

DIVISION: FINANCE**Policy #: FIN-501****POLICY NAME**EMAIL

POLICY STATEMENT

The Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESD) maintains an electronic mail (email) system to support communications; teaching and learning; and, its business operations. All users are expected to use the system in a responsible, legal and ethical manner.

BACKGROUND

The NLESD is a public body and commits considerable resources to the provision of an efficient and effective email system. The email system plays a vital role in the District's information technology services infrastructure, and is an essential mechanism for delivering educational programs and services and for managing the administrative functions of NLESD.

The use of the email system, like the use of other NLESD resources, is subject to normal requirements of ethical and legal behaviour. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Outline access privileges;
 - Define expectations and responsibilities of users, and appropriate use of the email system;
 - Protect the district-owned email system;
 - Protect users; and,
 - Safeguard information.
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SCOPE

This policy applies to all email systems and associated services owned by NLESD, all email accounts (both temporary and permanent) and all district email records, regardless of the method of access and use (i.e. use of email via desktop and any wireless devices). It applies to all those who have access to a NLESD email account including employees, students, trustees, interns and third parties.

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DEFINITIONS

Email

Emails are messages, including attachments, sent and received between computers/terminals linked by communications facilities. This includes address information and message content. *Emails are considered official district records if they contain information and action related to the business of the District.* This would include transactions such as those approving or authorizing, delegating, making decisions and other similar transactions. These must be retained as official records of the District. *A general guideline would be to save email records that contain information/documentation similar to what would be saved to a hard copy file/cabinet.*

Transitory Email

Transitory emails may be deleted at the discretion of the originator and receiver. Transitory email records are only required for limited time to ensure the completion of a routine action or subsequent record. It does not provide evidence of a business activity, decision or transaction, OR it is a draft or duplicate and an updated or final version of the document has been produced. Therefore, it is not the official record of a school district transaction or decision.

Terminated Account

Terminated email accounts are deleted from the email system and their contents are not able to be accessed. Terminated email accounts cannot be reactivated.

Personal Information

The *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (ATIPPA)* defines personal information as information about an identifiable individual, including:

- Name, address or telephone number;
 - Race, national or ethnic origin, colour, or religious or political beliefs or associations
 - Age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status or family status
 - An identifying number, symbol or other particular assigned to an individual
 - Fingerprints, blood type or inheritable characteristics
 - Health care status or history, including a physical or mental disability
 - Educational, financial, criminal or employment status or history.
 - Opinions of a person about the individual, and
 - The individual's personal views or opinions, except when they are about someone else.
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POLICY DIRECTIVES

1. Use of the NLESD email system requires prior authorization of the Assistant Director of Education (Finance and Business Administration) or designate.
2. All users are reminded that conduct via email may reflect on the reputation of NLESD. Users are expected to treat email in a professional manner and to practice responsible use at all times. Users must ensure that they manage their NLESD email account in accordance with this policy and associated procedures/regulations as well as other district policies including, but not limited to, the [Acceptable Use of Technology](#) policy, and all applicable federal and provincial laws. This includes when users participate in commonly shared collaboration areas such as conferences and workspaces.
3. The email system and other IT assets are the property of NLESD. The District reserves the right to restrict access to the email system without prior notice or consent, if there is reason to believe that violations of policy or law have occurred or when required to meet operational needs. The District does not routinely inspect or monitor email or internet usage. However, users should have no expectation of privacy in anything that they create, store, send or receive on the district-owned email system.
4. The email system and messages may be monitored and/or accessed by district personnel who are authorized to do so and have an appropriate reason for access. This includes monitoring email traffic and content for viruses and SPAM and investigating suspected misuse of email. NLESD may also be required to provide email messages for legal proceedings and in response to requests under the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
5. Use of the NLESD email system may be revoked at any time for inappropriate use. Any use which violates federal or provincial laws and/or district policies may result in:
 - a) Loss of access privileges;
 - b) Disciplinary measures;
 - c) Termination of employment; and/or,
 - d) Legal action, including criminal prosecution.

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ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES/REGULATIONS

1. General

- 1.1 Each Division is responsible for ensuring that employees and other users are made aware of policies and procedures/regulations regarding email use and management.
- 1.2 The District will normally provide an email account to all employees, trustees, interns and others, as required, to be used in conjunction with their duties or activities with the NLESD. These accounts, denoted by the District's email domain name - **@nlesd.ca**, are centrally administered.
- 1.3 Users are responsible for complying with security measures in place and for the content they disseminate. The District's IT Department administers the security of the email system along with user authentication and access. Security measures applied are based on industry standards and practices. The IT Department also employs filtering software and other measures to protect systems from email containing viruses, to reject email from known SPAM senders and to scan inbound email for SPAM. However, the security and confidentiality of users' email records, and email transmission, is not guaranteed.
- 1.4 NLESD employs various back-up and archival procedures. Systems are 'backed up' on a routine basis to protect system reliability, integrity and loss of data. Therefore, email messages may exist, despite being deleted by the sender and/or receiver.
- 1.5 Email messages that constitute records should normally be kept for at least **one year**, unless required to be kept longer in compliance with policy or legislation, at the direction of the Director of Education or for law enforcement purposes.
- 1.6 Email records retained in an individual's mailbox will be purged permanently from the email system after **three years**. Users are therefore advised to save any email records to be retained to a sub-folder or documents folder on a storage system other than the email server.
- 1.7 Email accounts that are not accessed for 400 days will be terminated and purged permanently from the email system, unless required for district purposes.
- 1.8 When an individual is no longer attached to NLESD, it is the responsibility of his or her immediate supervisor to notify the IT Department that the email account is no longer needed. With respect to departing employees, this notification should be

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done via the Human Resources Division, as part of the employee exit process. This will ensure termination of a user's email account upon his/her departure.

