

ICT REGULATION AND EMAIL POLICY

Review Body:	Development & Admissions
Leadership Group Responsibility:	Assistant Headteacher/ICT support
Type of Policy:	Statutory
Review Period:	Every 3 years
Reviewed:	February 2018
Next Review:	February 2021

Purpose of Regulation Policy:

To regulate the use of RMETs IT facilities by Students, Teachers and Support Staff

Regulation Policy Applies to:

To all students registered at RMET, staff whom are employed as teachers, support staff and any guests that are visiting from external organisations.

1. Acceptable Use

Access to computers, networks and Internet services is provided for administrative, educational, communication and research purposes consistent with the RMETs educational mission, curriculum and instructional goals. General rules and expectations for professional behavior and communication apply to use of RMETs computers, networks and Internet services.

Users are to utilise RMETs computers, networks and Internet services for school-related purposes and performance of job duties. Incidental personal use of the RMET computers is permitted as long as such use does not interfere with the employee's job duties and performance, with system operations or other system users. Student personal use should not interfere with their learning. **"Incidental personal use" is defined as use by an individual for occasional personal communications.**

2. Prohibited Use

The employee is responsible for his/her actions and activities involving RMETs computers, networks and Internet services and for his/her computer files, passwords and accounts. General examples of unacceptable uses which are expressly prohibited include but are not limited to the following:

- 2.1 Any use that is illegal or in violation of other RMET policies, including harassing, discriminatory or threatening communications and behaviour, violations of copyright laws, etc.;
- 2.2 Any use involving materials that are obscene, pornographic, sexually explicit or sexually suggestive;
- 2.3 Any inappropriate communications with students or minors;
- 2.4 Any use for personal and/or private financial gain, or commercial, advertising or solicitation purposes;
- 2.5 Any use as a forum for communicating by e-mail or any other medium with other RMET users or outside parties to solicit, advocate or communicate the views of an individual,

non-school-system sponsored organisation or non-school-site sponsored organisation; to solicit membership in or support of any non-school-sponsored organisation; or to raise funds for any non-school-sponsored purpose, whether for-profit or not-for-profit. No individual shall knowingly provide RMET e-mail addresses to outside parties other than their own. Anyone who is uncertain as to whether particular activities are acceptable should seek further guidance from the ICT department of RMET.

- 2.6 Any communication that represents personal views as those of the Trust or that could be misinterpreted as such;
- 2.7 Installing software or applications without permission from the ICT support department.
- 2.8 Knowingly opening or forwarding any e-mail attachments known to contain viruses;
- 2.9 Sending mass e-mails to RMET users or outside parties unless specifically approved by the Headteacher
- 2.10 Any malicious use or disruption of RMETs computers, networks and Internet services or breach of security features;
- 2.11 Any misuse or damage to RMETs computer equipment;
- 2.12 Misuse of the computer passwords or accounts (employee or other users); Each individual is responsible for all use under their login account ID therefore it is unwise to share passwords;
- 2.13 Any communications that are in violation of generally accepted rules of network etiquette and/or professional conduct;
- 2.14 Any attempt to access unauthorised sites;
- 2.15 Failing to report a known breach of computer security to the ICT support department;
- 2.16 Using RMET computers, networks and Internet services after such access has been denied or revoked;
- 2.17 Any attempt to delete, erase or otherwise conceal any information stored on a RMET computer that violates these rules.

RMET Email Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Email Policy has been developed in response to the acknowledged need for guidelines describing the acceptable use of the RMETs email and related services and facilities.
- 1.2 The Policy is maintained and regulated by the ICT Support Department.
- 1.3 The Policy will be distributed to users of the email and related services and facilities. There will also be periodic re-issue of the Policy, supported by sign-up acceptance by users of the facilities.
- 1.4 The Policy will be reviewed every three years and if necessary amended from time-to-time, with particular regard to the expected developments in the operational use of the system, and by reference to the development of recognised best practice.

2. Purpose of the Email Policy

- 2.1 The Email Policy provides guidance about acceptable use, for the purpose of sending or receiving email messages and attachments, of any IT facilities, including hardware, software and networks, provided by RMET. The Policy also describes the standards that users are expected to observe when using these facilities for email, and ensures that users are aware of the legal consequences attached to inappropriate use of the facilities.
- 2.2 The Policy establishes a framework within which users of these email facilities can

- apply self-regulation to their use of the facilities.
- 2.3 The Policy is designed to advise users that their usage of facilities for email will be monitored and, in some cases, recorded. The Policy is also linked to the RMET Disciplinary Procedures for students and staff, and usage of email facilities in breach of the Policy may lead to appropriate disciplinary action being taken.
- 2.4 The Policy also specifies the actions that they will take in the investigation of complaints received from both internal and external sources, about any unacceptable use of email that involves RMET IT facilities.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 Scope of the Policy

This Email Policy applies to the use, for the purpose of sending or receiving email messages and attachments, of any IT facilities, including hardware, software and networks, provided by the Trust.

