



The Royal School

Wolverhampton

Electronic Communications Policy

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Introduction

This Policy describes the requirements for the monitoring and use of schools' electronic communications and internet to meet legal obligations. It will provide guidance concerning the use of school computers and how usage will be monitored.

Scope

This policy applies to anyone within the school who use electronic communications and the Internet through devices based at the school. This policy also explains how the use of computers, electronic communications, and Internet facilities will be monitored.

Responsibilities

This policy is maintained by the Marketing and Communications Director. All staff have responsibility for familiarising themselves with this policy. Compliance is compulsory. Anyone who fails to comply may be subjected to action under the school's disciplinary policy. It is the responsibility of the Heads of Faculties to ensure that teaching staff, and the Head of HR to ensure support staff, are made aware of the existence and content of the policy.

Electronic Communications

The school understands the importance of electronic communications and encourages all staff to use them in the performance of their duties. In the light of this, staff should be aware that all correspondence sent via the school remains the property of the school and is liable to be disclosed in response to Freedom of Information requests.

Staff should:

- Ensure devices are not left unattended or unlocked. Staff will be held responsible for all activity using their account.
- Not assume that electronic communication is private; electronic messages can be intercepted or wrongly addressed, and they are easily forwarded to third parties.
- Use the parent contact details in SIMS and the address books in Outlook to target communication to the relevant audience. Do not send 'all staff' messages unless the matter concerned is relevant to all staff.
- Be aware that electronic communications constitute records that are admissible as evidence in a court of law.
- Regularly discard any unsolicited or non work-related documents or attachments received by electronic communication.
- Inappropriate use of electronic communications by staff may result in action under the school's formal procedures. If you receive an inappropriate electronic message please report the details to the Head of Faculty.
- Remember at all times that whatever you write using the school's electronic communication means you are corresponding on behalf of and representing the school.
- Be aware that other colleagues may have access to either your or others emails and their content.
- When sending emails relating to a confidential matter, it is good practice to limit the amount of information on the subject line. Mark these emails as sensitive or confidential
- Never read or open an email marked confidential or sensitive that is not addressed to you without good reason.

Acceptable and Unacceptable use

Staff are expected to use electronic communication for school purposes in the best interest of The Royal. Never communicate, download, upload, or access anything that could damage the schools reputation or your own. You may face disciplinary action if this occurs.

Acceptable use is subject to:

- Not interfering with the performance of duties
- Not incurring unwarranted expense
- Not engaging in illegal activity
- Not carrying out persona business transactions
- Limited use for personal interest, recreation, research and studies

Defamation

Electronic communications and the Internet are a form of publication and their wrongful use may constitute a libel contrary to the provisions of the Defamation Act 1996. Staff must not put any defamatory statement onto the Internet or on the school's computer system. As well as staff being personally exposed to potential legal action for defamation, the school can also be exposed both for the actions of its staff and also as an online provider. Staff must not send messages or post information on the internet that shows the school in an unprofessional light.

Discrimination and Harassment

The school does not tolerate discrimination or harassment in any form. This principle extends to any information distributed via School systems including electronic communications, the internet or telephone. You may not put on any system any material that discriminates or encourages discrimination or harassment on racial or ethnic grounds or on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, religion or disability.

Data Protection Issues

Under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1988, staff are required to ensure that personal information (including contact details and references to individuals in e-mail correspondence) is kept securely for no longer than necessary, is accurate and up to date.

Monitoring

The School reserves the right, without notice, to access, listen to or read any communication made or received by staff on its computers for the following purposes:

- to establish the existence of facts
- to ascertain compliance with regulatory or self regulatory practices and procedures
- to investigate or detect unauthorised use of systems
- to prevent or detect crime
- to intercept for operational purposes, such as protecting against viruses and making routine interceptions such as forwarding e mails to correct destinations
- to check electronic communications systems when you are on holiday or on sick leave.

If an issue arises where there may be a case to monitor such usage, the relevant line manager will explain the concerns to the Headmaster who will determine if monitoring is recommended. The Headmaster and Chairman of the Governors will then make the decision to monitor a member of staff's email, telephone or internet usage before monitoring is actioned.

The School also reserves the right to monitor time spent by staff accessing the internet for browsing. The school may monitor sites visited, the content viewed or information downloaded where necessary. This will be done to ensure the school computer network is not unnecessarily tied up with non-work related activities.

The school also reserves the right to make and keep copies of telephone calls, electronic communications and data documenting use of the telephone, electronic communications and/or the Internet systems, for the purposes set out above.

Reporting misuse

Staff who suspect misuse of the school electronic communications, internet or telephone systems should in the first instance advise the Head of Faculty, Deputy Head or HR.

Evaluation and Review

The performance of this policy will be reported on annually and it will be formally reviewed every five years by the appropriate committee.