- a) Inactive employees (e.g. retiring, resigning) are responsible for ensuring that their email records and mailboxes are in order before they leave.
- b) NLESD is under no obligation to store or forward the contents of an individual's mailbox after s/he leaves.

2. Responsibilities of Users

- 2.1 Access to the email system is provided by entering a username and password. Each individual user is responsible for protecting the confidentiality of his/her email account and password information and for refraining from establishing the same password for personal purposes (e.g. access to home computer or personal email). Users must not attempt to gain unauthorized access to another person's email account.
- 2.2 Users are expected to be cautious when opening emails or attachments in order to prevent the spread of computer viruses. Emails from unknown sources should not be opened and should be immediately deleted. If a user receives a harassing or threatening email, s/he should retain the email for processing and notify his/her supervisor immediately. Email that is harassing, obscene, inappropriate or offensive should not be further distributed.
- 2.3 Individual email users are responsible for managing their own email accounts, including organization and cleaning (e.g. deleting transitory and personal emails), and complying with data storage quotas as set by the IT Department. Users are not permitted to store personal videos or photos in the email system.
- 2.4 NLESD permits limited personal use of the email system by employees and other users provided such use does not:
 - a) Violate this or any other NLESD policy;
 - b) Interfere with staff productivity;
 - c) Interfere with the business operations of the District;
 - d) Interfere with IT operations or the email system; and/or,
 - e) Compromise the District in any way.
- 2.5 Users are responsible for updating any website or conference created within the NLESD First Class email system, and for purging old data on a regular basis. Group distribution lists must also be updated at a minimum once per school year, by the person who initiated or requested the account.

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3. Appropriate Use

- 3.1 Appropriate use of the District's email system includes, but is not limited to:
- a) Communicating with fellow employees, business partners of NLESD, government departments and other public bodies, and members of the school community, within an individual's assigned responsibilities.
 - b) Acquiring or sharing information necessary or related to the performance of an individual's assigned responsibilities.
 - c) Participating in approved educational or professional development activities.

4. Inappropriate Use

- 4.1 When using the NLESD email system, all users must comply with applicable federal and provincial laws. These laws include, but are not limited to, laws relating to defamation, privacy, copyright, harassment and child pornography. The email system must not be used to:
- a) Transmit any materials for illegal or unlawful purposes including copyright infringement, fraud, plagiarism, intimidation, forgery, impersonation, soliciting for illegal pyramid schemes, and computer tampering (e.g. spreading computer viruses).
 - b) Access, store or transmit material that is offensive, objectionable, abusive, pornographic, obscene, sexist, racist, harassing, bullying or provocative, including adult-oriented content.
 - c) Solicit for personal financial gain and commercial purposes, or for conducting or pursuing one's own political, business or personal interests;
 - d) Promote any political party, candidates or election of any kind.
 - e) Distribute hoaxes, chain letters or advertisements;
 - f) Send, forward and/or reply to large distribution lists concerning non-school district business. This activity is considered a form of SPAM and is not acceptable.

5. Monitoring and Privacy

- 5.1 The email systems and other IT assets are owned by NLESD and are therefore its property. Emails may be monitored or accessed by NLESD personnel who are authorized to do so and have an appropriate reason for access, when:
- a) Required by and consistent with law, such as retrieving emails in response to a court order;
 - b) There is reasonable justification that violations of law or of district policies have occurred;

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- c) There is reasonable justification that email records contain information critical in meeting operational requirements of the NLESD.
- d) It is necessary to retrieve emails in response to an access to information request under the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. In the event of an access request under ATIPPA, email holders may be informed that an email search will occur or has occurred.

5.2 Users are advised to use extreme caution when communicating personal or confidential information via email. Once an email is sent it becomes the property of the receiver and the sender loses control over the distribution. Users are also advised to double-check addresses; reduce c.c. and b.c.; and, reduce 'reply to all'.

- a) Steps should be taken to protect personal/confidential information to be transmitted by email, such as sending the minimal amount of information possible and masking personal identifiers (e.g. not including names). When sending an email outside of the NLESD email system, users are advised to encrypt sensitive information in an email or attachment.
- b) When using email to correspond, only board-owned email should be used to transact the business of the District.

REFERENCES:

Info-Tech Research Group: *E-mail Acceptable Use Policy (template)*
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (Office of the Chief Information Officer): *Email Policy, Guidelines (2011-10-08), and Using Email Effectively*
College of the North Atlantic: *Electronic email and internet usage*.

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