



SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE AND VALE OF WHITE HORSE DISTRICT COUNCILS

Internet and email acceptable use

INTRODUCTION

This document applies to all employees (including temporary staff and contractors) and councillors.

In order to obtain internet access and/or an individual email account (firstname.lastname@southoxon/whitehorse/southandvale.gov.uk) which will work externally, you must read this document and complete and submit the 'request for external email / internet access' form.

ACCEPTABLE USE

Internet

We provide internet access primarily for purposes connected with council business although you may access the internet for personal use. You must comply with the following requirements, which protect the councils' interests:

- personal use should not interfere with office use or council business (for staff, it should be solely within your own time)
- do not allow anyone else to use your internet access for personal purposes
- ensure your PC is password protected if it is unattended
- do not access inappropriate sites or use the facility for any purpose that might harm the councils i.e. through legal proceedings or adverse publicity. Serious misuse, such as deliberately accessing sites containing illegal, pornographic, sexist or racist material or any other material likely to be considered grossly offensive, will be treated as gross misconduct
- do not attempt to download software or other material unconnected with council business
- do not infringe any copyright material
- do not use your internet access to run a business
- do not leave your browser open if you are not using the internet – close it down when not in use

Email

Use of email is permitted and encouraged where such use supports the goals and objectives of the councils. However, to use email you must ensure that you:

- comply with current legislation
- use email in an acceptable way (see below for unacceptable behaviour)
- do not create unnecessary business risk to the councils by their misuse of email

You may use email for personal use subject to:

- the approval of your head of service
- writing or reading emails only in your own time
- all private emails should contain a disclaimer to the effect that the contents are not authorised by or attributable to the council(s)

- emails must not be used for any personal gain or private business

Please refer to the 'email good practice guidance' document for the procedures for using email within the councils and in communicating with outside individuals or organisations.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

- use of council communications systems to set up personal businesses or send chain letters
- forwarding of council confidential messages to external locations
- distributing, disseminating or storing images, text or materials that might be considered discriminatory, offensive or abusive (in that the context is a personal attack, sexist or racist, or might be considered as harassment)
- accessing copyrighted information in a way that violates the copyright
- breaking into the councils' (or another organisations') system or unauthorised use of a password/mailbox
- broadcasting unsolicited personal views on social, political, religious or other non-business related matters
- transmitting unsolicited commercial or advertising material
- undertaking deliberate activities that waste staff effort or networked resources
- introducing any form of computer virus or malware into the corporate network

Serious abuse, such as harassment or sending offensive material, will be treated as gross misconduct.

MONITORING AND MISUSE

Please be aware that we record the use of the internet in detail (including the time spent and content viewed) to protect the councils from misuse.

Email is a corporate system which the councils provide for use by councillors and its employees (including temporary staff and contractors). They retain the right to view all messages (incoming and outgoing) whether they are business, personal or otherwise, without the knowledge or permission of the sender or recipient. We archive all email messages (internal and external) and retain them for various reasons including freedom of information requests, mailbox management and disciplinary investigations.

We will investigate any incidents of possible misuse. If substantiated, this may result in withdrawal of the service and in further action as appropriate to the circumstances (including disciplinary action for staff).

AGREEMENT

All council employees (including temporary staff and contractors) and councillors who have been granted the right to use the internet and email services are required to sign the agreement on the request form confirming their understanding and acceptance of this document.

Change control

Version	Date	Author	Reason
Version 1	February 2011	Penny O'Callaghan	Joint document