

# INTERNET AND EMAIL POLICY

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>PURPOSE.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>BACKGROUND .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>APPLYING THE POLICY .....</b>	<b>4</b>

Greenwich

## 1 Purpose

This document sets out the policy and defines the acceptable use of the Royal Borough of Greenwich's use email and internet facilities. This document applies to all staff and councillors working for or on behalf of the Royal Borough.

## 2 Background

### 2.1 Email

Electronic mail (email) systems are provided by the Royal Borough to allow employees to communicate internally and with third parties in an effective, efficient and timely manner. Email can, however, put the Royal Borough at risk from a number of threats. These range from information being obtained by unauthorised people to legal action caused by inappropriate use of the systems.

### 2.2 Internet

The Internet provides the Royal Borough with access to valuable sources of information as well as inexpensive connectivity to a wide range of third parties. It is seen as an important part of the Royal Borough's communication infrastructure. Use of the Internet by employees of the Royal Borough is permitted and encouraged where such use supports the goals and objectives of service delivery. In order to ensure that employees comply with current legislation and use the Internet in an acceptable way, and do not create unnecessary business risk to the Royal Borough by their misuse of the Internet all staff must ensure that they are familiar with this Policy.

## 3 Applying the Policy

### 3.1 All emails sent and received are Royal Borough records

Any communications and information transmitted, received or archived by the Royal Borough computer systems, belong to the Royal Borough of Greenwich. Emails held on Royal Borough equipment are considered to be part of the corporate record, in addition to this, email provides a record of staff activities. The Royal Borough reserves the right to monitor usage of email, to ensure security and operational availability. It also reserves the right to access and disclose any email, to ensure compliance to the policy and the Royal Borough's legal and statutory requirements. To assist with this process, logs are kept of all email usage. Access to email resources is provided for work related activities and personal use is **not** permitted, unless it is specifically for one of the following reasons:

- Emails which are in connection with personal child care responsibilities;
- Emails which relate to dependents who are ill or the employees own health; and
- Emails which, in the opinion of the manager, are necessary to respond to exceptional situations. In this case, a manager's prior agreement will be necessary.

### 3.2 Only Royal Borough email accounts are to be used for official business

Non-work email accounts **must not** be used to conduct or support official Royal Borough business. Councillors and staff must ensure that any emails containing sensitive information is sent from an

official Royal Borough email. All emails that represent aspects of Royal Borough business or Royal Borough administrative arrangements are the property of the Royal Borough and not of any individual employee. All emails that are used to conduct or support official Royal Borough business must be sent using an official Royal Borough email address.

Web-based personal email must never be used to conduct Royal Borough business. Royal Borough data should not be forwarded to personal web-based email without the knowledge and explicit written consent of a manager.

### **3.3 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 a particular service of the Royal Borough. 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 Royal Borough's reputation or its relationship with customers, clients or business partners.

Email is designed to be an open and transparent method of communicating. 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 intended. It is therefore the responsibility of the person sending an email to decide whether email is the most appropriate method for conveying time critical information or of communicating in the particular circumstances.

### **3.4 Users must act appropriately when receiving 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 (those that request you forward the message to one or more additional recipients who are unknown to the original sender) **must not** be forwarded using Royal Borough systems or facilities.

### **3.5 Staff must maintain confidentiality 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 the confidentiality of personal data.

Staff must make every effort to ensure that the confidentiality of email is appropriately maintained. Staff should be aware that a message is not deleted from the system until all recipients of the message and of any forwarded or attached copies have deleted their copies. Moreover, confidentiality cannot be assured when messages are sent over outside networks, such as the Internet, because of the insecure nature of most such networks and the number of people to whom the messages can be freely circulated without the knowledge of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

Care should be taken when addressing all emails, but particularly where they include RESTRICTED information, to prevent accidental transmission to unintended recipients. Particular care should be taken if the email client software auto-completes an email address as the user begins typing the recipient's name.

### 3.6 Users must act appropriately to prevent virus transmission

Computer viruses are easily transmitted via email and internet downloads. Full use must therefore be made of the Royal Borough's anti-virus software. If any user has concerns about possible virus transmission, they must report the concern according to the Royal Borough's Incident Management process. In particular, users:

- Must not transmit by email any file attachments which they know to be infected with a virus.
- Must not download data or programs of any nature from unknown sources.
- Must not forward virus warnings other than to ICT Security email address in accordance with the Royal Borough's Security Incident Policy.
- Must report any suspected files to ICT Security email address in accordance with the Royal Borough's Security Incident Policy.

