Email Acceptable Use Policy

Please read this policy carefully as you will, in future, be deemed to be aware of its contents in the event that there is any breach of the College's policy.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that employees of The Isle of Wight College and its subsidiaries understand the way in which electronic mail (email) should be used in the organisation. It aims to ensure that email is used effectively for its intended purpose without infringing legal requirements or creating unnecessary business risk.

Scope

All employees of The Isle of Wight College including contractors and temporary staff are subject to this policy. Failure to comply may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal. At the same time, your conduct and/or action(s) may be unlawful or illegal and you may be personally liable.

General principles

The College provides an email system to support its activities and access to this system is granted to College employees on this basis. Emails sent or received on the College email system are not private property; they form part of the administrative records of the College.

Incidental and occasional personal use of the corporate email system is accepted, subject to the restrictions contained in this policy. Any personal use of email is expected to be on the employee's own time and is not to interfere with the person's job responsibilities. Personal use of the email system must not detrimentally affect the job responsibilities of other employees, disrupt the system and/or harm the College's reputation.

Use of email

Care should be taken when using email because email messages are perceived to be less formal than paper-based communication and there is a tendency to be lax about their content. Bear in mind that all expressions of fact, intention and opinion via email can be held against you and/or the College in the same way as verbal and written expressions.

Corporate guidelines on standards (format, signature, disclaimer and structure of email messages) must be adhered to where present.

Formal methods of email distribution must not be used for sending emails that are not relevant to the business.

Access to all non-corporate email Internet sites (e.g. Hotmail, Yahoo mail etc.) is prohibited.

Confidentiality

All information relating to our customers and the business operation of the College is confidential. You are expected to treat electronic information with the same care as you would paper-based information which is confidential. Keep all such information secure, use it only for the purpose(s) intended and do not disclose the same to any unauthorised third party (which may include other employees of the College).

- Keep passwords safe. Do not disclose them to anyone.
- If a document is highly confidential or sensitive in nature, you should store it in a private directory.
- Do not forward, send or in any way disseminate such information that may compromise the College.
- Maintain confidentiality by not forwarding or sharing any client information that would violate the Data Protection Act or industry guidelines.
- Return any message received that was intended for another recipient. Delete any copies of misdirected messages. An incorrectly addressed message should only be forwarded to the intended recipient if the identity of that recipient is known and certain.
- Verify the recipients of the email are approved to receive the information contained in the email, to avoid a breach of confidence.

Inappropriate use

Exercise due care when writing an email to avoid being rude or unnecessarily terse and ensure that your message meets the standards of professionalism the College expects of your position. Do not make any statements on your own behalf or on behalf of the College, which do or may defame libel or damage the reputation of any person.

You should not engage in any activity that is illegal, distasteful or likely to have negative repercussions for the College. You must not upload, download, use, retain, distribute or disseminate any images, text, materials or software which:

- Are or might be considered to be indecent, obscene, pornographic or illegal
- Are or might be offensive or abusive in that its context is or could be considered to be a personal attack, rude or personally critical, sexist, racist, or generally distasteful
- Encourage or promote activities which make unproductive use of College time
- Involve activities outside of the scope of your responsibilities – for example, unauthorised selling/advertising of goods and services
- Might affect or have the potential to affect the performance of, damage or overload the College's system, network and/or external communications in any way
- Might be defamatory or incur liability on the part of the College or adversely impact on the image of the College
- Would be a breach of copyright or license provision with respect to both programs and data
- You cannot or are not prepared to account for

The following activities are expressly forbidden:

- The introduction of any form of computer virus
- Seeking to gain access to restricted areas of the network or other hacking activities
- Forgery or attempts to read other users' mail without their express permission
- The installation of software not approved by the Head of IT Services.
- Solicit e-mails that are for personal gain.
- Represent personal opinions as those of the College.

Email messages that have been deleted from the system can be traced and retrieved. Therefore, all persons having a part in creating or forwarding any offending email can be identified. Emails, both in hard copy and electronic form, are admissible in a court of law.

Monitoring

All Isle of Wight College resources, including computers, email and voicemail are provided solely for business purposes. At any time and without prior notice, The Isle of Wight College maintains the right and ability to examine any systems and inspect and review any and all data recorded in those systems. Any information stored on a computer, whether the information is contained on a hard drive, computer disk or in any other manner may be subject to scrutiny by the College. This examination helps ensure compliance with internal policies and the law. It supports the performance of internal investigations and assists the management of information systems.

In order to ensure compliance with this policy, the College may employ monitoring software to check on the use and content of email to ensure that there are no serious breaches of the policy. The College specifically reserves the right for authorised personnel to access, retrieve, read and delete any communication that is created on, received through or sent in the email system, to assure compliance with all College policies. Such monitoring will be used for legitimate purposes only.

Agreement

All College employees, contractors and temporary staff who have been granted the right to use the College email system are required to sign this agreement notifying their understanding of and acceptance to comply with this policy.

Signed:

Date:

If you are unclear about any of the issues discussed in this policy, please contact the Human Resources Manager.