



POLICY 2115

USE OF INTERNET AND EMAIL

1. Intent of Policy

To provide guidelines for the use of the internet and Council's email system, and establish procedures for creating, retaining, managing and disposing of emails that meet the Australian Standard.

2. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all Council employees, Councillors, contractors, consultants, temporary and casual employees, and other authorised personnel offered access to Oberon Council resources.

3. Guidelines

Internet access and email provided to Councillors and employees are public resources to be used for legitimate business purposes. All email accounts, including the data and messages contained within or transmitted via them, are the property of Oberon Council and are primarily intended for business use only.

Use of email and internet must be consistent with other relevant laws, policies and practices regulating:

- Copyright breaches and patent materials legislation
- Anti-discrimination legislation
- Privacy legislation
- Council's Code of Conduct
- Practices regulating discriminatory speech and the distribution of illicit and offensive materials, particularly those that are sexual or pornographic in nature.

Failure to comply with this policy may lead to disciplinary action, should users conduct and/or should actions be unlawful or illegal, they may be personally liable.

Council reserves the right to control and monitor the use of its equipment/services, and audit and remove any illegal material without notice.

Personal Use

Reasonable personal use of email and/or internet is permissible; however, personal use is a privilege which needs to be balanced in terms of operational needs. Its use must be appropriate, lawful, efficient, proper and ethical. Personal use should:

- be infrequent and brief

- not involve activities that might be questionable, controversial or offensive, including gambling, accessing chat lines/rooms, transmitting inappropriate jokes or sending junk programs/mail
- not extend to sending non-business related written material to any political organisation
- not disrupt Council communication systems, and
- not interfere with employees' job responsibilities or detrimentally affect the job responsibilities of other employees.

Employees reasonably suspected of abusing personal use requirements will be asked to explain such use.

Email

Email messages must be kept as Council records if: they provide evidence of Council's business and activities; are needed for use by others; or affect the work of others. Staff sending and receiving emails are responsible for deciding if an email message is considered to be Council record and making sure that these messages are documented to provide a formal record.

Email messages which become Council records must be kept in accordance with the approved retention periods listed in the Local Government Disposal Schedule.

Access to email is limited to Council staff, or other authorised persons, who have been given a user identification and password. Staff must not give their password to another staff member or member of the public, and must not access other staff members' email without the authority of a Director. Unauthorised access to programs or information will result in disciplinary action.

The email system is part of Council's computer network and all the information processed, transmitted or stored in the system are the property of Council.

Email is a business tool. Staff must make sure that all email messages are brief, concise and business related, and are kept in Council's filing system (Magiq) only as long as required.

Email messages kept as Council records are accessible to the public under Freedom of Information and Privacy legislation.

Email systems should not be assumed to be secure. Staff must be aware of the potential risks involved in sending confidential or sensitive information by email.

Procedures for use of email

Email should be treated with the same significance as a signed letter.

Email must be accessed at least once a day by each employee with access to a networked computer. All emails should be filed in Council's filing system (Magiq). Any spam emails should be deleted.

Staff should maintain their own email address book.

An email message sent with a Council document as an attachment, must note details of the source of the document on the attachment. These details should include the addressee, the sender and the date and time of dispatch and receipt.

Email messages kept as Council records must be saved into Council's Magiq Document System. The email system should not be used as a filing system (See Records Management Policy).

Emails are admissible as evidence in court, so good judgement should be exercised when writing emails.

Messages should be kept polite and should not be written in upper case as this is considered as 'shouting'. Only information that is of value to the receiver should be sent and messages should not be made High Priority unless they are truly urgent.

Use of Internet/Web Sites

It is inappropriate to :

- Download unauthorised software, including games
- Download files containing picture images, photos or graphics for personal use
- Download music files or access web radio or TV stations for personal use
- Visit inappropriate web sites including on-line gambling, sexually explicit or pornographic, etc.

All internet access is monitored by end-point protection software which prohibits sites based on classification and algorithms. Occasionally a legitimate site is unintentionally blocked. Requests to have websites and email addresses added to the 'white list' should be directed to itsupport@oberon.nsw.gov.au.

For details on the use of social media sites refer to Council's Social Media Policy 2130.

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