

EMPLOYEE E-MAIL POLICY

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE:

This Dedham Public School Email Policy is a supplement to the existing Dedham Public Schools Instructional Network Acceptable Use Policy. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the proper use of the Dedham Public Schools' email system and to make all users aware of what are acceptable and unacceptable uses of its email system.

USERS:

All Dedham Public Schools staff members are provided with an email account to be used for job-related communication that is consistent with the goals and mission of the Dedham Public School district. This email address is available to the community. Employees are responsible for his/her actions and activities involving school computers, networks and Internet services and for his/her password and account. All files and messages created on school equipment or sent or retrieved over the DPS network, or Internet are the property of the Dedham Public Schools. At this time students are not issued DPS email accounts.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND STUDENT INFORMATION:

Email can be used to communicate with parents however, it is important that confidential information about a student never be transmitted via email but rather a letter, telephone call or a parent conference may be more appropriate. Please be aware that student-teacher and parent-teacher communication via email is not secure and that any email can become a public record. Electronic mail messages should not be considered confidential, consistent with the Electronic Communications Privacy Act. Copies of all information created, sent or retrieved may be scanned at any time, without notice, for inappropriate materials. Where appropriate, communications, text and images may be disclosed to law enforcement agencies.

Employees must use their school issued email account for all school business. Employees must not use personal non-DPS email accounts in communicating with students or parents. Using the school issued email account provides protection for all involved parties since all email is archived. All email received from and sent to a DPS email account are archived.

PROHIBITED USES:

Users are obliged to use email in a responsible, effective and lawful manner. Although by its nature email seems to be less formal than other written communication the same laws apply. It is important that users are aware of the legal risks of email. As with any Dedham Public School policies, violations will be addressed appropriately. The school department retains control, custody and supervision of all computers, networks and Internet services owned or leased by the Dedham Public Schools and reserves the right to monitor all computer and network activity by employees and other system users. Employees have no expectation of privacy in their use of school computers, including email messages and stored files. There are illegal and prohibited activities some of which are noted below:

The Dedham Public Schools' network and email system or email accounts may not be used in the following manner:

- Any use that is illegal or in violation of Dedham Public School policies, including obscenity, libel, threats, hate postings, racial or sexual harassment and copyright violations or inappropriate communications with students or minors.
- For private financial gain or commercial offerings or solicitations of any kind including products or services for sale.
- As a forum for communicating by email or any other medium with other school users or outside parties for political campaign purposes, religion, or the promotion of personal views or to solicit, proselytize, advocate or communicate the views of an individual or non-school sponsored

organization; to solicit membership in or support any non-school sponsored organization; or to raise funds for any non-school sponsored purpose, whether profit or not-for-profit. For guidance regarding political campaign issues, go to www.mass.gov and search "Use of the Internet and E-mail for Political Campaign Purposes."

- No employees shall knowingly provide school email addresses to outside parties whose intent is to communicate with school employees, students and/or their families for non-school purposes.
- Utilize the DPS network and email system to distribute information or communicate and encourage actions that would in any way interfere with or disrupt the goals and mission of the Dedham Public Schools.
- Send, reply to or forward mass emails to school users or outside parties or use the email system as a discussion forum for school or non-school purposes without the permission of the Technology Director.
- Transmit confidential information about school department personnel, student information, contract negotiations or any other school department business deemed confidential in nature by the Dedham Public Schools.
- Forward a message without acquiring permission from the sender first.
- Intentionally send an attachment that contains a virus or virus hoax.
- Send or forward unsolicited email messages such as "chain" email letters, junk mail, daily jokes, screen savers, executable programs or animations, offers to purchase or participate in non-school related business.
- Joining electronic services using the Dedham Public Schools email account that expose the DPS network to unwanted "Spam" such as "Joke-A-Day" or "Blue Mountain."
- Forge or attempt to forge email messages.
- Disguise or attempt to disguise your identity when sending mail including using another person's email account or deleting or concealing any information stored on a school computer that violates these rules.
- Do not use the bcc email feature. Secret use of the blind carbon copy is not professional and prohibited.

BEST PRACTICES GUIDELINES:

The Dedham Public Schools considers email as an important means of communication, collaboration and learning and recognizes the importance of proper email content and speedy replies in conveying a professional image and responsiveness to colleagues and the community. Users should take the same care in drafting an email as they would for any other written communication.

Writing emails:

- Dedham Public Schools email style is informal. This means that sentences can be short and to the point. You can start your email with 'Hi', or 'Dear', and the name of the person. Messages should be ended with your name, job title and school.
- Use informative, carefully phrased subject headings.
- Use spell check and proofread for content on emails prior to transmission.
- Do not send unnecessary or large attachments. Compress attachments larger than 200K before sending them whenever possible.
- Do not write emails in all capital letters
- Refrain from overuse of the "cc:" and "forward" features. Be sure that the recipient of the duplicate email is aware of what action to take if any is needed or if the email is for informational purposes only.
- Only send emails of which the content could be displayed on a public notice board. If they cannot be displayed publicly in their current state, consider rephrasing the email or using other means of communication.
- Without the non-verbal cues that go along with voice and face-to-face communication, email lends itself to miscommunication. If in doubt about the meaning of an email, seek clarification.
- Avoid expressing emotion through email.

Reading emails:

- Users of the Dedham Public Schools' network should endeavor to check their email at the beginning and end of each school day, but at the minimum users must check and respond to their Dedham Public School email at least once within the hours of each school day.
- Recipients of email should not forward electronically or distribute messages in any form to others without permission from the sender.

Replying to emails:

- Email messages like any other communication should be answered within 48 hours via email, telephone, a handwritten note or other appropriate form of communication at the discretion of the staff member.
- Excessive emails from a parent or guardian should be reported to your supervisor.
- Users shall not send any confidential information regarding a student via email.

Maintenance:

- Delete any email messages that you do not need to have a copy of, and set your email software to automatically empty your "deleted items" on closing.
- All emails should be deleted after they are no longer needed.

PERSONAL USE:

The use of the Dedham Public Schools email is for professional and educational uses only in accordance with their contractual duties and the goals and mission of the school department. The Dedham Public Schools electronic email services may be used for incidental personal use, defined as use by an individual employee for occasional, limited personal communications, as long as it does not interfere with the employee's job duties and performance, with system operations, other system users or network performance and is consistent with the established policies of the Dedham Public Schools. All email records sent or received through the email system including personal emails are property of the Dedham Public Schools and may be accessed, monitored and scanned at any time at the discretion of the Dedham Public Schools.

The Dedham Public Schools assumes no responsibility for any unauthorized charges made by employees, including but not limited to credit card charges, subscriptions, long distance telephone charges, equipment, and line costs or for any illegal use of the computers such as copyright violations.

CONSEQUENCES:

As with all school policies, any employee who violates this policy and/or rules governing use of the DPS network will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Illegal uses of the DPS Network will also result in referral to law enforcement authorities.

Updated and Approved by School Committee October 6, 2010