



Star

NURTURING TODAY'S YOUNG PEOPLE,
INSPIRING TOMORROW'S LEADERS

ELECTRONIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS POLICY



Document control

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1 Scope and purpose

- 1.1 The Trust's IT and communications systems are intended to promote effective communication and working practices within the Trust. This policy outlines the standards staff must observe when using these systems, the circumstances in which the Trust will monitor their use, and the action the Trust will take in respect of breaches of these standards.
- 1.2 In particular, remember that staff are representatives of the Trust and all communication through the Trust's systems (whether by telephone, e-mail or otherwise), must be conducted in an appropriate manner.
- 1.3 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time after consultation with our recognised Trade Unions.
- 1.4 This policy deals mainly with the use (and misuse) of computer equipment, e-mail, the internet, telephones, mobile phones, personal digital assistants (PDAs) and voicemail. It also applies to the use of fax machines, copiers, scanners, CCTV, and electronic key fobs and cards.
- 1.5 Misuse of IT and communications systems can damage the business and reputation of the Trust.
- 1.6 All staff must comply with this policy at all times to protect the Trust's IT and communications systems from unauthorised access, misuse, and harm. Breach of this policy may be dealt with under the Trust's Disciplinary Procedure and, in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal.
- 1.7 In this policy references to establishment personnel/bodies are to the personnel/bodies present within the establishment at which the particular employee reviewing the policy is engaged.

2 Who is responsible for this policy?

- 2.1 The Trust has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy, but has delegated day-to-day responsibility for its operation to Star Central, the Local Governing Body and the Head at each Trust establishment.
- 2.2 The Senior Leader responsible for IT will deal with requests for permission or assistance under any provisions of this policy, subject to their primary tasks of maintaining the Trust's core systems, and may specify certain standards of equipment or procedures to ensure security and compatibility.
- 2.3 The Senior Leadership Team has a specific responsibility to operate within the boundaries of this policy, ensure that all staff understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and to take action when behaviour falls below its requirements.
- 2.4 All staff are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any misuse of the Trust's electronic communications systems or equipment should be reported to the Head of Establishment.

3 Who is covered by the policy?

- 3.1 This policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades, including senior managers, officers, directors, employees, consultants, contractors, trainees, homeworkers, part-time and



fixed-term employees, casual and agency staff and volunteers (collectively referred to as **staff** in this policy).

- 3.2 Third parties who have access to the Trust's IT and communication systems are also required to comply with this policy.

4 Equipment security and passwords

- 4.1 Staff are responsible for the security of the equipment allocated to or used by them, and must not allow it to be used by anyone other than in accordance with this policy.
- 4.2 If given access to the e-mail system or to the internet, staff are responsible for the security of their terminals. If leaving a terminal unattended or on leaving the office/classroom, they should ensure that they lock their terminal or log off to prevent unauthorised users accessing the system in their absence. Staff without authorisation should only be allowed to use terminals under supervision.
- 4.3 Desktop PCs and cabling for telephones or computer equipment should not be moved or tampered with without first consulting the IT Technician/Network Manager.
- 4.4 Passwords are unique to each user and must be changed regularly to ensure confidentiality. Passwords must be kept confidential and must not be made available to anyone else unless authorised by the Head of Establishment. On the termination of employment (for any reason), staff accounts will be disabled and passwords reset if access by the Establishment is required.
- 4.5 Staff who have been issued with a laptop, PDA or mobile phone must ensure that it is kept secure at all times, especially when travelling. Appropriate steps must be taken to secure access to data kept on such equipment to ensure that confidential data is protected in the event of loss or theft. Staff should also be aware that when using equipment away from the workplace, documents may be read by third parties, for example, passengers on public transport.

5 Systems and data security

- 5.1 Staff should not delete, destroy or modify existing systems, programs, information or data which could have the effect of harming the Trust or exposing it to risk.
- 5.2 Staff should not download or install software from external sources without authorisation from the Establishment. This includes software programs, instant messaging programs, screensavers, photos, video clips and similar files. Incoming files and data should always be virus-checked before they are downloaded. If in doubt, staff should seek advice from the Establishment.
- 5.3 Use of removable storage (e.g. USBs and removable hard drives) will not be permitted on the Trust network without full acceptance of our security procedures.
- 5.4 The Trust monitors all e-mails passing through its system for viruses. Staff should exercise caution when opening e-mails from unknown external sources or where, for any reason, an e-mail appears suspicious (for example, if its name ends in .ex). The IT Technician/Network Manager should be informed immediately if a suspected virus is received. The Trust reserves the right to block access to attachments to e-mails for the purpose of effective use of the system and for compliance with this policy. The Trust also reserves the right not to transmit any e-mail message.



