

# E-mail Usage Policy

Oxford International School (OIS)

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OIS

Information & Communication Technology Department

## Introduction

1. This policy sets out the general rules for the use of Oxford International School's e-mail system, including electronic notice-boards hosted thereon, together with specific protocols and guidance concerning the Data Protection implications.
2. The School's e-mail systems are coordinated and managed by Information and Communication Technology (ICT). No other e-mail system (server or client) is recognised by or supported within the School.
3. Well managed use of e-mail and other electronic information systems will, in accordance with the School's Information Strategy, reduce the need for paper-based communication.
4. It is a condition of use of IT and e-mail facilities provided by the School, by a student, teacher, member of management staff or other authorised person, that the user agrees to be bound by the relevant Policies and Regulations.

## Use of E-mail

5. The e-mail systems are School property and the School reserves the right to monitor and to access any e-mail messages.
6. The use of e-mail for incidental and occasional personal purposes is permitted for convenience but should not be used for private confidential correspondence. Such use must not directly or indirectly interfere with the School's systems or burden the School with any incremental costs.
7. All users are responsible for ensuring that their e-mail usage is within the regulations, is ethical and lawful.
8. The sending of text or images that contain material of an offensive, indecent or obscene nature is prohibited.
9. Access to the School e-mail systems for staff and students is available off-campus.
10. Users of e-mail should be aware of formal requirements and good practice in the use of e-mail as set out in the sections below.
11. E-mail may be used for any legal activity in furtherance of the aims or policies of the School, subject to the conditions listed below. The following specific uses are excluded:
  - i. Any use that brings the School into disrepute;
  - ii. The transmission of e-mails with or without attachments that are known to contain viruses or other harmful software;
  - iii. The use of another individual's e-mail account by using that individual's identity (i.e. the individual's username/password details);
  - iv. The use of e-mail that could result in the inadvertent commitment of the School to a contract or agreement if it appears to the other party that he/she has authority to do so;
  - v. The creation of anonymous messages. All e-mails must be attributable to a named sender;
  - vi. Impersonation or misrepresentation of another individual;
  - vii. Alterations of source or destination address information;
  - viii. The e-mailing of some sensitive messages, for example employment decisions;
  - ix. The use of e-mail for personal reasons to promote or denigrate companies or organisations, or defame other employees;
  - x. The use of bulk e-mails, including excessive use of mailing lists, which is unrelated to the legitimate educational activities of the School and is likely to cause offence or inconvenience to those receiving it;

- xi. The use of private e-mail for any commercial activity or monetary gain;
  - xii. Sending copies of documents in breach of copyright laws;
  - xiii. The use of e-mail to harass or intimidate others or to interfere with the ability of others to conduct School business;
12. Students may redirect their e-mail to another e-mail address e .g. Hotmail, Yahoo, rocket mail etc, but they do so at their own risk. The School will provide a method that allows students to forward their School e-mail to another e-mail address but having e-mail redirected does not absolve the student from the responsibilities associated with communication sent to his or her official School e-mail address. The School will not be responsible for the handling of e-mail by outside vendors. Staff must correspond with students via the School e-mail system only and not with any external e-mail address. Students must use the School e-mail system when e-mailing School staff. Staff receiving non School e-mails purporting to have been sent by a student should be treated with caution.

### Misuse of E-mails

13. Penalties for misuse of e-mail will depend on the seriousness of the offence, and will be in accordance with current School procedures.

