



Appendix B

Internet, Email and Instant Messaging Policy

Revision History

Date	Version	Description	Signed
14 July 17	Draft 1.0	First Draft	PJ
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1.0 Introduction

This document sets out the policy on the use of internet facilities, use of email and instant messaging facilities for all staff and other users who work for, or on behalf of Derry City and Strabane District Council. This policy should be read in conjunction with "Derry City and Strabane District Council ICT Policies and Procedures" and "Derry City and Strabane District Council Social Media Policy."

Access to the internet will be agreed with your Head of Service and relate to a defined business purpose.

Email and IM systems are provided by the Council to allow employees to communicate internally and with third parties in an effective, efficient and timely manner. However, email and IM can put the Council at risk from a number of threats. These range from information being obtained by unauthorized people to legal action caused by inappropriate use of the systems.

The basic aim of this policy is to ensure that, in using the internet, email and Instant Messaging, neither you as an individual nor Derry City and Strabane District Council breaks the law, does anything unethical or anti-social, or damages the interests of Derry City and Strabane District Council

It is vital that you read this policy carefully. If there is anything that you do not understand, it is your responsibility to ask your manager to explain. Once you have read and understood this Policy, you must sign it and then return the signed copy to the Human Resources department.

2.0 Internet Personal Use

Internet access provided by Derry City and Strabane District Council is primarily for business use. Occasional and reasonable personal use is permitted provided that this does not interfere with the performance of your duties, and is restricted to staff free time (when clocked out). Members of staff must obtain approval their line manager/Head of Service to use the council network to browse the internet for personal use.

Council Internet should not be used for private business activities. Abuse of this privilege will result in disciplinary action against the employee concerned.

2.1 Internet Prohibited Use

Internet access provided by Derry City and Strabane District Council shall not be used for:

- Intentionally accessing or transmitting material which is obscene, sexually explicit, sectarian, defamatory, racist, incites or depicts violence, describes techniques for criminal or terrorist acts or which represents values which are contrary to those of the Council.
- Knowingly doing anything which is illegal; under UK law or the law of any other relevant country;
- Perpetrating any form of fraud, or software, film or music piracy.
- Sending offensive or harassing material to others.
- Downloading commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to third parties, unless this download is covered or permitted under a commercial agreement or other such license.
- Gaining access to unauthorized areas ("hacking").
- Creating or supporting any internet messages or postings that are intended to harass, annoy or alarm any person or organization.
- Publishing defamatory and/or knowingly false material about the council, members, employees or customers on social networking sites, "blogs", or any online publishing format.
- Revealing confidential information about the council in a personal online posting, upload or transmission – including financial information and information relating to our customers, business plans, policies, staff and/or internal discussions.
- Undertaking deliberate activities that waste staff effort or networked resources.
- Introducing any form of malicious software into the computer network.
- Browsing under an alias

2.2 Internet Monitoring

The Council's Internal Audit monitors and audits all internet usage on its network for the purposes of assuring system security, proper usage, and for performance impact of the network. The monitoring system records the person's username, computer network address, website name, date, time and duration of visit. The Council also blocks and filters access to Internet sites that are considered inappropriate or offensive. The ability to access a website does not in itself mean you are permitted to visit it.

3.1 Email and Instant messaging as a form of communication

Email and instant messaging is designed to be an open and transparent method of communicating. However, it cannot be guaranteed that the message will be received or read, nor that the content will be understood in the way that the sender of the email or instant messaging intended. It is therefore the responsibility of the person sending an email to decide whether it is the most appropriate method for conveying information.

Instant Messaging is a handy tool for quickly checking information or arranging a short notice meeting and collaborating but should not be used for communicating financial information, authorisations, decisions, historic or other information that must be retained for statutory or Council purposes e.g. it may be needed in a response to an FOI request or be part of an audit trail.

Instant messaging should only be used for informal communications with colleagues. Any discussions pertinent to the Council's business should be conducted via email so that a formal record exists

3.2 All emails received and transmitted are Council Records

Any communications and information transmitted, received, or archived by Derry City and Strabane District Council computer systems, including email and IM, belong to Derry City and Strabane District Council.

Emails and IMs held in Council systems are considered to be part of the corporate record. This Policy is notice that Derry City and Strabane District Council employees shall have no expectation of privacy in anything they store, send or receive on the Council's email and IM system.

The Council reserves the right to monitor usage of email and IM, to ensure security and operational availability. It also reserves the right to access and disclose any email and IM, to ensure compliance to Council policy and the Council's legal and statutory requirements.

