

# GROVE Neurodivergent Mentoring & Education

## **IT and Communications Policy**

1. This policy applies to all employees and other staff unless otherwise indicated. They therefore apply to managers, officers, directors, employees, consultants, contractors, trainees, homeworkers, part-time and fixed-term employees, casual and agency staff and volunteers (collectively referred to as **staff**). They do **not** form part of the terms of your contract with us, which are provided to you separately.
2. Although email is a vital business tool, you should always consider if it is the appropriate method for a particular communication. Correspondence with third parties by email should be written as professionally as a letter. Messages should be concise and directed only to relevant individuals. Our standard disclaimer should always be included.
3. You should access your emails at least once every working day, stay in touch by remote access when travelling in connection with our business, and use an out of office response when away from the office for more than a day. You should endeavour to respond to emails marked "high priority" within 24 hours.
4. You must not send abusive, obscene, discriminatory, racist, harassing, derogatory, defamatory, or otherwise inappropriate emails. Anyone who feels that they have been harassed or bullied, or are offended by material received from a colleague via email should inform Jessica Garner.
5. You should take care with the content of email messages, as incorrect or improper statements can give rise to claims for discrimination, harassment, defamation, breach of confidentiality or breach of contract. Remember that you have no control over where your email may be forwarded by the recipient. Avoid saying anything which would cause offence or embarrassment if it was forwarded to colleagues or third parties, or found its way into the public domain.
6. Email messages may be disclosed in legal proceedings in the same way as paper documents. Deletion from a user's inbox or archives does not mean that an email cannot be recovered for the purposes of disclosure. All email messages should be treated as potentially retrievable, either from the main server or using specialist software.
7. In general, you should not:
  - (a) send or forward private emails at work which you would not want a third party to read;
  - (b) send or forward chain mail, junk mail, cartoons, jokes or gossip;
  - (c) contribute to system congestion by sending trivial messages, copying or forwarding emails to those who do not have a real need to receive them, or using "reply all" unnecessarily on an email with a large distribution list;
  - (d) sell or advertise using our communication systems or broadcast messages about lost property, sponsorship or charitable appeals;
  - (e) agree to terms, enter into contractual commitments or make representations by email unless appropriate authority has been obtained. A name typed at the end of an email is a signature in the same way as a name written at the end of a letter;
  - (f) download or email text, music and other content on the internet subject to copyright protection, unless it is clear that the owner of such works allows this;
  - (g) send messages from another person's email address (unless authorised) or under an assumed name; or
  - (h) send confidential messages via email or the internet, or by other means of external communication which are known not to be secure.

8. If you receive an email in error you should inform the sender.
9. Do not use your own personal email account to send or receive email for the purposes of our business. Only use the email account we have provided for you.
10. Subject to below, internet access is provided solely for business purposes.
11. When a website is visited, devices such as cookies, tags or web beacons may be employed to enable the site owner to identify and monitor visitors. If the website is of a kind described below, such a marker could be a source of embarrassment to the visitor and us, especially if inappropriate material has been accessed, downloaded, stored or forwarded from the website. Such actions may also, in certain circumstances, amount to a criminal offence if, for example, the material is pornographic in nature.
12. You should not access any web page or download any image, document or other file from the internet which could be regarded as illegal, offensive, in bad taste or immoral. Even web content which is legal in the UK may be in sufficient bad taste to fall within this prohibition. As a general rule, if any person (whether intended to view the page or not) might be offended by the contents of a page, or if the fact that our software has accessed the page or file might be a source of embarrassment if made public, then viewing it will be a breach of this policy.
13. You should not under any circumstances use our systems to participate in any internet chat room, post messages on any internet message board or set up or log text or information on a blog or wiki, even in your own time.
14. The following must never be accessed from our network: online radio, audio and video streaming, instant messaging and webmail (such as such as Gmail or Hotmail) and social networking sites (such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Linked In). This list may be modified from time to time.
15. We permit the incidental use of our internet, email and telephone systems to send personal email, browse the internet and make personal telephone calls subject to certain conditions set out below. Personal use is a privilege and not a right. It must not be overused or abused. We may withdraw permission for it at any time or restrict access at our discretion.
16. Personal use must meet the following conditions:
  - (a) use must be minimal and take place substantially out of normal working hours (that is, during lunch hours, before 9 am or after 5.30 pm);
  - (b) personal emails should be labelled "personal" in the subject header;
  - (c) use must not interfere with business or office commitments;
  - (d) use must not commit us to any marginal costs; and
  - (e) use must comply with this policy and our other policies including the Equal Opportunities Policy, Anti-harassment Policy, Data Protection Policy and Disciplinary Rules.
17. You should be aware that personal use of our systems may be monitored (see our Monitoring Policy) and, where breaches of this policy are found, action may be taken under the disciplinary procedure. We reserve the right to restrict or prevent access to certain telephone numbers or internet sites if we consider personal use to be excessive.