### Legal Consequences of Misuse of E-mail Facilities

14. In a growing number of cases involving civil or criminal law, e-mail messages (deleted or otherwise) are produced as evidence in a permanent written form. There are a number of areas of law which apply to use of e-mail and which could involve liability of users or the School. These include but are not limited to the following:
- i. Intellectual property. Anyone who uses e-mail to send or receive any materials that infringe the intellectual property rights of a third party may be liable to that third party if such use is not authorised by them;
  - ii. Obscenity. A criminal offence is committed if a person publishes any material which is pornographic, excessively violent or which comes under the provisions of the Information & Telecommunication Act 2006.
  - iii. Defamation. Legal responsibility for the transmission of any defamatory, obscene or rude remarks which discredit an identifiable individual or organisation will rest mainly with the sender of the e-mail and may lead to substantial financial penalties being imposed;
  - iv. Data Protection. Processing information (including photographs) which contains personal data about individuals requires the express written consent of those individuals. Any use of personal data beyond that will be illegal;
  - v. Discrimination. Any material disseminated which is discriminatory or encourages discrimination may be unlawful under Bangladesh Criminal Law *Penal Code*, 1860.

### Code of Practice for all E-mail Users

15. Users should adhere to the following guidelines for appropriate use:
- i. Check your e-mail regularly; once a day is an absolute minimum. Depending on the nature of the post, e-mail may need checking on a more regular basis, say hourly.
  - ii. Students, teacher or member of management staff must recognise that certain communications may be time critical. "I didn't check my e-mail", and errors in forwarding, user unknown or other error message are not acceptable excuses for missing official School communications sent by e-mail;
  - iii. Be polite. Messages sent by e-mail can often seem abrupt, even when it is not the intention. Use professional courtesy and discretion. The use of all upper-case text in either the subject

- or the body of an e-mail should also be avoided as this is deemed to be the e-mail equivalent of shouting;
- iv. Before you send an e-mail, read it through to make sure it really does say what you want it to say;
  - v. Do not say anything in an e-mail that you would not be prepared to say to someone face to face;
  - vi. Do not reply “With History” if it is not necessary especially if it incorporates a large attachment;
  - vii. Use ‘reply all’ and distribution lists with caution in order to keep the number of messages to a minimum and reduce the risk of sending messages to the wrong people;
  - viii. Staff must set the Out-of-Office option when they are away stating an alternative e-mail contact for work-related matters;
  - ix. Messages should be addressed to those from whom an action or response is expected, “cc” or “bcc” should be used for other recipients for whom the message is for information only;
  - x. Respect peoples’ privacy and consider this aspect before forwarding messages;
  - xi. Delete unwanted or unnecessary e-mail. It is the user’s responsibility to manage their e-mail folders and keep within the set quota limits. ICT can give advice and assistance if required;
  - xii. Unsolicited e-mail, especially with an attachment, may contain a virus or other harmful software. If in doubt, delete the e-mail or contact the sender to check before opening;
  - xiii. Do not try to carry out confidential or sensitive tasks or express controversial views via e-mail;
  - xiv. Enter a meaningful title in the ‘subject’ field at the top of the e-mail to help the reader anticipate the content correctly. Try to keep to one subject per message to help avoiding unnecessary confusion;
  - xv. Don’t use all or part of someone else’s message without acknowledgement. Don’t edit someone else’s message without making it clear what the changes are that you have made. Don’t distribute other people’s messages without permission;
  - xvi. Avoid subscribing to unnecessary mailing lists. Unsubscribe from mailing lists when they are no longer required;
  - xvii. E-mail transmissions and postings to electronic notice-boards should normally be limited to matters of School business;
  - xviii. E-mail group lists provided by ICT should only be used for matters of School business. To send to such a group list, the sender should be either a member of the group list concerned or a member of staff involved with that course. Prior permission from Head of School’s Office is required to send a message to all staff or all students. Any multiple use of e-mail group lists provided should be avoided unless absolutely necessary;
  - xix. Do not forward e-mail “chain letters”. These are e-mails which either ask you to forward them on to all your friends (or to everyone you know) or which state that something bad will happen if you do not forward them. E-mails of this type, which are warning about something (e.g. computer viruses), are almost certainly hoaxes as well. If you are unsure about any e-mail that you’ve received then:
    - a. Students should contact ICT staff for information and help;
    - b. Staff should e-mail the Administrator account.

