

<b>Procedure Title</b>	<b>Email - Acceptable Use (Employee)</b>		
<b>Date of Issue</b>	March 29, 2005	<b>Related Policy</b>	BP 2311-D
<b>Revision Dates</b>	April 8, 2014; June 22, 2016; January 15, 2020; November 24, 2021; February 15, 2023	<b>Related Forms</b>	
<b>Review Date</b>		<b>Originator</b>	Administrative Council
<b>References</b>			
AP 2312-D "Network Resources - Limited Personal Use"; Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act; Education Act			

**1.0 RATIONALE**

- 1.1 Bluewater District School Board recognizes that access to email systems enhances and encourages effective communications. It is also aware that misuse of board email systems can be detrimental to the business conducted by Bluewater District School Board, and it is therefore necessary that all users of board email systems be aware of what is deemed acceptable use and what is not.
- 1.2 This procedure outlines appropriate and inappropriate use of Bluewater District School Board email systems with the intent of minimizing disruptions to services and activities, and ensuring compliance with applicable policies, procedures, and laws.

**2.0 PROCEDURE**

**2.1 Account Activation/Termination**

- i. The Information Communications Technology Department (ICT) is responsible for setting up employee email accounts. At the initial set up the ICT Department will inform the employee where their principal access to their email account is located (this is to facilitate access for employees who either do not have a computer specifically assigned to them, or employees who travel from work site to work site). Part of the initial setup and establishment of an account will also include an overview of how to access email. This may include either instruction from ICT personnel or written instructions received at the time of initial set up.
- ii. Email access at Bluewater District School Board is controlled through individual accounts and passwords. Each user of the board email system is required to read this procedure and related policy BP 2311-D "Email - Acceptable Use". It is the responsibility of the employee to protect the confidentiality of their account and password information. Email accounts are for the sole use of the employee and passwords to these accounts are not to be shared with other individuals.
- iii. All employees of Bluewater District School Board are responsible for a board email account. Board email accounts will be granted to third party non-employees on a case-by-case basis. Possible non-employees that may be eligible for access include Contractors or Consultants.
  - a) Applications for these temporary accounts must be submitted in writing to the manager of information technology. All terms, conditions, and restrictions governing board email use must be in a written and signed agreement.
- iv. Email access will be terminated when the employee or third party terminates their employment or association with Bluewater District School Board, unless other arrangements are made. Bluewater District School Board is under no obligation to store or forward the contents of an individual's email inbox/outbox after the term of their employment has ceased.

## 2.2 Expectations of End Users

- i. Important official communications are often delivered via email. As a result, employees of Bluewater District School Board with board email accounts are expected to check their email as often as possible in a consistent and timely manner so that they are aware of important board announcements and updates, as well as for fulfilling business and role-oriented tasks.
- ii. Email users are responsible for mailbox management, including organization and cleaning. If a user subscribes to a mailing list, they must be aware of how to remove themselves from the list and is responsible for doing so in the event that their current board email address changes.
- iii. Email users are also expected to comply with normal standards of professional and personal courtesy and conduct.
- iv. All staff are required to include a signature in all email correspondence (internal and external), which includes the following information at a minimum:
  - a) full name
  - b) title
  - c) school or work location
  - d) address
  - e) phone number
- v. Optionally, the following information may also be included in staff email signatures:
  - a) phone extension or Microsoft Teams phone number (if applicable)
  - b) fax number
  - c) department
  - d) official board logo
  - e) school or board website URL
  - f) school or board social media page(s) (if applicable)
  - g) pronouns
  - h) a statement in support of administrative procedure AP 7241-D “Disconnecting from Work”, such as “Please do not feel obligated to reply to this email outside of your normal working hours.”
  - i) use of a quote should be limited to the Bluewater District School Board vision statement and placed at the very bottom of the email signature as follows: “Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow”
- vi. There are two approved options offered to staff in order to customize their email account picture profile:
  - a) utilize the Bluewater District School Board logo (default)
  - b) utilize a personal profile picture

If a staff member chooses option (b), the following guidelines must be adhered to:

- 1) use a recent photo;
- 2) staff member should be the only subject in the photo;
- 3) face should be in focus;
- 4) must be wearing appropriate professional or business casual attire;
- 5) head should be held straight and upright; and
- 6) a pleasant facial expression must be used.

## 2.3 Appropriate Use

- i. Individuals at Bluewater District School Board are to use email to further the goals and objectives of Bluewater District School Board. The type of activity would include, but is not limited to:
  - a) communicating with parents, students, fellow employees, education and business partners of Bluewater District School Board, and clients within the context of an individual’s assigned responsibilities;
  - b) acquiring or sharing information necessary or related to the performance of an individual’s assigned responsibilities;
  - c) participation in educational or professional development activities.

