



## Eastbrook School E-mail Protocol

To promote effective electronic communication within school and with external agencies

### Introduction

This document has been produced to address the effectiveness and efficiency of our communication and information system. Through the publication of this document, effective training and the commitment of all school staff, electronic communications will prove to enhance communication rather than waste time or over burden colleagues through poor email management. The ability to access an email account at any time and in any place greatly enhances the potential for communicating effectively. Eastbrook School has adopted a web based approach.

### Organisation

- [office@eastbrookschoool.org.uk](mailto:office@eastbrookschoool.org.uk) This address will receive the majority of the school emails.
- Printing emails often adds considerable cost to the school. A printed email will also prevent the reader from using any links that are incorporated within it. Therefore it is advised that whenever possible the person responsible for opening up the office email account forwards mail to the required recipients.
- There will be occasions when confidential information will need to be sent to the school to be read only by the headteacher using [headteacher@eastbrookschoool.org.uk](mailto:headteacher@eastbrookschoool.org.uk)
- Each member of staff has an email account, [surnamefirstinitial@eastbrookschoool.org.uk](mailto:surnamefirstinitial@eastbrookschoool.org.uk)
- Eastbrook School publicly advertises their office account e.g. on school letter heads and on their website.
- The headteacher and office account for Eastbrook School are available to all Local Authority staff
- All staff should use their school email address for all school related business.
- Staff email addresses will be used to collate lists of co-ordinators, meeting group members and common interest groups. These will be circulated to relevant staff.
- The email addresses for the various sections of the LA will be available through the school contacts list.

### Sending Emails

- Staff should use their own password protected accounts to send and check email
- Only send a message to colleagues who need to receive it.
- If the email address of an individual is unknown, use the subject field to stipulate who the message is for, and then send your message to the school office account
- Identify yourself in each message, include your name and position at the end of a message. Omit personal details, such as home phone number and addresses. Letter heads, signatures and disclaimer details can be set up automatically to save time and provide a formal style response.

### Content

- Use the subject field to indicate clearly the what the content is about, so that users can prioritise their mail
- Do not write in CAPITAL LETTERS as this is the electronic version of shouting

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- Humour can often be misinterpreted – emotional meaning is often lost in text, keep your wonderful wit for face to face communication
- Do not reply to an email to point out grammatical errors
- Avoid sending unnecessary information – keep emails brief and to the point. It is good practice to focus on one topic per message.
- Better to receive 5 separate emails from the same person on different issues, than one with the 5 points made together. Individual issues may be able to be dealt with immediately and other more complex issues can be dealt with separately.
- Emails which give a link to the required information on a website are very helpful. This allows the reader to download the required information at their own convenience.
- Do not use email to **replace** MIS reports, however they can be useful share more information

### **Attachments**

- Careful consideration should be given before sending large attachments, as the receiver may not have the ability or required mailbox size to open them, they may take a long time to download and the receiver may not have the required program on their computer to open them up.
- Sound and graphics attached to emails will reduce the speed of delivery to your recipient. Avoid attaching these items if they are not pertinent to the message sent
- The sender should clearly state on the email what the attachment is and the purpose for sending it, to minimise the spread of viruses
- Better to provide a link to a web site or shared directory than send the same content through email.

### **Sensitive Information**

- Emails are the electronic equivalent of a postcard. Anyone can read the content along the delivery path. Sensitive information should be sent by post or via a secure transfer system
- Child Protection details should not be reported via email
- Never email in haste, consider the facts and consequences of the message
- Be professional and careful about what you say about others, as email is easily forwarded. Only put in writing what you would say to someone's face.
- Be aware of copyright and libel issues e.g. when sending scanned text, pictures or information downloaded from the internet
- An email can be contractually binding. Therefore care should be taken when expressing personal views that these cannot be misinterpreted as belonging to school or LA, as the email address will part contain the school or LA name.
- If an urgent email is sent, you may want to follow this with a phone call
- Never send emails that are offensive, threatening, defamatory or illegal. Emails have been used successfully as evidence in libel cases

### **Receiving Emails**

- Emails should be read by the intended recipient only
- Email accounts should be accessed on a regular basis, at least once each day.
- In the case of absence, an auto-responder can be set up saying how long the person will be absent, and providing an alternative contact.
- All incoming emails requiring a response, should be replied to within 10 working school days; certain emails may need to be prioritised in light of their content.
- Electronic mail needs to be sorted and organised in the same way as paper mail
- Emails that need to be kept should be stored in electronic folders. This will help to ensure that the mailbox does not fill up quickly

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- Deleted and sent items should be cleared out regularly to ensure that the mailbox does not exceed 75% full
- Important email should be protected from editing or deletion, a regular back-up procedure is advised

### **Security**

- School staff are responsible for the security of their computer, and for protecting any information or data used and/or stored on it.
- Do not to leave an mailbox open and unattended, always keep it password protected
- The account holder/s needs to strive to keep their passwords confidential; to prevent other users from accessing and sending emails from their account. Users may need to make their passwords known in the event of absence.
- It is good practice to change your password on a regularly, twice a term is recommended.
- School emails will only be monitored by the headteacher in exceptional circumstances
- Absent staff are aware that their email account may be opened by another member of staff

### **Creating a password**

- The following advice should be followed with regard to password format.
- Passwords must not be easily guessable or related to the identity of the user e.g. your own name, that of a family member, your pets name or your birthday.
- Passwords should not be words that are found in a standard dictionary.
- Passwords must be at least 7 characters long.
- Passwords should contain at least one non-alphabetic character.
- Passwords should not be written down, unless the paper copy is stored at the appropriate level of security.

### **Confidentiality**

- Please remember that emails are only as secure as the telephone. Sensitive information should be sent by post or via a secure transfer system

### **Training**

- All staff need to know how to send, open, and forward messages, as well as how to administer basic housekeeping on their accounts
- Training will be provided on request.
- Ongoing support will be available from the school IT team

**This protocol will be circulated to all staff each year in the Autumn Term**