



## **Computer, Email, and Internet Policy**

### **Purpose of the Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to minimise the threats and risks associated with email, voicemails, internet and computer usage in general, to ensure that the best personal and professional standards underpin the Club's usage of these technologies. The policy aims to inform everyone engaged within or by the Club about their rights and responsibilities in this regard when using these technology platforms.

The internet is a valuable resource, not just for communication, but also as a source of information. While email and the internet bring many benefits to the Club, they also bring risks. The Club is responsible for material originating from its website and material found on its machines.

### **Scope of the Policy**

This Policy applies to all systems and services throughout the Club and those engaged within or by the Club who use them, including remote locations, external data processing facilities and third parties who use our computing facilities.

It applies to the use of email, internet and computer systems by all staff employed, club members, club volunteers and others engaged on behalf of the Club who may be provided with access to the Club's systems.

It also applies to any Club Committee/Joint members who are emailing on the Club's behalf.

### **Policy**

#### **1 Email**

Email is a computerised communication system that enables the sending and receiving of messages via PC's, laptops, and mobile phones. Documents and other material can be attached to emails. The risks associated with the use of emails include but is not confined to the following scenarios:

- (a) Your message may go to persons other than the intended recipient and if confidential or commercially sensitive, this could be damaging to the Club.
- (b) Email messages can carry computer viruses that are potentially damaging to the Club's computer operations.
- (c) Letters, files, and other documents attached to emails may belong to others and there may be implications, including, but not limited to matters relating to copyright, in sending or receiving such material without permission.
- (d) Email is speedy. This may have implications for messages which are written in haste or written carelessly. With a slower medium, there may be more of an opportunity to reconsider, verify or rephrase. This could give rise to misunderstandings, offence or indeed to legal liability on the Club's part for defamation, etc.
- (e) An email message may legally bind the Club contractually in certain instances without the proper authority having been obtained internally.
- (f) It should be remembered that all personal data contained in emails may be accessible under Data Protection Legislation.
- (g) Emails should be regarded as potentially public information, which carry a heightened risk of legal liability for the sender, the recipient and the organisations for which they work.
- (h) Offensive e-mails can also constitute bullying, slander, harassment and may cause offence to colleagues or other recipients and are treated in the same manner as other forms of abuse in line with the Club's policies and will not be tolerated.

## **2 Rules for Email use**

To avoid or reduce the risks inherent in the use of email, the following must be noted and observed:

- (a) The Club's name is included with every message sent by an employee or member given access to an email address. This reflects on the Club's image and reputation. Therefore, email messages must be appropriate and professional.
- (b) A low level of personal use of email is tolerated on an employee's own time, but it should not in any way interfere with the Club's operations or cause any harm to either the Club or to Club facilities.
- (c) Personal, confidential, or commercially sensitive information must not be sent by email. You must be mindful that such information can be readily or rapidly

re-distributed via email to a wide audience, perhaps even without the knowledge of the original sender.

- (d) Beware of what is written in email messages. Extra caution needs to be taken with email messages in respect of any disparaging remarks that may be contained therein. An email should be regarded as a written formal letter, the recipients of which may be much wider than the sender intended. Hence any defamatory or careless remarks can have very serious consequences, as can any innuendo.
- (e) Emails containing indecent, obscene, sexist, racist or other inappropriate remarks or pictures (including cartoons) are prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.
- (f) Do not enter contracts on behalf of the Club using the internet or email unless you have the express authority to do so from the appropriate authority within the Club. Where appropriate, relevant legal advice should be obtained.
- (g) If you receive any offensive, unpleasant, harassing, or intimidating messages via the email then you are requested to inform the appropriate authority within the Club i.e. Honorary Secretary. It is important that the Club traces such emails as quickly as possible and deals with them appropriately and expeditiously.
- (h) Documents prepared by the Club for suppliers/external providers may be attached via the email. However, excerpts from reports, publications etc. other than those written/issued by the Club, may be in breach of copyright and the author's consent may be required. However, links to files and/or web locations are permissible. Information received from a supplier/external provider should not be released to another supplier/external provider without prior consent of the original sender. If in doubt consult the appropriate authority within the Club.
- (i) Email services should not be used in any manner that may cause excessive strain on computer facilities or unnecessary interference with other users. This includes, but is not limited to, the sending or forwarding of email chain letters, sending large numbers of unsolicited emails or re-sending the same message repeatedly and unnecessarily to one or more recipients.
- (j) The email system employs user-ID's and associated passwords to isolate the communications of different users. Users must never share passwords or reveal them to anyone else. In general, employees should not leave their computer unattended without securing the session by password, timeout or signing off.

