



WESTGATE-ON-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

STAFF EMAIL AND COMMUNICATION POLICY

ADOPTED: 07.06.2022 Review due: 06.2023

Policy Statement

Communications via email internet usage undertaken in the name of the Council or on Council systems carry inherent risks such as:

- Potential defamation
- Spreading of viruses, including Trojans which can steal data
- Breach of confidentiality
- Accepting files from sources in online chat rooms which could bypass firewalls or email filters
- Breach of contract
- Breach of copyright
- Breach of data protection legislation
- Breach of privacy and unlawful discrimination

This policy sets out the restrictive use of the Town Council's electronic equipment, namely, computers and telephones.

The Town Council reserves the right to monitor telephone, email, and internet usage in accordance with the law, in particular the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

The Council provides telephones, email, and internet access solely for the purposes required for the performance and fulfilment of job responsibilities.

Occasional and reasonable personal use of the Council's telephone, internet and email service is permitted, provided that it does not interfere with work performance or security.

1. Monitoring and Privacy Issues

1.1 Internet and email usage may be monitored from time to time in order to identify potential breaches of this Policy. This may lead to formal disciplinary action. Employees should note that serious breaches may result in dismissal for gross misconduct.

1.2 However, the Town Council is subject to Article 8 of the Human Rights Act, and this means that the Council will respect employees' private and family life.

2. Email Etiquette

2.1 All employees must follow the procedure outlined below when sending and receiving emails on behalf of the Town Council:

- a) Only agreed email signatures may be used
- b) All messages must use appropriate business language
- c) A waiver clause will be included at the end of each email message
- d) The circulating of offensive, indecent, or obscene material or anything which breaches the Equal Opportunities Policy is strictly prohibited. Confidential material should not be disclosed.
- e) Only attachments from a trusted source may be downloaded
- f) Ensure that the address of the recipient is correct before sending emails
- g) Ensure that a 'reply to all' is appropriate
- h) Ensure that essential files are saved before deleting the message in which they were received.

3. Telephone Etiquette

3.1 All employees must follow the procedure outlined below when using the Council's telephone:

- a) Answer all calls by stating the name of the Town Council
- b) Be polite at all times
- c) Do not be rude or abrupt to callers
- d) Do not use offensive language
- e) Do not swear
- f) Check the telephone frequently for messages from callers and respond in a timely manner

3.2 Employees may make and receive personal calls if they are brief and infrequent. This applies to calls on the Council's land line or employees' personal mobile phones.