### 3.7 Non-permissible use of email

Email should not be used for the following:

- a) For the transmission of unsolicited commercial or advertising material, chain letters, or other junk-mail of any kind, internally or to other organisations.
- b) For the unauthorised transmission to a third party of RESTRICTED material concerning the activities of the Royal Borough.
- c) For the transmission of material such that this infringes the copyright of another person, including intellectual property rights.
- d) For activities that unreasonably waste staff effort or use networked resources, or activities that unreasonably serve to deny the service to other users.
- e) For activities that corrupt or destroy other users' data.
- f) For activities that disrupt the work of other users.
- g) For the creation or transmission of any offensive, obscene or indecent images, data, or other material, or any data capable of being resolved into obscene or indecent images or material.
- h) For the creation or transmission of material which is designed or likely to cause annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety.
- i) For the creation or transmission of material that is abusive or threatening to others, or serves to harass or bully others.
- j) For the creation or transmission of material that either discriminates or encourages discrimination on racial or ethnic grounds, or on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, political or religious beliefs.
- k) For the creation or transmission of defamatory material.
- l) For the creation or transmission of material that includes false claims of a deceptive nature.
- m) For so-called 'flaming' - i.e. the use of impolite terms or language, including offensive or condescending terms.
- n) For activities that violate the privacy of other users.
- o) For unfairly criticising individuals, including copy distribution to other individuals.
- p) For publishing to others the text of messages written on a one-to-one basis, without the prior express consent of the author.
- q) For the creation or transmission of anonymous messages - i.e. without clear identification of the sender.
- r) For the creation or transmission of material which brings the Royal Borough into disrepute.

### **3.8 Important**

Personal use of the Council's e-mail system is **NOT** permitted unless the use is specifically for one of the following criteria:

- e-mails which are in connections with personal child care responsibilities;
- e-mails which relate to dependants who are ill / the employees own health; and
- e-mails which in the opinion of a manager, are necessary to respond to exceptional situations. In this case, a manager's prior agreement will be necessary.

### **3.9 Employees must use the Internet acceptably**

The following is deemed unacceptable use or behaviour by employees:

- a) visiting Internet sites that contain obscene, hateful, pornographic or otherwise illegal material
- b) using the computer to perpetrate any form of fraud, or software, film or music piracy
- c) using the Internet to send offensive or harassing material to other users
- d) 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 licence
- e) gaining access to unauthorised areas ('hacking')
- f) creating or supporting any Internet messages or postings that are intended to harass, annoy or alarm any person or organisation
- g) publishing defamatory and/or knowingly false material about the R, members of staff, or customers on social networking sites, 'blogs' (online journals), or any online publishing format
- h) revealing confidential information about the Royal Borough 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
- i) undertaking deliberate activities that waste staff effort or networked resources
- j) introducing any form of malicious software into the corporate network

### **3.10 Employees must NOT store Royal Borough data on third party websites**

The Royal Borough cannot guarantee the security of third party websites or data storage. Therefore, no Royal Borough data may be stored or sent to such websites. This includes such storage and file transfer sites as Dropbox, GoogleDocs, Yousendit, Megaupload. All business-related information produced, collected and/or processed in the course of Royal Borough work remains the property of the Royal Borough. This includes such information stored on third-party websites such as webmail service providers and social networking sites, such as Facebook and LinkedIn.

Where the Royal Borough has a legal requirement to share data with another organisation and it is necessary to upload the data onto a third party website, this must be approved by an appropriately senior person within that department.

### **3.11 The Internet must not be used for private business**

No member of staff is permitted to use Royal Borough Internet access, at any time, for private business activities.

### **3.12 Royal Borough email must not be used on websites**

Royal Borough email addresses may not be used when registering on websites for personal use.

### **3.13 Internet use will be monitored**

The Royal Borough of Greenwich accepts that the use of the Internet is a valuable business tool and provides Internet-related resources for business purposes. However, its misuse can have a negative impact upon employee productivity and the reputation of the business. The Royal Borough will monitor Internet access by staff and will maintain a log of volume of Internet and network traffic, together with all websites visited by Royal Borough staff. The Royal Borough 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.

If a manager has concerns about misuse of the internet Internet use by a member of staff, they may request an investigation be carried out, by logging a request with the *ICT Security email address*.  
Changes, Approval and review of policies

### **3.14 Annual review, approval, and adoption**

This policy and the commitment to ensuring the Royal Borough Internet and email is use appropriately is subject to continuous, systematic review and improvement. This Internet and Email Policy will be governed by the Information Governance Steering Group, which is chaired by the Information Governance Lead.

### **3.15 Formal approval, adoption and review**

This policy will be formally signed off by the Greenwich Management Team.