Email
Policy

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Caroline Parker	Information Services Manager

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This instruction applies to:
This policy applies to anyone accessing or using Oxfordshire County Council's email systems under any circumstances. This includes all temporary and permanent Council staff, contractors, staff working under contract for external agencies commissioned by the Council, volunteers and Councillors.

For action by:
As above.

For information:
As above.

Revision History

Version	Date	Author / Reviewer	Notes
5.2	01/08/2019	Information Management Team	Minor amendments
5.1	27/06/2018	Information Management Team	Minor amendments
5.0	18/04/2018	Information Management Team	GDPR/Annual Review
4.0	18/10/2016	Information Management Team	Review.
3.0	01/12/2015	Information Management Team	Review.
2.1	12/12/2014	Information Management Team	Minor amendments.

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Email Policy

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Contents

Email Policy

1. Policy Statement

Oxfordshire County Council provides an e-mail system to its users as a tool for communication. As a minimum the council will:

- Ensure that the e-mail system is available for users.

- Protect the e-mail system from unauthorised or accidental modification ensuring the accuracy and completeness of the council's information assets.

- Protect information assets against unauthorised disclosure.

- Provide secure methods of e-mailing personal and sensitive content both within and outside the council.

Please note: throughout this policy are links to other relevant policies and procedures. All users should take the time to familiarise themselves with all of these documents.

2. Purpose

This policy sets out the requirements for the use of any e-mail system for council business by advising users of what is deemed acceptable use of those systems.

3. Scope

This policy applies to anyone accessing or using Oxfordshire County Council's e-mail systems under any circumstances. This includes all temporary and permanent Council staff, contractors, staff working under contract for external agencies commissioned by the Council, volunteers and Councillors.

4. Policy Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy may lead to disciplinary action. In the case of council employees this will be in accordance with the agreed disciplinary procedures and [Officers Code of Conduct](); for elected members it will be in accordance with the [Code of Conduct for Members](). For other groups the equivalent procedures and standards will apply.

It should also be noted that any information - including e-mails and attachments, texts, pictures and media posts - may need to be disclosed under the Data Protection Act 2018, General Data Protection Regulations and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

If you do not understand the implications of this policy or how it may apply to you, seek advice from your line manager.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

All users of Oxfordshire County Council e-mail facilities must agree to abide by the requirements of this policy and associated procedures.

All managers are responsible for ensuring their staff abide by the requirements of this policy.

6. Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, but no less frequently than every 12 months.

Policy review will be undertaken by the Information Services Manager.

7. E-mail Procedures

The following procedures **must be** followed when using Oxfordshire County Council e-mail facilities.

All e-mails used to conduct, or support Oxfordshire County Council business must be sent using the correct e-mail method:

a. Internally and for non-sensitive external e-mail this will be an "@oxfordshire.gov.uk" address.

b. Any sensitive and / or personal information going outside the council must be sent securely using the recommended method in the secure email methods table. Please see the Share information securely for more information.

c. Non-work e-mail accounts must not be used to conduct or support official Oxfordshire County Council business.

d. Users must not use any council e-mail account to conduct any non-council business.

e. Users must not use any council e-mail account to join non-business-related websites, newsgroup lists or other online public forums.

f. Sensitive and / or personal information should be protectively marked as appropriate. This includes any e-mails and their attachments.

g. Users must not send out any e-mail containing sensitive or personal information unless they are certain they are using the correct method.

h. Where information is sent out inappropriately it is classed as a security breach and must be reported to the ICT Service Desk immediately. Please see the Information Security Incident Policy.

i. Any e-mail including any attachments that includes any sensitive personal information must be protectively marked, where appropriate, by the sender. For more information see the Security Classification Procedures.

j. Automatic forwarding of council e-mails to any e-mail address outside the council is not allowed as it presents a security risk to the council and its information.

k. Egress or other secure e-mails must not be forwarded to lower classification domain e.g. from Egress Switch e-mail account to a standard gov.uk e-mail account or to personal e-mail addresses such as those provided by Google, Hotmail, Yahoo etc.

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In addition, e-mails **must not** be used for the creation or transmission of any material that contravenes any council policy, in particular the Officers' Code of Conduct, Member Code of Conduct and Dignity at Work Policy.

a. All external e-mail will carry the official council disclaimer.

b. Under no circumstances should users communicate material which is defamatory, obscene, or contravenes any Council guidance or policy including the council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

E-mail **must not** be used for activities that:

- Unreasonably waste effort or use networked resources;

- Unreasonably deny the service to other users;

- Corrupt or destroy other users' data;

- Disrupt the work of other users;

- Violate the privacy of other users.

Computer Viruses

To avoid possible infection of the council network with computer viruses, all users **must not**:

- Open file attachments from unknown or unexpected sources;

- Transmit by e-mail any file attachments which they know to be infected with a virus;

- Download data or programs of any nature from unknown sources;

- Forward any suspicious file to another organisation or third party;

To assist in prevention of viruses, all users **must**:

- Ensure that an effective anti-virus system is operating on any computer which they use to access council facilities.

- Report virus or other malware warnings to the ICT Service Desk immediately.

- Report any suspect emails or attachments to the ICT Service Desk.

Network capacity

In order to ensure that the networked resources enabling e-mail are available and perform to their optimum, users should:

- Avoid sending unnecessary messages. Please see the advice from Internal Communications at e-mail Communications.

- Not send e-mails with attachments if this can be avoided. In particular please avoid sending e-mails with large attachments (above 100KB in size). Please follow the guidance on the Share Your Files page.

Security

Users must be wary of providing their council e-mail address on websites, newsgroup lists or other online public forums even if these are business related. Please refer to the Spam e-mails and Spam filtering Guide for advice on limiting e-mail traffic into your account.

e-mail should not be used as long-term storage. If required, e-mails should be stored in a business application or records management system, NOT within an e-mail system. All e-mails are subject to the council's Records Management Policy; they should be kept according to business needs or for the appropriate retention period.

Monitoring and access

Where a manager suspects that the e-mail facilities are subject to unauthorised use, they should inform the Information Services Manager, their Deputy Director and their HR Business Partner.

The Information Services Manager will comply with any legitimate requests from authorised bodies under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (RIPA) legislation.

If an e-mail account needs to be accessed by a line manager for specific work purposes, written agreement from the HR Business Partner **must be** obtained and forwarded to the ICT Service Desk.

Any line manager granted such access must conduct their activities strictly in accordance with the guidance available on the Managing People page on the Intranet.

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