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INTERNET AND EMAIL POLICY

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Classification: **Information Management**		
Strategic Plan link: A Council that is actively responsive to community needs and delivers financial sustainability, governance and leadership.		
References and related Policies, Procedures and Forms: *Local Government Act 1999* *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* *Freedom of Information Act 1991* *Local Government Act 1999* *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* *Freedom of Information Act 1991*		

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This policy contains important rules and guidelines covering use of the internet and email facilities within Council. Many of the rules apply equally to the Councils' other methods of external communication such as letter, facsimile and telephone.

This policy explains how internet and email access should be used; it also highlights those activities which are permitted.

All information sent or received over the Council's network is the property of the Council.

2.0 POLICY OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the proper use of Council's electronic communication systems by Council staff, contractors and consultants for their intended purposes without infringing legal requirements, Council policies or creating unnecessary business risk.

The internet and email facility and equipment are provided to staff to assist in the performance of the Council's responsibilities and the execution of individuals' jobs.

In accordance with Council's Records Management Policy and recordkeeping procedures, all email should be answered promptly and action taken to ensure retention of corporate correspondence, i.e. registration into the Electronic Document Record Management System (EDRMS).

The Council may monitor the use of the systems and investigate any unusual usage patterns.

3.0 GUIDELINES

3.1 INTERNET

The Internet is provided as a business tool to be primarily used for work purposes however; minimal personal use is allowed where it does not interfere with the productivity of the officer and fully complies with the guidelines set down in this policy.

Be aware, internet usage is logged by Council systems. Access to these logs may be requested by a user's supervisor, through a written request to Information Technology (IT) staff.

The use of Council's electronic communications system to make or send fraudulent, unlawful or abusive information, calls or messages is prohibited. Council staff who receives any threatening, intimidating or harassing telephone calls or electronic messages should immediately report the incident to their manager.

The Internet may not be used to access material considered to be offensive as defined by the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* and/or the District Council of Streaky Bay Equal Employment Opportunity Policy.

Care should be taken to remember that while Council officers may not consider the material viewed as offensive, other officers in the same area or customers (who may be able to see the screen) may not share the same view.

Offensive material includes, but is not limited to:

- Obscene or harassing language or images;
- Comments or images that would offend someone on the basis of their religious or political views, sexual orientation, physical features, ethnicity, gender or age.

Do not download and install software without permission. This includes free software and shareware available on the internet. All software installed on Council computers should be licensed and checked by IT staff to confirm that it operates on the Council's Standard Operating Environment.

Staff shall not create or subscribe to social media sites (i.e. Facebook, Twitter) in a manner that could be perceived as the official position or statement of Council without the permission of the Chief Executive Officer.

3.2 EMAIL

The equipment and any messages created, sent or received on the Council computer system are the property of the District Council of Streaky Bay. This includes email of a private nature.

Email messages must not contain material considered to be offensive as defined by the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* and/or the District Council of Streaky Bay Equal Employment Opportunity Policy.

Do not create congestion by sending trivial, group, 'junk' or 'chain' email messages.

Do not use the council email to sign up to personal electronic news letters, user groups or web-sites.

Incidental and occasional personal use of email is permitted provided it does not constitute operating an outside business interest, does not interfere with the productivity of the officer and fully complies with the guidelines set down in this policy.

No unauthorised Council information or copyrighted material is to be distributed by email.

Unless authorised, employees may not retrieve or read email that was not sent to them.

Staff should be aware that in legal proceedings, stored emails may be required to be produced as evidence in the same way as any other documentary evidence relevant to the proceedings.

All emails sent outside the Council must contain the following disclaimer:

"*This email may contain confidential information, which may also be legally privileged. Only the intended recipient(s) may access, use, distribute or copy this email. If this email is received in error, please inform the sender by return email and delete the original. It is the recipients' responsibility to check the email and any other attached files for viruses".*

3.2.1 Virus Infection

Computer viruses are often spread via Email and users should be vigilant in terms of monitoring 'suspicious' or 'unfamiliar' sources. No file attachments should be opened or stored unless the employee can positively identify the sender.

If there is any doubt, delete. If a file is deleted or a virus infection is suspected and/or confirmed the incident must be reported immediately to the Corporate Services Manager.

3.2.2 Dealing with inappropriate Email

When dealing with inappropriate email, Council recommends the following message to be forwarded back to the sender:

'*Please note that the image/text you have sent me could potentially be viewed as inappropriate in accordance with the District Council of Streaky Bay Internet & Email Policy. I would appreciate if similar images/text are not forwarded to me in the future. With thanks….'*

4.0 Policy Details

VERSION	DATE ADOPTED	MINUTE BOOK NUMBER
	Nov 2005	
	19 March 2009	
V3.0	18 August 2011	197/11