- 5.5 Staff should not attempt to gain access to restricted areas of the network, or to any password-protected information, unless specifically authorised.
- 5.6 Staff using laptops or Wi-Fi enabled equipment must be particularly vigilant about its use outside the premises and take any precautions required by the Establishment from time to time against importing viruses or compromising the security of the system. The system contains information which is confidential to the Trust's business and/or which is subject to data protection legislation. Such information must be treated with extreme care and in accordance with the Trust's Data Protection Policy.

6 E-mail etiquette and content

- 6.1 E-mail is a vital tool, but an informal means of communication, and should be used with great care and discipline. Staff should always consider if e-mail is the appropriate method for a particular communication. Correspondence with third parties by e-mail should be written as professionally as a letter. Messages should be concise and directed only to relevant individuals.
- 6.2 Staff must not send abusive, obscene, discriminatory, incitement to violence, extremist, racist, sexist, Islamophobic, anti-Semitic, homophobic, harassing, derogatory, defamatory, or otherwise inappropriate e-mails. Anyone who feels that they have been harassed or bullied, or are offended by material received from a colleague via e-mail should inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- 6.3 Staff should take care with the content of e-mail messages, as incorrect or improper statements can give rise to claims for discrimination, harassment, defamation, breach of confidentiality or breach of contract. Staff should assume that e-mail messages may be read by others and not include anything which would offend or embarrass any reader, or themselves, if it found its way into the public domain.
- 6.4 E-mail messages may be disclosed in legal proceedings in the same way as paper documents. Deletion from a user's inbox or archives does not mean that an e-mail cannot be recovered for the purposes of disclosure. All e-mail messages should be treated as potentially retrievable, either from the main server or using specialist software.
- 6.5 In general, staff should not:
 - 6.5.1 send or forward private e-mails at work which they would not want a third party to read;
 - 6.5.2 send or forward chain mail, junk mail, cartoons, jokes or gossip;
 - 6.5.3 contribute to system congestion by sending trivial messages or unnecessarily copying or forwarding e-mails to those who do not have a real need to receive them;
 - 6.5.4 sell or advertise using Trust communication systems;
 - 6.5.5 agree to terms, enter into contractual commitments or make representations by e-mail unless appropriate authority has been obtained. A name typed at the end of an e-mail is a signature in the same way as a name written at the end of a letter;
 - 6.5.6 download or e-mail text, music and other content on the internet subject to copyright protection, unless it is clear that the owner of such works allows this;
 - 6.5.7 send messages from another worker's computer or under an assumed name unless specifically authorised; or



- 6.5.8 send confidential messages via e-mail or the internet, or by other means of external communication which are known not to be secure.
- 6.6 Staff who receive a wrongly-delivered e-mail should return it to the sender.

7 Use of the internet

- 7.1 When a website is visited, devices such as cookies, tags or web beacons may be employed to enable the site owner to identify and monitor visitors. If the website is of a kind described in paragraph 10.2, such a marker could be a source of embarrassment to the visitor and the Trust, especially if inappropriate material has been accessed, downloaded, stored or forwarded from the website. Such actions may also, in certain circumstances, amount to a criminal offence if, for example, the material is pornographic in nature. This is further considered under inappropriate use of equipment and systems at paragraph 10.
- 7.2 Staff should therefore not access any web page or any files (whether documents, images or other) downloaded from the internet which could, in any way, be regarded as illegal, offensive, in bad taste or immoral. While content may be legal in the UK, it may be in sufficient bad taste to fall within this prohibition. As a general rule, if any person (whether intended to view the page or not) might be offended by the contents of a page, or if the fact that our software has accessed the page or file might be a source of embarrassment if made public, then viewing it will be a breach of this policy.
- 7.3 Staff should not under any circumstances use the Trust's systems to participate in any internet chat room, post messages on any internet message board or set up or log text or information on a blog or wiki, even in their own time unless they are doing so in furtherance of their work responsibilities with the prior approval of the Head of Establishment.