- (k) Where a suspected virus is received, contact the Honorary Secretary immediately. All incoming attachments must be virus checked. All storage devices and CDs should also be virus checked.
- (l) It is prohibited to forward emails concerning the sensitive business information or private communications to your personal email address. All email communication to external contacts must be in line with normal business practice.
- (m) When communicating by email, particularly when forwarding email threads, please ensure that the previous email threads are appropriate to the end recipient. It may not be appropriate to forward emails internally to persons not included on the original email thread and it is not appropriate to forward emails externally at any time unless the author of the original email is advised.
- (n) Emails containing Club data should never be forwarded to your personal email account without permission.
- (o) It is an offence and may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal if you are found, as an employee, to be using the system to the detriment of the Club.

### **3 Monitoring of Email**

The Club reserves the right to monitor the contents and usage of the email system to support operational, maintenance, auditing, compliance (including compliance with employee/employment policies), security and investigative activities and for other legitimate business purposes. Accordingly, you should use email with the knowledge that the Club may from time to time examine the content of email communications and monitor your use of email.

Opening mailboxes for investigation requires authorisation by the appropriate authority within the Club on a case-by-case basis. The Club may search your mailbox, hard disk, network drive and relevant backups. Where a problem is found to exist following an investigation, it will be reported to the sender or the employee or other party concerned. Where the problem relates to material such as virus,

which can damage the network, the Club may immediately close down an account pending further investigation and action.

Email monitoring system may be installed to protect Club systems including to:-

- (a) Check mail messages for viruses and clean them before they enter the mail system.
- (b) Filter out mail messages with attached video files. Video files tend to be very large. They can have an adverse effect on the delivery of other mails, especially those from the Internet.

- (c) Filter out offensive language, attachments, etc.

## **4 Internet**

The internet enables users to obtain information specific to their role and enables two-way communication with sites appropriate to that role. The risks to the Club of the misuse of the internet can be great and hence the need for strict rules.

### **4.1 Internet Rules**

- (a) The Club's internet connections are intended for activities that either support Club Business and Golf operations or the appropriate professional development of employees, where applicable. As with email, a low level of personal surfing of the internet is tolerated, but this must be in your own time and must not interfere with the Club's operations or cause any harm either to the Club or to Club facilities.
- (b) You must not deliberately perform acts which waste your own or your colleague's or fellow member's time or computer resources. These acts include:
- Playing games, online gambling, shopping etc;
  - Online non-business related chat group;
  - Uploading/Downloading large unofficial files which create unnecessary non-business related loads on network traffic;
  - Accessing streaming audio/video files, for example, listening to music or watching movie clips;
  - Forwarding non-business related audio/video files to other employees or other members;
  - Participating in mass non-business related mailings such as chain letters;
  - Sending any unofficial attachments;
  - Accessing, storing, or distributing images, 'video' or graphics which do not relate directly to club operations;
  - Sending or circulating any defamatory information;
  - Sending or circulating any data protected by Data Protection legislation;
  - Sending or circulating any information which is confidential Club information;

