



Okehampton Town Council

Social Media, IT and Phone Use Policy for Employees

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the proper use of Okehampton Town Council's systems and facilities and make users aware of what the Council deems acceptable and unacceptable. The Council reserves the right to amend this policy at its discretion.

Refer to the Employee Handbook for the Employee Council issued Mobile Phone Policy.

Social media

An employee's behaviour on any social networking or other internet sites must be consistent with the behaviour required of employees generally.

Where it is possible for users of a social media site to ascertain who you work for, you should take particular care not to behave in a way which reflects badly on the Council. Inappropriate or disparaging comments about the Council, colleagues or the town will be treated as misconduct. Because social media interactions can be copied and widely disseminated in a way that you may not be able to control, the Council will take a particularly serious view of any misconduct that occurs through the use of social media.

Employees must not operate a social media account or profile that purports to be operated on or on behalf of the Council without express permission to do so from the Town Clerk.

Email, Internet and Computer Use

Email

The following rules **MUST** be adhered to by all users within the Council. It is prohibited to:

- Send or forward emails containing libellous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene remarks. If you receive an email of this sort, you must notify the Town Clerk.
- Forward a sensitive or controversial message without acquiring permission from the sender first.
- Forge or attempt to forge email messages.
- Disguise or attempt to disguise your identity when sending mail.
- Send email messages using another person's email address without permission.
- Copy a confidential message or attachment belonging to another user without permission of the originator.
- Forward details allowing the identification of a person without their prior permission (see Data Protection Policies)

Email Electronic Signature and Disclaimer

Employees must ensure that their electronic signature and disclaimer is set up in the following format to appear on outgoing emails:

Name
Job Title
Address
Telephone number
Name of Organisation
An appropriate disclaimer

Downloading and Importing Files and Software

Employees must download files only onto those PCs with virus checking software.

Employees must exercise extreme care when receiving emails with attachments from third parties, particularly unidentified third parties, as these may contain viruses.

Data from memory sticks, CDs, and other external devices must only be viewed on PCs with appropriate virus checking software. If in any doubt about whether it is safe and permissible to use these devices, by asking the Town Clerk.

System Monitoring

Users expressly waive any right of privacy in anything they create, store, send or receive on the Council's computer system.

The Council can, but is not obliged to, monitor emails without prior notification. The organisation considers the following to be examples of valid reasons for checking an employee's emails:

- If an employee is absent for any reason and communications must be checked for the smooth running of the business to continue;
- If the Council suspects that an employee has been viewing or sending offensive or illegal material;
- If the Council suspects that an employee has been using the email system to send/receive an excessive number of personal communications; or
- If the Council suspects that an employee is sending or receiving emails that are detrimental to the Council.

If there is evidence that you are not adhering to the guidelines set out in this policy, the Council reserves the right to take appropriate disciplinary/legal action, which could result in termination of employment.

Personal use of Council Internet and Email

Employees may not use their Council email address for personal use.

Employees may use the internet for personal use outside of working hours, ie at lunchtimes, for things such as checking the weather or news pages.

Abuse of Internet/email access could include, but is not limited to:

- Accessing inappropriate websites;
- Downloading or distributing obscene, offensive, or indecent material;
- Using language or behaviour likely to bring the Council into disrepute;
- Using the Council's official role/status for personal gain;
- Using Council's role/status to support a specific political or issue-based campaign;
- Using the equipment to contribute to fraud; and

- Using or passing on privileged or confidential information.

Phone Use

Employees must not use Council phones, mobile or landline, for personal use unless in an emergency situation or approved by the Town Clerk.

Use of Personal Phones and Devices

Personal phones and devices make staying in touch easier but also mean that it is easy not to disengage from work outside of working hours and employees are encouraged not to access emails during these times.

Personal phone and devices must not be used for council purposes. Refer to the Employee Handbook for the Council Mobile Phone Policy.

General

Abuse of this policy will be regarded as a disciplinary offence and will be subject to action laid out in the policies on code of conduct and elsewhere.