

Internet and Email – Frequently Asked Questions

[These frequently asked questions should be read together with the Internet and Email Acceptable Use Policy]

Is personal use of the Council's Internet and email system allowed?

You can use the Council's Internet system for personal use in your own time only (before work, during lunchtime, and after work). Personal use of the Council's email address Derbyshire.gov.uk is not allowed at any time.

Why can't I use my Derbyshire.gov.uk email address for personal use?

Internet and email are vital tools in helping the Council to serve the people of Derbyshire and these tools need to be fast and reliable. Personal use takes up capacity that should be available to support service delivery.

It is inappropriate to use your Derbyshire.gov.uk email address for personal use as it may give the impression that any business is on behalf of the Council.

How will you know what is personal use or information I need for my job?

There are no restrictions about using the internet for your job. There are many websites that people will use for their job or could use in their personal life. Employees need to be sure that whenever they use a website for personal purposes that it is in their own time.

How can my use of the Council's Internet and email facilities be open to public scrutiny?

Current legislation, including the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act, may require your emails to be released to other people both inside and outside the Council.

Can I assume that, if the Council filtering system does not block access to an Internet site I wish to visit, I am okay to visit the site?

Do not assume that it is okay to visit a website that is not blocked.

New websites are created all the time and may contain inappropriate material. If you visit a site that contains inappropriate material, you must inform your line manager immediately.

What is 'inappropriate material'?

In most cases, common sense will determine whether the material is appropriate for the work place. If you are unsure, then it is very likely that the material is inappropriate. Further detailed guidance is provided in the policy.

Can I use my Hotmail or similar personal email account through my work Internet access provided I do it in my own time?

Yes. However, you should not send or receive material that is inappropriate for the workplace, nor should you use these web based email services for the sending or receiving of Derbyshire County Council information.

What if I receive an urgent personal email that needs an instant reply during work time?

If it is a genuine emergency for example from your child's school you should inform your line manager at the earliest opportunity that you have responded to the email and they will make a note of it.

Wherever possible all personal email should be directed to a personal email account, most emails contain instructions on how to unsubscribe or contact the person/organisation to change the email address.

How will staff working in network 'dead zones' be able to deal with emergencies?

If it is a genuine emergency, e.g. school closures in bad weather conditions, you will be able to check for messages. You should inform your line manager at the earliest opportunity that you have done so.

Does the policy mean that I cannot download any files from the Internet?

You must not download executable files, licensed or unlicensed software programs, or music/video files from the Internet unless specifically approved by Transformation Service. These can contain viruses that may harm the Council's computer systems.

Am I allowed to keep email and pages I have downloaded from the Internet in my own time on my computer at work?

No

If I use the Internet in my lunchtime, can I print any pages off the Internet on the printer in my office?

No, office printers are not for personal use. Internet access is free to all employees subject to the restrictions previously mentioned.

(The Derbyshire Library Service offers a printing service for downloaded pages and emails for a price for each A4 sheet)

As a Trade Union representative, can I use the Council's email facility to send Trade Union messages to other representatives?

Yes Trade Union messages can be sent but this should be during designated 'time off' for trade union duties. Such messages should be restricted to matters arising from member representation, enquiries and issues, other trade union representatives, officers and employees of the trade union and will be monitored

in the same way as all other email traffic.

Are communications with the Trade Unions allowed using my Derbyshire.gov email address?

Yes, for all communications, issues and enquiries relevant to your employment with the Council.

I am undertaking training required for my job and this requires access to the internet. I am also using my council email address. Will I still be able to use the Council's email for items related to the training?

Yes, if the training is funded and supported by the Council as part of your job.

Will I still be able to use the Council's Wi-Fi on my phone or tablet?

Yes, however the Council's guest wireless will require a registration process to access it in due course. You should not use these devices to communicate Derbyshire County Council information and so any use should be in your own time.

Can I email work I have worked on at home from home to Council email addresses or vice-versa?

Yes, but where possible the council's email system should be used
<https://mail.derbyshire.gov.uk/owa>

Can I use the Council email facility to publicise social/charity events e.g. school fair, birthdays, fundraising etc?

No.

Are the Derbyshire Swap Shop and Noticeboard sections on Dnet affected by the policy?

Adverts placed on Swap Shop are recorded and must be undertaken in your own time. Responses should be directed to a personal email address not your derbyshire.gov.uk email address.

What if someone uses my computer when I am not at my desk?

The Council's Secure Desk Policy requires that you always lock your screen when away from your desk to prevent others from using your account. Pressing the Windows key and 'L' will do this quickly.

I am a School governor, is use of the council email address allowed for communications with the school?

Yes, however it is only for governor related business and care needs to be taken regarding the sensitivity of the information as there may be delegate access to

your council email address which would mean other staff could access the information.

Can I use the Council email address to communicate with the staff network groups (LGBT & BME networks and disabled workers group)?

Yes for issues relating to the County Council.

Can I use the Council email system when applying for jobs that are advertised internally and externally?

Yes

Is the Council allowed to monitor my Internet access and my emails?

The Council is responsible for all business communications and monitoring is a recognised component of the employment relationship. All use of the Council's Internet and email system is recorded and may be subject to monitoring. The Council has an agreed Monitoring Protocol with regard to Internet and email use.

How does the Council monitor internet activity, emails etc?

It is often necessary for your colleagues and/or your manager to be able to access your inbox in order to manage workloads and respond to urgent emails during periods of absence. This type of monitoring is necessary in order to ensure the effective operation of the service and is not related to potential breaches of the policy.

*In addition to the monitoring described above, the Transformation Service provides Strategic Directors with regular management reports relating to the use of the Internet and email by employees within the department. The Strategic Director or their delegate will consider what if any appropriate action should be taken in light of the information contained within these reports. Where it is considered necessary to investigate a potential breach of the policy **further** by gathering **more** information about an employee's use of the Council's systems, the Strategic Director or their delegate will follow the Council's Monitoring Protocol.*

In all situations where a Senior Manager considers that it is necessary to access emails that have been deleted or stored in personal folders as part of an investigation into an employee's conduct, or to obtain detailed information about an employee's use of the internet, the Senior Manager will follow the Council's Monitoring Protocol.

How long is monitoring information held?

Information obtained through monitoring will only be held for as long as it is necessary to complete enquiries. Where information is part of disciplinary proceedings, the information will be kept in accordance with the retention period for such proceedings. Where information is not being used as part of an enquiry

or disciplinary investigation it will be stored in accordance with normal retention policies.

Will I know if I am being monitored?

Your manager or the Audit Services Unit would normally consult with you about any suspected breach of the Internet & Email Acceptable Use Policy before any further investigation is carried out. However, in some situations it may not be appropriate to consult with you beforehand.

Is information sent via email secure or not?

Email is not secure. Sending an unencrypted email is as secure as sending a postcard - many other people may be able to read it as well as the person it was sent to.

Why might an email I was expecting not arrive?

This can happen for many reasons. The most likely cause is that the Council's filtering systems has blocked the email. This may happen because the message appears to contain inappropriate material or a virus. You will need to contact the Transformation Service Desk to confirm this.

Who does the policy apply to?

All employees are required to electronically accept the Internet and Email Acceptable use Policy. Elected members are also signed up to the policy.

Who reviews the policy and when?

The Internet and Email Acceptable use Policy is reviewed annually by the Information Governance Group.

Who do I contact with queries?

Your line manager or the Transformation Service desk, via the service desk online icon on your desktop.