### Cautionary Notes

16. The nature of e-mail is such that total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed and users should be aware of the following points about e-mail use:

- i. Copies of e-mail may exist on a back-up copy or a remote system even after the author or recipient has deleted the message;
- ii. E-mail may be forwarded by any recipient without the author's consent: it may not have been the author's intention that the mail should be forwarded;
- iii. A forwarded message may be a modified version of the original;
- iv. It is possible for the author or sender of an e-mail to disguise or alter their identity;
- v. Organizations outside the School may have different e-mail policies. Some consider it the property of the organization, subject to examination, copying or forwarding. Be aware of this possibility when sending e-mail;
- vi. Usernames and passwords should not be disclosed to others. This could result in security breaches and other people using your e-mail account to send unauthorised messages. Suspected security breaches should be reported to ICT at once;
- vii. Once a message is sent, there is no way to retrieve it. Check carefully that messages are addressed to the correct recipient(s) before sending;

## **Auditing**

17. Under Bangladesh law, employers are generally liable for what their employees do in the course of their work. This includes employees using e-mail to send defamatory or offensive messages.
18. The School also needs to ensure that staff and students are not spending excessive amounts of time using it for private purposes.
19. ICT does not routinely monitor or access e-mail. However, all e-mails arriving at Oxford International School are automatically scanned for viruses and for "spam" content i.e. whether they match unsolicited, nuisance, e-mails previously sent to Oxford International School: all such e-mails are blocked. However, filtering/virus-scanning can never be 100% effective so any unsolicited e-mails and attachments should always be treated with caution. Similarly, an e-mail may be incorrectly marked as infected or "spam" and become unnecessarily blocked.
20. ICT reserves the right of access to users' e-mail and audit logs on both the client workstation as well as the servers for legitimate purposes, such as investigation of complaints of misuse. Contents and audit logs for both sent and received e-mail may be inspected (including personal e-mail) at any time without notice. Authorisation has to be given by the Head of ICT (or appropriate deputy) for access to staff e-mail and the Head of ICT (or appropriate deputy) for access to student e-mail.
21. ICT will endeavour to maintain privacy of e-mail. However, there may be special cases where it is essential that e-mail messages are accessed due to, for example, illness of the owner of a mailbox. In these instances, on the request of a Head of School and on the authorisation of the Head of ICT (or appropriate deputy), ICT may locate and make available e-mail messages for access by a nominated member of staff. The owner of the mailbox will be notified in due course.
22. Certain authorised members of ICT may necessarily have access to the contents of e-mail messages in the course of system administration. Any knowledge thus obtained will not be communicated to others, unless required for system administration.
23. ICT reserves the right to take special actions in administering e-mail if this is essential to preserve the integrity or functionality of the system. This may include the deletion of e-mail.

## **Security - Opening and Closing Accounts**

24. E-mail accounts for staff and student are set up by ICT on receipt of a request from Human Resources Service. Associated passwords are issued directly to the end user or via Faculty or Service administration.
25. Staff and student accounts are deleted on receipt of a request from Human Resources Service.
26. Before leaving employment at Oxford International School, staff should unsubscribe from any e-mail lists they have subscribed to and delete any personal e-mails in their account. Staff should

also set up an “out of office” message to run until 8 weeks after their leaving date stating that they have left the School and who the sender should contact instead. If there are any work-related e-mails that need to be transferred to another user then these e-mails should be forwarded on as appropriate - the Administrator account.

27. Following the departure of a member of staff from the School, their e-mail account will be closed for access by them and deleted after a period of 8 weeks. School management may request access to be given to the closed mailbox by another member of staff for this duration.

### Auto Signature & Disclaimer

28. All staff e-mail messages sent from the School shall include an e-mail disclaimer, as follows:

*“This transmission is confidential and may be legally privileged. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender by return e-mail and delete the message from your system.”*

### Signature:

**Firstname Lastname, *Title***

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*This transmission is confidential and may be legally privileged. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender by return e-mail and delete the message from your system.*

### Review

29. It is the responsibility of ICT to regularly review the content of the E-mail Usage Policy.