The Policy is applicable to members of staff, students and other authorised users of the RMETs IT facilities.

3.2 Appropriate and Proper Use

RMET supports the appropriate and proper use of the Internet, email, and related services and facilities that the RMET provides for its students, staff and other authorised users.

3.3 Regulatory Framework

Associated with the provision of these services and facilities, RMET takes seriously its responsibility to provide an appropriate regulatory framework, including specific standards and guidance for the appropriate use of these services and facilities. The Email Policy constitutes a component part of this regulatory framework.

Use of all IT facilities provided by RMET is subject to the relevant Policies and Regulations, in particular the RMETs IT Regulations and the Internet Policy Statement.

3.4 Acceptance of Policies and Regulations

It is a condition of use of IT and email facilities provided by RMET, by a student, member of staff or other authorised person, that the user agrees to be bound by the relevant RMETs Policies and Regulations.

3.5 Monitoring Arrangements

RMET will maintain appropriate monitoring arrangements in relation to all Internet, email and related services and facilities that it provides, and the Trust will apply these monitoring arrangements to all users.

These arrangements may include checking the contents of, and in some instances recording, email messages for the purpose of:

- establishing the existence of facts relevant to the business;
- ascertaining or demonstrating standards which ought to be achieved by those using the facilities;
- preventing or detecting crime;
- investigating or detecting unauthorised use of email facilities;

- ensuring effective operation of email facilities; or
- determining if communications are relevant to the business -for example where an employee is off sick or on holiday.

RMET may, at its discretion, apply automatic message monitoring, filtering and rejection systems as appropriate, and deny transmission of messages with content that is unacceptable in the terms of this Policy.

These monitoring arrangements will operate on a continual and continuing basis, with the express aim of monitoring compliance with the provisions of RMETs Email Policy and IT Regulations and for the purposes outlined above as permitted by The Telecommunications (Lawful Business Practice) (Interception of Communications) Regulations 2000.

3.6 Disclaimers

RMET includes a disclaimer footnote to be appended to all email messages that are sent to external addresses from the Trust schools, in order to provide necessary legal protection.

3.7 Action in the Event of a Breach of the Standards of Acceptable Use

In circumstances where there is assessed to be a breach of the standards of acceptable use, as described in section 4 of this Policy, RMET will, as a first action, act promptly to prevent continuance or repetition of the breach, for example to withdraw any unacceptable materials. This action will be taken in accordance with the normal managerial arrangements, and may typically involve liaison between the appropriate member(s) of the Senior Leadership Team, the person concerned and, if appropriate, a representative from a professional body (Union).

Subsequent action will be as described below.

Indications of non-compliance with the provisions of the Email Policy will be investigated, as appropriate, in accordance with the provisions of RMETs Disciplinary Procedures, as applicable to staff and students.

Subject to the findings of any such investigation, non-compliance with the provisions of the Email Policy will lead to appropriate disciplinary action, which could include dismissal on the grounds of gross misconduct. Furthermore, publication of some materials may not only amount to a disciplinary offence, but also a criminal offence, in which case the issue will be reported to the police for them to take appropriate action.

4. Standards of acceptable use

4.1 Appropriate Use of the RMET Provided Services and Facilities

The main purpose for the provision by RMET of IT facilities for email is for use in connection with the teaching, learning, research, and approved business activities of the Trust schools.

IT facilities provided by RMET for email should not be used:

- i. for personal use, other than as specified in paragraph 4.4 below
- ii. for the transmission of unsolicited commercial or advertising material, chain letters, press releases, or other junk mail of any kind, to other users, user organisations, or organisations connected to other networks, other than where that material is embedded within, or is otherwise part of, a service to which the member of the user organisation has chosen to subscribe

- iii. for the unauthorised transmission to a third party of confidential material concerning the activities of RMET
- iv. for the transmission of material such that this infringes the copyright of another person, including intellectual property rights
- v. for the deliberate unauthorised access to services and facilities accessible.
- vi. for the unauthorised provision of access to RMET services and facilities by third parties
- vii. for activities that unreasonably waste staff effort or networked resources, or activities that unreasonably serve to deny service to other users
- viii. for activities that corrupt or destroy other users' data
- ix. for activities that disrupt the work of other users

4.2 General Standards of Use

IT facilities provided by RMET for email should not be used:

- i. for the creation or transmission (other than for properly supervised and lawful research purposes) of any offensive, obscene or indecent images, data, or other material, or any data capable of being resolved into obscene or indecent images or material
- ii. for the creation or transmission of material which is designed or likely to cause annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety
- iii. for the creation or transmission of material that is abusive or threatening to others, or serves to harass or bully others
- iv. for the creation or transmission of material that either discriminates or encourages discrimination on racial or ethnic grounds, or on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, political or religious beliefs. RMET is committed to fostering a learning and working environment free of discrimination where everyone is treated with dignity and respect
- v. for the creation or transmission of defamatory material
- vi. for the creation or transmission of material that includes false claims of a deceptive nature
- vii. for so-called 'flaming' i.e. the use of impolite terms or language, including offensive or condescending terms
- viii. for activities that violate the privacy of other users
- ix. for criticising individuals, including copy distribution to other individuals
- x. for publishing to others the text of messages written on a one-to-one basis, without the prior express consent of the author
- xi. for the creation or transmission of anonymous messages, i.e. without clear identification of the sender

xii. for the creation or transmission of material which brings the Trust into disrepute
The Senior Leadership Team will exercise its discretion in judging reasonable bounds within the above standards for acceptability of material transmitted by email.