3.3 Monitoring of Email and Instant messaging usage

All users should be aware that messaging and email usage is monitored electronically and recorded centrally. The monitoring of (outgoing and incoming) traffic will be undertaken so that Council:

- can plan and manage its resources effectively;
- ensures that users act only in accordance with policies and procedures;
- ensures that standards are maintained;
- can prevent and detect any crime;

- can investigate any unauthorised use; and
- complies with informational security and legislation requirements.

Whilst respecting the privacy of authorised users, under the Data Protection Code of Practice, Council maintains its legal right to monitor and audit the use of email by authorised users under the Lawful Business Practice Regulations 2000. Users should be aware that deletion of e-mail from individual accounts does not necessarily result in permanent deletion from the Council's ICT systems.

Note: IM conversations are not routinely retained or archived, but may be forensically recovered if required for criminal or disciplinary investigation purposes in accordance with the above authorisations

3.4 Access to another employee's email

Access to another employee's email is **strictly forbidden** unless: -

- (a) The employee has given their consent,
- (b) Their email needs to be accessed by their line manager for specific work purposes whilst they are absent
- (c) An appropriately authorised investigation is being undertaken.

In the case of (b) and (c) authorisations must be obtained from the corresponding Head of service, Director or Chief Executive.

Access granted to email and network accounts must be for a specific purpose and **proportionate to the need** having regard to the rights and freedoms of the employee and the expectations of a reasonable level of privacy with regard to personal communications. Managers must only open emails which are relevant to the business need and/or purpose stated.

3.5 Personal Use

The Derry City and Strabane District Council email system is provided primarily for work related activities. Occasional and reasonable personal use is permitted provided that this does not interfere with the performance of your duties, and is restricted to staff free time (when clocked out), and with the consent of your Line Manager/Head of Service.

Abuse of this privilege will result in disciplinary action against the employee concerned. Personal emails must be clearly marked as being "personal". It is an

explicit condition of using this facility that users accept that the content of such emails may be accessed by management, without notice or any requirement for further consent.

While it is not intended to undertake routine monitoring of the contents of emails (personal or otherwise), emails may be accessed at any time either as a result of checking an officer's email account for business reasons if they are absent from work, or as part of an exercise to monitor compliance with internet and email usage policy.

3.6 Only Derry City and Strabane District Council email accounts are to be used for council business

Non-work email accounts must not be used to conduct or support official Council business. All emails that are used to conduct or support official Derry City and Strabane District Council business must be sent using an official @derrystrabane.com email address.

Web based personal email must never be used to conduct Council business. Council data should not be forwarded to personal web based email without the knowledge and explicit written consent of your Head of Service, Director or Chief Executive

3.7 Email must be treated as formal communication

Email must not be considered to be any less formal than memos or letters that are sent out from the Council. When sending external email, particular care should be taken to ensure that the communication does not contain any material which would reflect poorly on the Council's reputation or its relationship with customers, clients or business partners.

Email templates must follow the DCSDC Corporate Email template in Appendix xx

The photo/image in your email account must either

- (a) remain blank which is the default setting, or
- (b) use an image which forms part of the email operating system, or,
- (c) use a pen pic photo of the user which has been approved by Human Resources.

3.8 Junk Mail

There may be instances where a user will receive unsolicited mass junk email or spam. It is advised that users delete such messages without reading them. Do not reply to the email. Even to attempt to remove the email address from the distribution list can confirm the existence of an address following a speculative email.

Before giving your email address to a third party, for instance a website, consider carefully the possible consequences of that address being passed (possibly sold on) to an unknown third party, and whether the benefits outweigh the potential problems.

Chain letter emails **must not** be forwarded using Derry City and Strabane District Council email systems or facilities.

3.9 Use of Non-council web mail accounts

Occasional and reasonable use of personal web based email services is permitted provided that this does not interfere with the performance of your duties, is restricted to staff free time (when clocked out), and with the consent of your Line Manager/Head of Service.

Personal email accounts must not be used to conduct Council business.

3.10 Confidential of information when using email

All staff are under a general requirement to maintain the confidentiality of information. There are also particular responsibilities under Data Protection legislation to maintain confidentiality of personal data.

Staff must make every effort to ensure that the confidentiality of email is appropriately maintained.

Care should be taken when addressing all emails, but particularly where they include SENSITIVE or RESTRICTED information, to prevent accidental transmission to unintended recipients. This content should be encrypted or password protected before sending

Instant Messaging should never be used to communicate PROTECTED or RESTRICTED information.

