ALDERLEY EDGE PARISH COUNCIL

E-mail and Internet Use Policy

Introduction

This policy has been developed in response to the acknowledged need for guidelines describing the acceptable use of the council e-mail and related services and facilities.

It describes the standards that are expected to be observed when using council facilities for e-mail.

It establishes a framework within which staff are expected to apply self-regulation to their use of the council e-mail facilities.

Usage of e-mail and Internet facilities in breach of the policy may lead to appropriate disciplinary action being taken against members of staff which could lead to dismissal.

Scope of the policy

This policy applies to the use, for the purpose of sending or receiving messages and attachments, of any IT facilities, including hardware, software networks, provided by council. The policy is applicable to all employees and other authorised users.

Appropriate and proper use

The council supports the appropriate and proper use of the Internet, e-mail, and related services and facilities that the council provides for its employees and other authorised users. Associated with the provision of these services and facilities the council endeavours to provide an appropriate regulatory framework including specific standards and guidance for the appropriate use of these services and facilities.

This policy constitutes a component part of this regulatory framework.

Use of e-mail

The council provides appropriate staff with an e-mail account as a vital tool to fulfil the council's objectives and to enable them to communicate effectively with other personnel, both within council and externally. Staff must not abuse the council e-mail account in any way. A non-exclusive list of abusive conduct is deemed to include:

- Sending unsolicited e-mails to other companies or individuals (spamming)
- Using council e-mail for purposes unrelated to the job
- Circulating unsuitable or illegal material
- E-mailing personal information entrusted to the council without obtaining permission from councillors
- Defaming any individual or the council regardless of whether the subject is, or could be, aware of the content.
- Use of the council e-mail address in any on-line forum, discussion group or message board without obtaining permission from councillors
- Spoofing other people's e-mail accounts (pretending to send, or attempting to receive e-mail on behalf of others without their permission)
- Setting up the equipment so that it could act as an "Open Mail Relay" for third party spammers
- Using the council's IT facilities for swapping of games, music, videos or DVDs

- Opening or reading e-mail, which has an unacceptable risk as set out below in "Preventing the spread of malicious software"
- Operating the e-mail without operating a suitable e-mail-aware anti-virus system as provided by council

Personal use

Staff may not use the council Internet facilities for personal use without prior authorisation from councillors.

Disciplinary action

If staff ignore the rules and guidance set out above and/or misuse and/or abuse the system, its facilities or any property belonging to council, they will be liable to disciplinary action. Depending on the circumstances the misuse and/or abuse could lead to summary dismissal. The council will take any breach of these rules very seriously. At the same time, the conduct and/or action(s) may be unlawful or illegal and the staff member may be personally liable.

Pornography

The uploading, downloading, storing, and/or printing out of computer data of indecent images by any employee or unauthorised person is conduct which will normally lead to summary dismissal of the employee or authorised person.

Preventing the spread of malicious software (viruses)

Staff must take all reasonable steps to prevent the receipt and transmission by e-mail of malicious software e.g. computer viruses and worms. In particular, staff must not:

- Transmit by e-mail any file attachments which are known to be infected with malicious software
- Open e-mail file attachments received from unsolicited or untrusted sources
- Use floppy disks or removable media that has not been scanned by the council's anti-virus software immediately prior to its use
- Download or install software without express approval by the councillors