

# Belfast Model School for Girls

*Achievement for All*



## Email Policy

**Agreed by Board of Governors: May 2012**

**To be reviewed: May 2015**

### Rationale

Email is a communication tool and all users must use email in a responsible, effective and lawful manner. Email is provided as part of the Belfast Model School for Girls overall provision of ICT facilities for the purpose of teaching, learning and administration activities. Email use is subject to relevant legislation and this policy should be read in conjunction with the Policy for the Acceptable Use of the Internet and the school computer network.

### Purposes

The purpose of this policy is to provide information about the Belfast Model School for Girls email system and to provide guidelines for users on the secure, effective and acceptable use of email. This policy also describes the standards that users are to comply with when using the facility, and to ensure that users are aware of the legal consequences attached to the inappropriate use of the facility.

### Guidelines

The email systems are school property and the school reserves the right to monitor and to access any email messages. The use of email for incidental and occasional personal purposes is permitted for convenience but should not be used for private confidential correspondence. All users are responsible for ensuring that their email usage is within the regulations and is ethical and lawful. The sending of text or images that contain material of an offensive, indecent or obscene nature is prohibited. Access to the school email systems for staff is available offsite.

**All users must adhere to the following guidelines for appropriate use of the email system:**

- All staff must format emails to the following standard to ensure readability and clarity for all users –
  - Background to be white with no graphics.
  - Typeface to be Arial - black colour.
  - Name and position held (if applicable) to be inserted followed by the standard disclaimer which is set out below.
- No purchases or an agreement to purchase products or services of any kind are to be made via email. All orders must be placed in the usual way via official order forms sent to the office.
- No one should ever permit another individual to use their email account to either send or receive mail. The account holder is liable for the content of all communications via their account.
- Check emails regularly.
- Messages should be clearly addressed to those from whom an action or response is expected, "cc" or "bcc" should be used for other recipients of the message.

- 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.
- Do not send emails to 'Roving' Groups as these will be seen by individuals outside of the school.
- Consider the content of email (especially if it is of confidential or sensitive nature) and ask the question "does it really need to go to all of these recipients?".
- Respect privacy and consider this aspect before forwarding messages.
- It is the user's responsibility to manage their own email folders and keep within the quota limits set.
- To ensure the free flow of email around the system, all users should on a weekly basis delete unwanted messages from their *Inbox* and *Sent Items*. Likewise the contents of the *Drafts* and *Deleted Mail* Folders should be cleared.
- Unsolicited email, especially with an attachment, may contain a virus. If in doubt, do not open the attachment and delete the email.
- Do not try to carry out confidential or sensitive tasks or air controversial views on email.
- Enter a meaningful 'subject' field to help the reader anticipate the content correctly, and try to keep to one subject per message.
- Be polite. Messages sent by email can often seem abrupt, even when this is not the intention. Use professional courtesy and discretion. The use of all uppercase text in either the subject or the body of an email should also be avoided as this is deemed to be the email equivalent of shouting.
- Don't use all or part of someone else's message without acknowledgement. Don't edit someone else's message without making it clear the changes that have made and don't distribute other people's messages without permission.
- Avoid subscribing to unnecessary mailing lists. Unsubscribe from mailing lists when they are no longer required.
- Email distribution group lists should only be used for matters of school business. To send to such a group list, the sender should normally be either a member of the group list concerned or a member of staff involved with that group.
- If a user needs to leave their workstation, they should at all times lock the workstation to prevent possible unauthorised access by another individual.

## **Disclaimer**

All staff *must* have the following disclaimer included at the bottom of their email –

*Any views expressed by the sender of this message are not necessarily those of Belfast Model School for Girls. This email and any files transmitted with it are intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender immediately by using the reply facility in your email software. All emails are swept for the presence of viruses.*

*To help promote the use of electronic documents and to be kinder to the environment, please consider whether you really need to print this email.*

## **Data Protection**

All email falls under the Data Protection Act and therefore -

- Under the Data Protection Act, all email transmissions which contain personal data may be disclosed in response to a request for disclosure, brought forward (through normal procedure), via the Schools Data Protection Officer. ‘Personal data’ can include a sender’s opinion of another person.
- Under the Data Protection Act, email messages may be disclosed to those referred to in them. The school is not responsible for any subsequent action to which a sender may thereby make themselves liable.
- The use of email, as a means of internal as well as external communication, falls within the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.
- Under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, email users who have access to email addresses have a responsibility not to disclose email addresses or email lists to an unauthorised third party without permission of the owner of the email address.

## **Misuse of the Email System**

Due to the nature of the Email System and possible legal implications, penalties for misuse of email will depend on the seriousness of the offence, and be in accordance with current School/BELB/DENI Procedures.