RMET regards the declaration of standards, as described above, to be particularly important. They reflect the values and beliefs of RMET.

4.3 Preventing the Spread of Malicious Software (Viruses)

Users of RMET IT facilities must take all reasonable steps to prevent the receipt and transmission by email of malicious software e.g. computer viruses.

In particular, users

- must not transmit by email any file attachments which they know to be infected with a virus
- must ensure that an effective anti-virus system is operating on any computer which they use to access RMET IT facilities
- must not open email file attachments received from unsolicited or untrusted sources

4.4 Personal Use

The main purpose for the provision by RMET of IT facilities for email is for use in connection with teaching, learning, research, and approved business activities of RMET.

RMET permits the use of its IT facilities for email by students, staff and other authorised users for personal use, subject to the following limitations:

- i. a level of use that is reasonable and not detrimental to the main purpose for which the facilities are provided
- ii. priority must be given to use of resources for the main purpose for which they are provided
- iii. personal use must not be of a commercial or profit-making nature, or for any other form of personal financial gain
- iv. personal use must not be of a nature that competes with the RMET in business
- v. personal use must not be connected with any use or application that conflicts with an employee's obligations to RMET as their employer
- vi. personal use must not be connected to any purpose or application that conflicts with RMETs rules, regulations, policies and procedures
- vii. personal use must comply with the RMETs policies and regulations, in particular the Email Policy

4.5 Cyber Bullying

Students and staff may face disciplinary action if they post damaging or offensive messages attacking other members of staff or students, on any social networking sites, such as ratemyteachers, YouTube, MySpace, Facebook or Twitter or Instagram.

Should a complaint be made to RMET, the Trust will immediately suspend and remove privileges of the staff or student account until the complaint is heard.

In relation to the personal use of RMET IT facilities for email, if users are in any doubt about what constitutes acceptable and appropriate use, they should seek the advice and guidance, from their line Manager, and in the case of students, of their Form Tutor.

5. Legal Consequences of Misuse of Email Facilities

In a growing number of cases involving the civil or criminal law, email messages (deleted or otherwise) are produced as evidence in a permanent written form.

There are a number of areas of law which apply to use of email and which could involve liability of users or RMET. These include the following;

- i. Intellectual property. Anyone who uses email to send or receive any materials that infringe the intellectual property rights of a third party may be liable to that third party if such use is not authorised by them.
- ii. Obscenity: a criminal offence is committed if a person publishes any material which is pornographic, excessively violent or which comes under the provisions of the Obscene Publications Act 1959. Similarly the Protection of Children Act 1978 makes it an offence to publish or distribute obscene material of a child.
- iii. Defamation: as a form of publication, the Internet is within the scope of legislation relating to libel where a statement or opinion is published which adversely affects the reputation of a person, group of people or an organisation. Legal responsibility for the transmission of any defamatory, obscene or rude remarks which discredit an identifiable individual or organisation will rest mainly with the sender of the email and may lead to substantial financial penalties being imposed.
- iv. Data Protection: processing information (including photographs) which contains personal data about individuals, requires the express written consent of those individuals. Any use of personal data beyond that registered with the Data Protection Commissioner will be illegal.
- v. Discrimination: any material disseminated which is discriminatory or encourages discrimination may be unlawful under the Single Equality Act 2010 where it involves discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, religion/belief, race, age or disability.

The above is only designed to be a brief outline of some of the legal consequences of misuse of email facilities.

6. Advices on Acceptable and Appropriate Use of Email Facilities

It should be remembered that use of RMET IT facilities for email in an unacceptable and inappropriate manner and breach of this Policy may be treated as a disciplinary offence. If users are in any doubt about what constitutes acceptable and appropriate use of email facilities, they should seek the advice and guidance, in the case of members of staff, of their Line Manager, and in the case of students, of their Form Tutor or Computing teacher.

7. Investigations of Complaints

RMET will investigate complaints received from both internal and external sources, about any unacceptable use of email that involves RMET IT facilities.

The investigation of facts of a technical nature, e.g. to determine the source of an offending email message, will be undertaken by ICT Support Team in conjunction with other departments as appropriate.

Where there is evidence of a criminal offence, the issue will be reported to the police for them

to take appropriate action. The Trust will co-operate with the police and other appropriate external agencies in the investigation of alleged offences.

In the event that the investigation of the complaint establishes that there has been a breach of the standards of acceptable use, then action will be taken as described in Section 3.8 of this Policy.