



CAMBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

E-MAIL ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (DEET)

Policy

The purpose of electronic mail (e-mail) within Department of Education administration units, schools and TAFE institutions is to conduct Departmental business.

All e-mail communication must be handled in the same manner as a letter, fax, memo or other business communications in a manner which conforms with the *Code of Conduct for the Victorian Public Sector, April 1995*.

Any misuse of e-mail privileges may result in the revoking of any right to use the service and may lead to other disciplinary action.

Rationale

The use of electronic mail resources at the Department of Education, schools and TAFE institutions is a privilege, and, like any other privilege, carries with it responsibilities.

Communicating electronically is cost-effective, timely and efficient. However, it is essential that use of this valuable resource be controlled to ensure that it is used in an appropriate manner.

Messages that are created, sent or received using the Department of Education's e-mail systems are the property of the Department and may be accessed as records of evidence in the case of an investigation. For example, all information produced on computer, including e-mail, is accessible under the Freedom of Information Act. E-mail messages can, and have been, retrieved from back-up systems and organisations have been held liable for defamatory e-mail messages sent by employees.

The process by which the Department of Education seeks to manage staff use of e-mail is through the development and adoption of this Acceptable Use Policy.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of managers and principals to ensure their staff are aware of this policy and to provide each of them with a copy. It is the responsibility of individuals to abide by the policy.

Guidelines

- E-mail is not to be used in any illegal manner, such as contravening copyright, defamation, censorship or criminal laws.
- E-mail must not be used to conduct a private business or to carry out research into non-work related topics.
- E-mail must not be used for sending junk mail, for profit messages or chain letters.
- Only material relating to the Department of Education's business is to be issued via e-mail. The transmission of material must be in accordance with the authorisation, release and distribution mechanism approved for that material.
- No confidential Department of Education information is to be sent via e-mail. While every attempt is made to assure the security of the Department's e-mail systems, users should be aware that this security cannot be guaranteed.
- E-mail must not be used to send harassing, obscene or other threatening messages, nor may they contain content that may be considered offensive or disruptive. This includes sexually oriented messages or images and sexual harassment messages. See *Rights and responsibilities under the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 1995: Training for principals, staff and school councils*, Department of Education and Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission, 1996.
- Constructing electronic communication so it appears to be from someone else is not allowed.
- Obtaining access to the files or electronic mail of others for the purpose of satisfying idle curiosity, with no substantial Departmental business purpose is not permitted.
- Sending a message to a large number of people, outside normal distribution guidelines, is not allowed.
- Subscribing to list servers (LISTSERVS) and mailing lists must be for business purposes or professional development reasons only.
- Appropriate record management practices for e-mail messages must be adhered to. See *Department of Education Record Keeping Policy*.
- E-mail messages that contain subject matter that would not be put into office memoranda must be avoided, and care must be taken with the use of sarcasm and humour.
- The sending of large mail messages or attachments should be minimised to ensure the e-mail performance of other users is not adversely affected.
- All data, programs and files which are attached and downloaded from e-mail messages must be run through a virus scan program before being launched or opened.

Reference

Refer to the Internet Acceptable Use Policy for further guidance on the use of e-mail services.