

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

E-MAIL AND INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Email Acceptable Use

1. Introduction

E-mail is widely used to help manage and deliver our services. Users should read this policy alongside the Council's other IT policies, the relevant codes of conduct (including the Code of Conduct for Employees), and the e-mail guidelines which appear in the Annex to this Policy.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees, including those working from home or from other locations, and councillors;
- Other workers (including casual and agency workers, secondees and contractors) using the Council's equipment and networks.

All existing users and new employees having access to the system will be required to sign an agreement stating that they have read and understood these policies prior to being granted access. From time to time staff and councillors will be asked to sign this policy (e.g. when changes have been made to the policy).

3. Policy statement

The Council encourages users to make effective use of e-mail. Such use should always be lawful. It should not compromise the Council's information and computer systems nor have the potential to damage the Council's reputation. Users must comply with this policy as a condition of access to e-mail facilities.

4. Appropriate use

The Council expects all users to use e-mail responsibly and according to the following conditions:

4.1 Personal use

E-mail is an important tool in the management and delivery of Council services and this is its main purpose. Personal use of e-mail is permitted providing that:

- Personal use is made only outside actual working hours and for limited periods.
- Users do not run private businesses using the Council's facilities.
- Users make it clear to the intended recipient that the message is sent by the user in their personal capacity, not in their capacity as a representative of the Council.
- The conditions applying to business use in paragraph 4.2 are followed in respect of all personal use.

This policy also applies to the use of all internet mail providers.

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4.2 *Business use*

Use of e-mail is subject to the following conditions:

- Users should read the e-mail guidelines in the Annex to this document before using e-mail and should make sure that their use of it follows this guidance.
- E-mail is never completely confidential or secure. Messages appear to be temporary by nature but they can be widely distributed and easily restored from backup copies. E-mail messages have the same status in law as written correspondence and are open to the same legal challenges. Users must therefore apply the same standards to e-mails as they do to written correspondence. All external emails will have an automatic disclaimer.

When using e-mail the following must be borne in mind:

- Users must not commit the Council to purchasing or acquiring goods or services unless authorised to do so.
- Users should be cautious about any e-mail that asks the reader to send it to others. Where there is any room for doubt, please speak to your line manager.
- Users must not forward e-mail chain letters but should delete them.
- Users must comply with the Data Protection Act when placing personal data in messages or attachments.
- Users must not download software without specific permission.

4.3 *Inappropriate use*

Users must not access, display or circulate any information in the following categories:

- Pornography (including child pornography)
- Gambling
- Promoting discrimination of any kind
- Promoting racial or religious hatred
- Involving threats or promoting violence
- Promoting illegal acts
- Any other information which may be offensive to colleagues

Incidents that appear to involve deliberate sending or receiving of e-mails that contain the following material will be reported to the Police:

- Images of child abuse (images of children, apparently under 16 years old) involved in sexual activity or posed to be sexually provocative
- Adult material that potentially breaches the Obscene Publications Act in the UK
- Criminally racist material in the UK

4.4 *Accidental access to inappropriate material*

If an e-mail containing inappropriate material is opened accidentally it should be sent to the Town Clerk who will discuss the matter with the Council's IT support provider.

5.0 Monitoring

The Council's system filters junk and profane e-mail to improve efficiency and enforce this policy. Users who receive this sort of e-mail should contact their line manager who will investigate whether the filtering can be improved. Managers may inspect any e-mail correspondence to see if users are complying with the policy. Any potential misuse identified from monitoring will be dealt with and may result in dismissal.

Internet Acceptable Use

1. Introduction

The internet is widely used to help manage and deliver our services. Users should read this policy alongside the Council's other IT policies and the relevant codes of conduct (including the Code of Conduct for Employees).

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees, including those working from home or from other locations, and councillors;
- Other workers (including casual and agency workers, secondees and contractors) using the council's equipment and networks.

All existing users and new employees having access to the system will be required to sign an agreement stating that they have read and understood these policies prior to being granted access. From time to time staff and councillors will be asked to sign this policy (e.g. when changes have been made to the policy).

3. Policy statement

The Council encourages users to make effective use of the internet. Such use should always be lawful. It should not compromise the Council's information and computer systems nor have the potential to damage the Council's reputation.

4. Appropriate use

The Council expects all users to use the internet responsibly and according to the following conditions:

4.1 Personal use

The internet is an important tool in the management and delivery of Council services and this is its main purpose. Personal use of the internet is permitted providing that:

- Personal use is made only outside actual working hours and for limited periods.
- Users do not run private businesses using the Council's facilities.
- The conditions applying to business use in paragraph 4.2 are followed in respect of all personal use.

- Regular and extensive personal use of the internet may result in disciplinary action. Whether or not this use has been during work time will be taken into account.

4.2 *Business use*

Use of the internet is subject to the following conditions:

- Users must not commit the Council to purchasing or acquiring goods or services unless authorised to do so.
- Employees may join, and publish to, newsgroups of professional interest or relevant to their work with their line manager's approval.
- Users must comply with the Data Protection Act when placing personal data in newsgroups and on web sites.
- Users must not download software other than static files e.g. Word documents, PDFs, but not applications or activeX controls.
- Users must comply with licence terms and conditions when copying or downloading material covered by copyright law.
- Information on the internet is not always accurate so users must verify information before use.

4.3 *Inappropriate use*

Users must not access, display or circulate any information in the following categories:

- Pornography (including child pornography)
- Gambling
- Promoting discrimination of any kind
- Promoting racial or religious hatred
- Involving threats or promoting violence
- Promoting illegal acts
- Any other information which may be offensive to colleagues

Incidents that appear to involve deliberate access to websites, newsgroups and on-line groups that contain the following material will be reported to the police:

- Images of child abuse (images of children, apparently under 16 years old) involved in sexual activity or posed to be sexually provocative
- Adult material that potentially breaches the Obscene Publications Act in the UK
- Criminally racist material in the UK

4.4 *Accidental access to inappropriate material*

Any user who inadvertently enters a site which could be deemed unsuitable must report it to their line manager.

5.0 Monitoring

The Council's IT systems allow for the use of the internet to be monitored and this may be done to see whether users are complying with the policy. Any potential misuse identified may amount to gross misconduct and may result in dismissal.

Declaration

I have read and understood the e-mail and internet acceptable use policy. I agree to adhere to the conditions of use and understand that a deliberate breach of them may result in disciplinary action.

Name: (please print)	
Signature:	
Date:	

Please sign and return to the Council Offices.