieving, or storing any communication that is:

- Discriminatory or harassing;
- Derogatory to any individual or group;
- Obscene, sexually explicit or pornographic;
- Defamatory or threatening;
- In violation of any license governing the use of software; or
- Engaged in for any purpose that is illegal or contrary to the school's policy or interests.

Personal use

The computers, electronic media and services provided by the school are primarily for educational use to assist employees in the performance of their jobs. Limited, occasional, or incidental use of electronic media (sending or receiving) for personal purposes is understandable and acceptable, and all such use should be done in a manner that does not negatively affect the systems' use for their educational purposes. However, employees are expected to demonstrate a sense of responsibility and not abuse this privilege.

Access to employee communications

The school reserves the right to routinely gather logs for most electronic activities or monitor employee communications directly, e.g., telephone numbers dialed, sites accessed, call length, and time at which calls are made, for the following purposes:

- Cost analysis;
- Resource allocation;
- Optimum technical management of information resources; and
- Detecting patterns of use that indicate employees are violating school policies or engaging in illegal activity.

The school reserves the right, at its discretion, to review any employee's electronic files and messages to the extent necessary to ensure electronic media and services are being used in compliance with the law, this policy and other school policies.

Employees should not assume electronic communications are completely private. Accordingly, if they have sensitive information to transmit, they should use other means.

Under no circumstances should pupil-named data be transmitted over the Internet or email. The school office has use of encrypted data systems for this purpose.

Software

To prevent computer viruses from being transmitted through the school's computer system, unauthorized downloading of any unauthorized software is strictly prohibited. Only software registered through the school may be downloaded. Employees should use virus trapping software on any home computer that is used to download planning or other information onto the school computers. Employees should contact the headteacher if they have any questions.

Security/appropriate use

Employees must respect the confidentiality of other individuals' electronic communications. Except in cases in which explicit authorization has been granted by school management, employees are prohibited from engaging in, or attempting to engage in:

- hacking or obtaining access to systems or accounts they are not authorized to use;
- using other people's log-ins or passwords;
- breaching, testing, or monitoring computer or network security measures.

No e-mail or other electronic communications can be sent that attempt to hide the identity of the sender or represent the sender as someone else.

Electronic media and services should not be used in a manner that is likely to cause network congestion or significantly hamper the ability of other people to access and use the system.

Anyone obtaining electronic access to other companies' or individuals' materials must respect all copyrights and cannot copy, retrieve, modify or forward copyrighted materials except as permitted by the copyright owner.

Encryption

Employees can use encryption software supplied to them by the systems administrator for purposes of safeguarding sensitive or confidential business information. Employees who use encryption on files stored on a school computer must provide their supervisor with a sealed hard copy record (to be retained in a secure location) of all of the passwords and/or encryption keys necessary to access the files.

Participation in online forums

Employees should remember that any messages or information sent on school-provided facilities to one or more individuals via an electronic network - for example, Internet mailing lists, bulletin boards, and online services - are statements identifiable and attributable to the school.

The school recognises that participation in some forums might be important to the performance of an employee's job. For instance, an employee might find the answer to a technical problem by consulting members of a news group devoted to the technical area.

Violations

Any employee who abuses the privilege of their access to e-mail or the Internet in violation of this policy will be subject to corrective action, including possible disciplinary action, legal action, and criminal liability.

Advice to staff on the use of social networking sites

There have been many issues with Facebook and other social networking sites in schools over the last couple of years.

The internet is a public domain not a private one and staff in schools must be aware that information which they share and post is accessible to the public at large.

It is therefore particularly important that staff do not name or discuss individuals – pupils, staff, parents or governors – on social networking sites. To do so would constitute a serious breach of confidentiality and data protection procedures.

All staff in schools must also be aware that they are particularly vulnerable to accusations of inappropriate behaviour, even outside of school, and that these could potentially give rise to the involvement of the GTC and formal disciplinary procedures.

All school staff, particularly teachers, risk exposure in the press and potential complaints to headteachers, governors and the Local Authority when information posted on the Internet suggests behaviour which compromises their position as role

models to pupils.

Our school offers the following advice to staff:

1. Ensure that you do not post any photographs on the Internet which could give cause for embarrassment.
2. Do not post any comments which could compromise your own integrity or which could bring the school, your colleagues, parents or the school community into disrepute.
3. Do not discuss school matters, including comments about pupils, staff, parents or governor on social networking sites.
4. Check that you are happy with the privacy levels on your pages and review these settings regularly.
5. You are very strongly advised not to allow pupils to become 'friends' on these sites. This is because it is deemed to be inappropriate to encourage out-of-school relationships with pupils and because of the nature of some of the likely content of material on sites used by adults.
6. If a complaint is received about a member of school staff then this will be dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedures and in consultation with Essex County Council's HR Schools' Team.