3.11 Access to Email outside the council network

Email must only be accessed through Council provided devices. Where appropriate, the council will provide users with mobile email devices to support the delivery of business.

It must be recognised that these devices are more susceptible to theft and/or loss and therefore staff must adhere to the following:

Only approved mobile phones devices must be used to synchronise Email Accounts to. Approved devices have been selected to ensure that safeguards are in place to protect any data downloaded to the device e.g. PIN numbers.

Staff must only request the functionality required to undertake their job role e.g. if only calendar access is required then staff should not request all mailbox functionality to be synchronised to the device.

Due to their relatively small size staff must take extra care when responding to emails or sending an email message from a mobile device, especially with regard to ensuring that the correct email recipient has been selected. These devices usually have very small key pads or on screen keyboards which make it easy to input an incorrect character which may result in the misdirection of an email.

Any loss of a mobile device being used to synchronise an Email account must be reported to the Digital Services Helpdesk at the earliest opportunity so as to minimise the risk of loss of data.

3.12 Email Disclaimer

The legal status of an email message is similar to any other form of written communication. Consequently, any email message sent from a facility provided to conduct or support official Derry City and Strabane District Council business should be considered to be an official communication from the Council. In order to ensure that Derry City and Strabane District Council is protected adequately from misuse of email, the following disclaimer will be on all external emails:

Disclaimer

The information contained in this communication from the sender is confidential. It is intended solely for use by the recipient and others authorized to receive it. If you are not the recipient, you are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, distribution or taking action in relation of the contents of this information is strictly prohibited and may be unlawful.

This email has been scanned for viruses and malware, and may have been automatically archived by **Mimecast Ltd**, an innovator in Software as a Service (SaaS) for business. Providing a **safer** and **more useful** place for your human generated data. Specializing in; Security, archiving and compliance. To find out more [Click Here](#).

3.13 Email Guidelines

- Users should try to avoid sending excessively large e-mails or attachments unless absolutely necessary. Contact the Digital Services Section to utilise compression techniques where appropriate.
- Users are encouraged to practice good 'housekeeping' with regard to e-mail facilities, especially given that individual storage space restrictions are in place. It is therefore, the user's responsibility to store only items that may be required for retrospective access
- Viruses can also be transmitted via e-mail messages to many users at one time. Care should be taken to ensure that all data sent or received is virus-free.
- If a user receives an e-mail in error, they must inform the sender immediately and delete the message from the system.

3.14 Non-Permitted use of email

Email should not be used for any of the following:

- The transmission of unsolicited commercial or advertising material, chain letters, or other junk-mail of any kind, internally or to other organizations.
- The creation or transmission of any disruptive, defamatory, offensive or obscene messages and/or images, including offensive comments about race, gender, disabilities, age, sexual orientation, pornography, religious beliefs and practice, political beliefs, or national origin, or which could reasonably be considered inappropriate.
- The creation or transmission of material which is designed or likely to cause annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety.
- The creation or transmission of material that is abusive or threatening to others, or serves to harass or bully others.
- Misaddressed messages and intentional or inadvertent revelation of corporate confidentiality
- Copyright Infringement
- Users must not use anonymous mailing services or represent themselves as another person to conceal their identify when mailing through the Internet, or falsify e-mails to make them appear to originate from someone else, or provide false information to any Internet service which requests name, e-mail address or other details.
- Activities that unreasonably waste staff effort or use of networked resources, or activities that unreasonably serve to deny the service to others

4.0 Disclaimer of Liability

The Council will not be responsible for any damages direct or indirect arising out of the unauthorised use of its Internet, email or instant messaging resources. Any liability remains with the individual user.

4.1 Disciplinary procedures

Any employee found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

4.2 Review Policy

This policy may be reviewed and amended to reflect changing circumstances, you will be informed of any such changes.



Derry City and Strabane District Council

INTERNET AND E-MAIL POLICY

All users granted Internet and e-mail access using Council facilities must sign the following statement:

“I have received a written copy of Derry City and Strabane district Council’s Internet, Email and instant messaging Policy and Guidelines. I fully understand the terms of this policy and agree to abide by them.

I realise that the Council’s security software may record for management use the Internet address of any site that I visit and keep a record of any network activity in which I transmit or receive any kind of file. I acknowledge that any message I send or receive may be recorded and stored in an archive file for management use. I know that violation of this policy could lead to disciplinary action, which may include dismissal, or even criminal prosecution”.

This policy will not infringe on any existing, or future, individual statutory rights.

Signed :..... **Date:**

Print Name :.....

Department/Section :.....