



KATHERINE TOWN COUNCIL

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

5.1 INTERNET AND EMAIL USE

POLICY

All communication using the Katherine Town Council's (Council) Internet and Email facilities must be undertaken in a professional manner, while responsibly representing the goals, objectives and image of the Council.

Inappropriate use of this technology is viewed as a serious disciplinary issue.

Employees and other users of the Council's Internet resources should not access, and should have no cause to access, material considered objectionable.

OBJECTIVE

To ensure employees maintain appropriate use of the Internet and Email as a business tool assisting workplace functions to the greatest benefit to the Council.

PROCEDURE

Email Access & Use

The Council uses a specific certified program for its email facilities, and this is the only electronic application that should be used for the Council electronic business communications.

The Council provides an email system as a vehicle for business communication and accordingly all emails sent or received by the Council employees are the Council's property. As the property of the Council, the Community Services Executive Manager, Chief Executive Officer or direct supervisor of the employee reserves the right to access staff emails at any time.

Employees are not to send or distribute emails containing the use of offensive words or pornography **under any circumstances**. This includes emails containing derogatory, inflammatory, insulting or libellous information about any other employee, customer, associate or any other person whatsoever.

Staff should refrain from distributing emails that contain material such as jokes or chain letters, and should avoid sending large attachments to multiple destinations. Such attachments include:

- Sound files (eg, WAV);
- Movie files (eg, AVI);
- Pictures (eg, JPEG); or
- Any form of such material.



KATHERINE TOWN COUNCIL

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Sending these files can overload the system and cause the mail server to fail.

Staff should confer with their supervisor or the Chief Executive Officer before sending commercially sensitive files/data out of the organisation by email.

Staff should endeavour to clean out their Inbox, Sent Items, Deleted Items and Inbox (kept messages) on a regular basis, by either deletion or saving in the central record system. A size limit per mailbox has been implemented to ensure that the email system is functioning optimally.

Staff with remote access should try to keep the number of emails in their Inbox, Sent Items and Deleted Items to a minimum, to increase the speed of connection when dialling in.

Email Format

The standard to be used for all emails is black font text (Arial) on a white background. Coloured backgrounds and text in emails increases the size of the email, and can also decrease readability. Additionally, some email systems cannot process emails if they are in a format other than plain text.

All emails sent by Council staff should include the following 'signature' at the foot of the body of the email:

- Yours sincerely/Kind Regards;
- Name;
- Title;
- Local Government;
- Physical Address;
- Postal Address;
- Phone Number – Fax Number; and
- Website Address.

"Disclaimer"

This email is private and confidential. If you are not the intended recipient, please advise us by return email immediately, and delete the email and any attachments without using or disclosing the contents in any way. The views expressed in this email are those of the author, and do not represent those of the Katherine Town Council unless this is clearly indicated.

You should scan this email and any attachments for viruses. The Katherine Town Council accepts no liability for any direct or indirect damage or loss resulting from the use of any attachments to this email."

All emails should be checked for spelling and grammatical errors before being sent and the recipient should be addressed correctly.



KATHERINE TOWN COUNCIL

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Email Attachments

All staff are encouraged to send non commercially sensitive documents as attachments to emails, rather than faxing, printing and photocopying.

Recording Emails to File/Records System

Email messages which warrant retention as formal business records are to be printed and stored on an appropriate InfoXpert records file.

Access to Staff Email

The Council reserves the right as the employer to access email and related material being sent to or by any employee via the Council Email system. This may include reading, responding and other processing of emails.

Staff emails may be regularly checked and reviewed by the IT Department to assess the use/abuse and distribution of email.

The process will occur at random intervals for all staff.

Staff should be aware that personal email and web usage information will be accessed and recorded.

Any concerns/issues encountered will be reported to the Community Services Executive Manager and the Chief Executive Officer.

The Community Services Executive Manager may be required to access staff emails where the threat of a computer virus is present. The Community Services Executive Manager may delete any emails that are causing system problems.

Email Etiquette

Read and respond to Messages

- Check your email regularly; ignoring a message is discourteous and confusing to the sender.
- Answer messages in a timely manner, informing senders when their requests cannot be accommodated.
- Delete messages as soon as they have been answered or the issue resolved.
- For messages that must be retained, an electronic copy should be stored on an appropriate InfoXpert file.
- Summarise accurately the message in the subject line.
- Include sufficient contextual information, and don't assume that the reader is familiar with the topic.
- Keep it concise and delete irrelevant text when an email has been sent back and forth a number of times.



KATHERINE TOWN COUNCIL

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- Reply promptly to responses and other emails, avoiding a "log-jam" of unanswered mail.
- Use correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Avoid replying "to all" and unnecessarily cluttering other people's in-trays;
- Avoid being over-familiar with recipients, particularly if they're superiors or strangers.
- Remember that emails are not confidential, and can easily end up in an unintended person's hands.
- Where employees receive electronic mail that is inappropriate, it is their obligation to immediately delete its contents and any attachments, and then advise the sender of its inappropriateness and instruct them not to send such correspondence again.

All Capital Letters give the effect of SHOUTING!

- Many people interpret the use of all capitals in email to indicate shouting, anger or rudeness. Studies show that proper use of upper and lower case assists word recognition and makes a message easier to read.
- Capitalise words only to HIGHLIGHT an important point or distinguish a title or heading.

Review before Sending

- Reading a message before sending will not only reveal spelling and grammatical mistakes, but if you put yourself in the place of the recipient you will detect whether your message is sensible and is going to be received and understood.
- An email message can contain words which were humorously intended by the author but which, without the accompanying expression or inflection if the words were spoken, seem insulting to the recipient.