## 2.4 Inappropriate Use

- i. Bluewater District School Board's email systems and services are not to be used for purposes that could be reasonably expected to cause excessive strain on systems. Individual email use will not interfere with others' use of Bluewater District School Board's email system and services. Email use at Bluewater District School Board will comply with all applicable laws, all Bluewater District School Board policies and procedures, and all Bluewater District School Board contracts.
- ii. The types of activities deemed inappropriate use of Bluewater District School Board systems and services includes, but not limited to are:
  - a) use of email for illegal or unlawful purposes, including copyright infringement, obscenity, libel, slander, fraud, defamation, plagiarism, harassment, intimidation, forgery, impersonation, soliciting for illegal pyramid schemes, and computer tampering (e.g., deliberate spreading of computer viruses);
  - b) use of email in any way that violates Bluewater District School Board policies, rules, or administrative orders;
  - c) viewing, copying, altering, or deletion of email accounts or files belonging to Bluewater District School Board, or another individual without authorized permission;
  - d) opening email attachments from unknown or unsigned sources. Attachments are the primary source of computer viruses and should be treated with utmost caution;
  - e) unauthorized access to another person's board email account passwords or attempting to obtain another person's board email account password. Board email accounts are only to be used by the registered user;
  - f) excessive personal use of Bluewater District School Board email resources. Bluewater District School Board allows limited personal use for communication, independent learning, and public service so long as it does not interfere with staff productivity, pre-empt any business activity, or consume more than a trivial amount of resources. Bluewater District School Board prohibits personal use of its email systems and services for unsolicited mass mailings, non-Bluewater District School Board commercial activity, political campaigning, dissemination of chain letters, and use by non-employees;
  - g) Use of information technology systems for private business activities, amusement/entertainment purposes, or charitable endeavors unless expressly approved by the director of education.

## 2.5 Monitoring and Confidentiality

- i. The board email systems and services used at Bluewater District School Board are owned by the board and are therefore the property of the board. This gives Bluewater District School Board the right to monitor any and all email traffic passing through its email system. While the board does not actively read end-user email, email messages may be inadvertently read by staff responsible for managing the system during the normal course of maintaining and managing the email system.
- ii. In addition, backup copies of email messages may exist, despite end-user deletion. The goals of these backup and archiving procedures are to ensure system reliability and prevent business data loss.
- iii. If Bluewater District School Board discovers or has reason to suspect activities that do not comply with applicable laws or the policy and procedure, board email records may be retrieved and used to document the activity in accordance with due process. All reasonable efforts will be made to notify an employee if their email records are to be reviewed. Notification may not be possible, however, if the employee cannot be contacted, as in the case of employee absence due to vacation.
- iv. Extreme caution is to be used when communicating confidential or sensitive information via email. Email users must keep in mind that all board email messages sent outside of Bluewater District School Board become the property of the receiver. A good rule is to not communicate anything that the author would not feel comfortable being made public. Demonstrate particular care when using the "Reply", "Reply All", or "Forward" commands during email correspondence.

- v. The Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act prohibits board employees and others from “seeking out, using, or disclosing”, without authorization, “personal or confidential” information, and requires employees to take necessary precautions to protect the confidentiality of personal or confidential information encountered in the performance of their duties. This unauthorized access or disclosure prohibition applies to board email records.
- vi. To ensure protection of information being electronically transmitted the following statement is attached to the signature section of all users of Bluewater District School Board’s email system:

*“This message and/or attachment is intended for the sole use of the individual to which it is addressed and may contain information that is privileged and confidential. If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient or an authorized representative of the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify me immediately and delete the message and any attachments from your system.”*

vii. **Security Banner on Email Messages**

In an effort to assist Bluewater staff and students in identifying spam, phishing, spear phishing, spoofing, and general outside email messages with high risk links, all email messages coming from outside our organization will display a yellow caution banner. An example is provided below:

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the BWDSB organization. Beware of hyper-links, statements and content within the email. Do not click on links or attachments unless you can verify the source.

**2.6 Reporting Misuse**

Any allegations of misuse should be promptly reported to the Bluewater District School Board Help Desk at 519-363-2014, ext. 2146 or send an email message to Help Desk. If you receive an offensive email, do not forward, delete, or reply to the message. Instead, report it directly to the Help Desk. Offensive emails would include receipt of messages that may be construed to be in violation of the law. They would not include messages received that advertise products such as cameras, watches or that promote a company’s services; these types of messages can be deleted without contacting the Help Desk.

**2.7 Disclaimer**

Bluewater District School Board assumes no liability for direct and/or indirect damages arising from the user’s use of Bluewater District School Board’s email system and services beyond the scope of the individual’s duties. Users are solely responsible for the content they disseminate. Bluewater District School Board is not responsible for any third-party claim, demand, or damage arising out of the use of Bluewater District School Board’s email systems or services.

**2.8 Failure to Comply**

Penalties for violation of this policy including disciplinary action will be consistent with the circumstances up to, and including, termination of employment.