8 Personal use of systems

- 8.1 The Trust permits the incidental use of internet, e-mail and telephone systems to send personal e-mail, browse the internet and make personal telephone calls subject to certain conditions set out below. Personal use is a privilege and not a right. It must be neither abused nor overused and the Trust reserves the right to withdraw its permission at any time.
- 8.2 The following conditions must be met for personal usage to continue:
- 8.2.1 use must be minimal and take place substantially out of normal working hours;
 - 8.2.2 personal e-mails must be labelled **personal** in the subject header;
 - 8.2.3 use must not interfere with business or office commitments;
 - 8.2.4 use must not commit Trust to any marginal costs; and
 - 8.2.5 use must comply with Trust policies including the Social Media Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Values and Ethos Policy, Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy, Data Protection Policy and Disciplinary Policy.
- 8.3 Staff should be aware that personal use of the Trust's systems may be monitored and, where breaches of this policy are found, action may be taken under the Trust's Disciplinary Policy. The Trust reserves the right to restrict or prevent access to certain telephone numbers or internet sites if personal use is considered to be excessive.



9 Monitoring of use of systems

- 9.1 The Trust's systems enable the Trust to monitor telephone, e-mail, voicemail, internet and other communications. For business reasons, and in order to carry out legal obligations in the Trust's role as an employer, use of the Trust's systems including the telephone and computer systems, and any personal use of them, is continually monitored by the Senior Leadership Team. Monitoring is only carried out to the extent permitted or as required by law and as necessary and justifiable for business purposes.
- 9.2 A CCTV system monitors key areas of Trust buildings 24 hours a day. This data is recorded. Footage may be used to support a disciplinary investigation and any inappropriate activity may result in disciplinary action being taken against the individual. Footage may also be passed to the Police and used in a criminal investigation.
- 9.3 The Trust reserves the right to retrieve the contents of messages or check searches which have been made on the internet for the following purposes (this list is not exhaustive):
 - 9.3.1 to monitor whether the use of the e-mail system or the internet is legitimate and in accordance with this policy;
 - 9.3.2 to find lost messages or to retrieve messages lost due to computer failure;
 - 9.3.3 to assist in the investigation of wrongful acts; or
 - 9.3.4 to comply with any legal obligation.

10 Inappropriate use of equipment and systems

- 10.1 Access is granted to the internet, telephones and other electronic systems for legitimate business purposes only. Incidental personal use is permissible provided it is in full compliance with the Trust's rules, policies and procedures (including this policy, the Social Media Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy, Data Protection Policy, Disciplinary Policy and Faith and Character Education Policy).
- 10.2 Misuse or excessive use or abuse of our telephone or e-mail system, or inappropriate use of the internet in breach of this policy will be dealt with under the Trust's Disciplinary Policy. Misuse of the internet can, in certain circumstances, constitute a criminal offence. In particular, misuse of the e-mail system or inappropriate use of the internet by participating in online gambling or chain letters or by creating, viewing, accessing, transmitting or downloading any of the following material will amount to gross misconduct (this list is not exhaustive):
 - 10.2.1 pornographic material (that is, writing, pictures, films and video clips of a sexually explicit or arousing nature);
 - 10.2.2 offensive, obscene, or criminal material or material which is liable to cause embarrassment to the Trust or to its key stakeholders;
 - 10.2.3 a false and defamatory statement about any person or organisation;
 - 10.2.4 material which is discriminatory, harassing, offensive, derogatory or may cause embarrassment to others;
 - 10.2.5 material which is extremist in nature, amounts to an incitement to violence or is otherwise capable of creating a hostile environment;



- 10.2.6 confidential information about the Trust or any of its staff, students, Governors or parents (including that which staff do not have authority to access);
- 10.2.7 any other statement which is likely to create any liability (whether criminal or civil, and whether for staff or the Trust); or
- 10.2.8 material in breach of copyright.

Any such action will be treated very seriously and is likely to result in summary dismissal.

- 10.3 Where evidence of misuse is found a more detailed investigation may be undertaken in accordance with the Trust's Disciplinary Policy, involving the examination and disclosure of monitoring records to those nominated to undertake the investigation and any witnesses or managers involved in the Disciplinary Procedure. If necessary, such information may be handed to the police in connection with a criminal investigation.

11 Monitoring, evaluation and review

- 11.1 The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout all Trust establishments.
- 11.2 The Trust will monitor the operation and effectiveness of arrangements referred to in this policy at each Trust establishment.
- 11.3 The Trust will review this policy at least every five years in consultation with each Trust establishment and the recognised trade unions.