

Amesbury Town Council

Email & Internet Acceptable Use Policy

Email Acceptable Use

1. Introduction

Email is widely used to help manage and deliver our services to the public. Users should read this policy alongside the Council's Code of Conduct.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees, including those working from home or from other locations and Councillors
- Other works (including casual and agency workers, secondees and contractors) using the Council's equipment and networks.

All existing users and new employees having access to the system will be required to sign an agreement stating that they have read and understood these policies prior to being granted access. From time to time staff and Councillors will be asked to sign this policy (e.g. when changes have been made to the policy).

3. Policy statement

The Council encourages users to make effective use of e-mail. Such use should always be lawful. It should not compromise the Council's information and computer systems nor have the potential to damage the Council's reputation. Users must comply with this policy as a condition of access to email facilities.

4. Appropriate use

The Council expects all users to use e-mail responsibly and according to the following conditions:

4.1 Personal use

E-mail is an important tool in the management and delivery of Council services and this is its main purpose. Personal use of e-mail is not permitted, employees and Councillors should use their own personal email address for this use.

4.2 Business use

Use of e-mail is subject to the following conditions:

- E-mail is never completely confidential or secure. Messages appear to be temporary by nature but they can be widely distributed and easily restored from backup copies. E-mail messages have the same status in law as written correspondence and are open to the same legal challenges. Users must therefore apply the same standards to e-mails as they do to written correspondence.

When using e-mail the following must be borne in mind:

- Users must not commit the Council to purchasing or acquiring goods or services unless authorised to do so.
- Users should be cautious about any e-mail that asks the reader to send it to others. Where there is any room for doubt, please speak to the Town Clerk.
- Users must not forward e-mail chain letters but should delete them.
- Users must comply with the Data Protection Act & GDPR when placing personal data in messages or attachments.
- Users must not download software without specific permission from the Town Clerk.

4.3 Inappropriate use

Users must not access, display or circulate any information in the following categories:

- Pornography (including child pornography)
- Gambling
- Promoting discrimination of any kind
- Promoting racial or religious hatred
- Involving threats or promoting violence
- Promoting illegal acts
- Any other information which may be offensive to colleagues

Incidents that appear to involve deliberate sending or receiving of e-mails that contain the following material will be reported to the Police:

- Images of child abuse (images of children, apparently under 16 years old) involved in sexual activity or posed to be sexually provocative
- Adult material that potentially breaches the Obscene Publications Act in the UK
- Criminally racist material in the UK

4.4 Accidental access to inappropriate material

If an e-mail containing inappropriate material is opened accidentally it should be sent to the Town Clerk who will discuss the matter with the Council's IT support provider.

5. Monitoring

The Council's system filters junk and profane e-mail to improve efficiency and enforce this policy. Users who receive this sort of e-mail should contact their line manager who will investigate whether the filtering can be improved. The Town Clerk may inspect any e-mail correspondence to see if users are complying with the policy. Any potential misuse identified from monitoring will be dealt with and may result in dismissal.

Internet Acceptable Use

1. Introduction

The internet is widely used to help manage and deliver our services. Users should read this policy alongside the Council's codes of conduct.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees, including those working from home or from other locations, and Councillors;
- Other workers (including casual and agency workers, secondees and contractors) using the council's equipment and networks.

All existing users and new employees having access to the system will be required to sign an agreement stating that they have read and understood these policies prior to being granted access. From time to time staff and Councillors will be asked to sign this policy (e.g. when changes have been made to the policy).

3. Policy statement

The Council encourages users to make effective use of the internet. Such use should always be lawful. It should not compromise the Council's information and computer systems nor have the potential to damage the Council's reputation.

4. Appropriate use

The Council expects all users to use the internet responsibly and according to the following conditions:

4.1 Personal use

The internet is an important tool in the management and delivery of Council services and this is its main purpose. Personal use of the internet is permitted providing that:

- Personal use is made only outside actual working hours and for limited periods.
- Users do not run private businesses using the Council's facilities.
- The conditions applying to business use in paragraph 4.2 are followed in respect of all personal use.
- Regular and extensive personal use of the internet may result in disciplinary action. Whether or not this use has been during work time will be taken into account.

4.2 Business use

Use of the internet is subject to the following conditions:

- Users must not commit the Council to purchasing or acquiring goods or services unless authorised to do so.
- Employees may join, and publish to, newsgroups of professional interest or relevant to their work with the Town Clerks approval.
- Users must comply with the Data Protection Act and GDPR when placing personal data in newsgroups and on web sites.
- Users must not download software other than static files e.g. Word documents, PDFs, but not applications or activeX controls.

- Users must comply with license terms and conditions when copying or downloading material covered by copyright law.
- Information on the internet is not always accurate so users must verify information before use.

4.3 Inappropriate use

Users must not access, display or circulate any information in the following categories:

- Pornography (including child pornography)
- Gambling
- Promoting discrimination of any kind
- Promoting racial or religious hatred
- Involving threats or promoting violence
- Promoting illegal acts
- Any other information which may be offensive to colleagues

Incidents that appear to involve deliberate access to websites, newsgroups and on-line groups that contain the following material will be reported to the police:

- Images of child abuse (images of children, apparently under 16 years old) involved in sexual activity or posed to be sexually provocative
- Adult material that potentially breaches the Obscene Publications Act in the UK
- Criminally racist material in the UK

4.4 Accidental access to inappropriate material

Any user who inadvertently enters a site which could be deemed unsuitable must report it to the Town Clerk

5 Monitoring

The Council's IT systems allow for the use of the internet to be monitored and this may be done to see whether users are complying with the policy. Any potential misuse identified may amount to gross misconduct and may result in dismissal.

Declaration I have read and understood the e-mail and internet acceptable use policy. I agree to adhere to the conditions of use and understand that a deliberate breach of them may result in disciplinary action.

Name: (please print)

Signature:

Date:

Please sign and return to the Town Clerk.