Sign-off your Messages

- Include your name and affiliation at the end of a message. Not only is this courteous, but it serves the practical function of reassuring the reader that the message has not been truncated in its travels. This is particularly important if sending through a gateway to a different mail system, where a message can sometimes be truncated on the way to its destination.

Forwarding earlier messages

- Be professional and careful with what you say about others in email.
- In the case of your own messages, you should say clearly in the message if you do not want all or part of its contents relayed.
- In the case of messages you receive from others, think first of any possible damage or embarrassment to the originator before forwarding it.
- It may be possible to remove sensitive parts of the message before sending it on to others.



KATHERINE TOWN COUNCIL

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- Do not edit and resend a message that you have received without indicating that changes have been made to the original.
- Remember that email is not confidential; it is neither absolutely private nor absolutely secure.
- The recipient of a message has control of the content and can use it how they choose.

Email Responsibly

- Do not waste resources by sending inconsequential messages and do not accumulate large amounts of email which are no longer required.
- Avoid irrelevancies and try to keep messages succinct and brief.
- Focus on one subject per message.
- Always define the topic of a message in the email subject header to make it easy for the recipient to quickly review their list of messages.

Message distribution

- Keep the list of recipients and carbon copies (cc) to a minimum.
- It is too easy to widely disseminate messages that are of limited or no interest to most recipients (commonly referred to as junk mail).

Large file attachments

- Do not send email messages enclosing large file attachments and distribute these widely (eg everyone in mailing lists) as they can cause email servers and gateways to fail. It can also cause traffic problems on the network.
- A preferred approach is to make the file accessible to other users by placing it in a shared folder or directory and informing users of its availability.

Use Receipts.

- If a message is important, then you need to be sure that it is received and read.
- In this case make sure you ask for a delivery receipt and a read-receipt.
- This will cause a message to be sent to you automatically to tell you when the message has been delivered to the recipients' mail box, and when the recipient has opened your message to read it.
- Note that some email systems do not allow read-receipts to be processed.

Keep a Copy

- Before removing mail messages from your Sent Mail folder, make sure that any important matters they relate to are closed.



KATHERINE TOWN COUNCIL

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Schedule a reminder

- Use your electronic diary in Outlook to schedule a reminder to check on the status of an important message after an appropriate period.
- Reminders can also be set on each message by using the Flag option in Outlook.

Treat email as a permanent, official record

- What you write can be used in evidence. Keep this in mind before you click the send button.
- Even if you do not think the matter is important enough to keep a copy, your recipient may keep a copy.
- Assume that any message you send is permanent and could be modified and/or forwarded throughout the world without your knowledge or consent.

Internet Use

Internet access is granted to all staff to use as a tool of research for Council business. The Internet contains a vast array of information, and the authenticity, accuracy or currency of any information taken from this medium should not be assumed.

All files downloaded from the Internet must be scanned for viruses immediately.

Employees may occasionally have authorised access to the Internet outside of normal working hours for approved study use or during lunch breaks.

All staff are prohibited from visiting any Internet sites or other internet facilities that contain pornographic pictures or information, or illegal or offensive data. Penalty for breach of this direction is termination of employment. Appropriate Internet usage must be adopted by all staff.

All internet activity through the Council servers is logged with the date, site visited and user name being recorded. These logs are reviewed regularly, and any inappropriate access will be referred to the supervisor, the divisional director and possibly the Chief Executive Officer.

The Council pays a usage charge on the number of bytes uploaded to and downloaded from the Internet. Each page viewed by a user is 'downloaded' from the internet, and therefore a charge is incurred by the Council. Staff should keep their Internet usage to a minimum, and bookmark pages regularly used for quick access. Web pages that are



KATHERINE TOWN COUNCIL

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

regularly used are stored in a cache which allows for faster retrieval and reduces download costs.

Staff should refrain from downloading any screen savers, pictures or executable files. Requests for the downloading of any other program or files should be made to the IT Services Coordinator or your supervisor.

Publishing of Information on the Council Website

Any information that is to be posted to the Council internet site should be checked and authorised by the Community Services Executive Manager or Chief Executive Officer before being uploaded.

Staff should not release or publish any statements contrary to the Council's stance on any particular issue, or any items of a defamatory or offensive nature, to any medium including websites and discussion groups.

Responsibility

All staff are responsible for:

- Only using Microsoft Outlook for all electronic communication;
- Not sending or distributing any emails containing offensive or pornographic content;
- Avoiding sending emails of a personal nature that contain large attachments to multiple destinations;
- Checking with a Supervisor or the Chief Executive Officer before sending commercially sensitive files/data out to external sources;
- Clearing out their Sent and Deleted Items and Inbox on a regular basis;
- Using the standard format for emails;
- Including their name and address details and the standard Disclaimer at the foot of every email sent;
- Checking emails for spelling and grammatical errors before sending them;
- Storing all work emails in an appropriate records file;
- Not accessing pornographic, dubious or illegal internet sites;
- Not downloading screensavers or other pictures from the Internet;
- Checking any information posted to the Council's internet site with the Community Services Executive Manager or Chief Executive Officer before requesting it be uploaded; and
- Not releasing or publishing any information that is contrary to the Council's stance to any other site or discussion group.

Employees may face disciplinary procedures if they are found to knowingly breach these guidelines.

The Community Services Executive Manager is responsible for:

- Accessing staff emails in the event of a (suspected) virus and deleting any offending emails;



KATHERINE TOWN COUNCIL

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- Regularly reviewing staff emails and internet use to ensure staff are not abusing the facilities;
- Assisting staff in downloading any files or other programs; and
- Keeping a record of all Sites, Logins and Passwords accessed by staff.

The Organisation may monitor usage of the Internet.

There can be no expectation of personal privacy in the use of the Organisation's Internet and or Email facilities.