- Negligent Virus Transmission;
  - Connecting any equipment to our network without permission;
  - Taking copies of our software or bringing illegal software into the workplace;
  - Making personal use of any blog or social networking forum unless you are acting on the Club's behalf as part of your role/position within the Club;
  - Attempting to gain unauthorised access to any computer system.
- (c) Material should not be downloaded from services that have to be paid for without appropriate authorisation. Any such material must be directly related to the operational activities of the Club.
- (d) Mailing lists and newsgroups are useful for keeping abreast of developments in an employee's particular professional field of interest, if applicable. Mailing lists and newsgroups may be used for Club business only. The guidelines as set out herein in respect of email usage and Internet browsing also apply to these media. Should members of a mailing list or newsgroup be in breach of these guidelines, employees or other parties must immediately remove themselves from the service concerned.
- (e) To access, download or send any indecent, obscene, pornographic, sexist, racist, defamatory or other inappropriate materials or the circulation of such materials will be a dismissible offence. There is the potential for criminal liability arising from such activity under the Child Trafficking and Pornography Act, 1998 and the Gardai or other appropriate authority may be informed as appropriate.
- (f) Employees may have access to social media sharing and/or chat rooms, where these relate to their work. These facilities may be used solely and strictly in the course of an employee's work. Use of any offensive, intemperate, or otherwise unacceptable language is strictly forbidden and will be regarded as a serious breach of Club Policies.
- (g) Employees may not download copyrighted software, audio or visual files or any other copyrighted material from the Internet. Any such material discovered will be deleted without prior notification.
- (h) Employees must not trade on any internet site such as, but not limited to, ebay.com. Trading includes selling, buying and exchanging goods, crypto currency, and/or other services. Use of the Internet by employees for such purposes is an example of serious misconduct and may result in appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

- (i) Employees must not access or use gambling internet sites. The use of the internet for such purposes is regarded as a disciplinary offence and may result in appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
- (j) Employees may only access the internet through a computer attached to the employer's network and must do so through an approved Internet firewall or other security device provided for by the Club.

## **4.2 Internet Monitoring**

The Club may employ software to monitor the use of web browsing facilities.

A record of internet sites visited by any employee through any of the Club's connections or computers may be kept and used by the Club at its discretion and for use as deemed appropriate.

Access to pornographic sites is absolutely forbidden and is in serious breach of this policy and the law. The Club will fully co-operate with the relevant authorities in investigating and prosecuting any such illegal access.

No one may download copyrighted software, audio or video files or any other copyrighted material from the internet. Any such material discovered will be deleted without prior notification.

Use of the Internet is subject to monitoring:

- (a) to support operational, maintenance, auditing, and investigative activities.
- (b) for legitimate business purposes.
- (c) to verify this policy is being complied with.
- (d) during any investigation.
- (e) for security and/or network management reasons.
- (f) for any other reasons as decided by the Club to be in our best interest

Monitoring includes, but is not limited, to, electronic scanning for source and destination addresses. The distribution of any information through the internet is subject to the scrutiny of the Club.

The Club reserves the right to determine the suitability of this information.

## **General Principles re Internet and Email**

In addition to the foregoing, the Internet and email should not be used:

- (a) For personal gain or profit.
- (b) To represent yourself as someone else.
- (c) To post or download messages that contain political views.
- (d) To advertise or otherwise support unauthorised or illegal activities.
- (e) To provide lists or information about Club employees/members or the employees/members of any related club/organisation to others and/or to send classified and/or confidential information without appropriate approval.

### **Infringement/ Breach of Internet and Email Rules**

Due to the importance of these rules, any breaches will be treated seriously including gross misconduct, in accordance with our Disciplinary and Grievance Policy.

Rule breaches may result in appropriate disciplinary action or further action deemed necessary by the Club up to and including dismissal, termination of contract, removal or suspension from office or role within the Club.

Violations or suspected violations of these rules should be reported to the appropriate authority within the Club.

The Club also operates a communications policy and a social media policy which should be read in conjunction with, and may also be relevant to, this policy.

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