



TOWN OF PLAINFIELD

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AND COMPUTER USAGE POLICY

Adopted by Select Board on October 24, 2017

I. INTRODUCTION

This Town of Plainfield (“Town”) Policy is intended to provide guidance on the appropriate use of the Town's electronic communication and information equipment and systems (“Systems”). Systems include, but are not limited to, computer workstations, laptops, tablets (such as iPads), hardware and software, electronic mail (“e-mail”), telephones, cellular phones, pagers, smart phones, handheld devices, facsimile machines, online cloud services (such as Google G Suite), and the Internet.

Use of the Town's Systems by any employee, contractor, consultant, and/or volunteer ("user") shall constitute acceptance of the terms of this Policy and any such additional related policies that may be issued by the Town.

Access and use of the Town's Systems is intended for business-related purposes, including communicating with coworkers and colleagues, and researching topics relevant to Town business. All existing state, federal, and local laws and Town policies apply to your conduct while using the Town's Systems, particularly those that govern intellectual property protection, sexual or other harassment, misuse of Town resources, privacy rights, and confidentiality.

This Policy sets forth general guidelines and examples of prohibited uses of the Town's Systems for illustrative purposes, but does not attempt to identify all required or prohibited activities by users. Questions regarding whether a particular activity or use is acceptable should be directed to the Systems administrator, and/or your supervisor. These guidelines may be supplemented by more specific administrative procedures and rules governing day-to-day management and operation of the Town's Systems. Furthermore, this Policy may be amended from time to time, and is meant to be read in conjunction with all other applicable policies of the Town of Plainfield.

II. PRIVACY

Users should not expect any right of privacy in said Systems, including electronic communications and information made or stored on the Town's Systems. The Town retains the right to inspect its Systems, including any Town-owned or leased computer or electronic communications equipment, any data contained in such equipment, and any data sent or received by that equipment. The Town will exercise that right when reasonable and in pursuit of legitimate needs for supervision, control, and the efficient and proper operation of the workplace. Users should be aware that appropriately-authorized network administrators may monitor network traffic, and/or access all files, including e-mail files and Internet use history, stored on any equipment.

All electronic files and documents originating from or passing through the Town's Systems are considered

to be the property of the Town.

III. SECURITY

All usernames and passwords are for the exclusive use of the individual to whom they are assigned. The user is personally responsible and accountable for all activities carried out under his/her username, and should take all reasonable precautions to protect his/her password. The password associated with a particular username must not be given or divulged to another person (with the exception of the Systems administrator). No one may use, or attempt to use, a username or password assigned to another person, or pose as another user.

IV. INTERNET GUIDELINES

While we increasingly use the Internet as a tool in the workplace, misuse or abuse of the Internet can potentially violate laws, bylaws, ordinances, regulations, or other Town policies. Therefore, users should adhere to the following Internet Guidelines.

A. Use for Official Business. It is the Town's policy to restrict Internet access to official Town business. Use of the Internet for personal matters is prohibited, with the exception of incidental personal use outlined in Section VI of this policy.

B. Authorization. Authorization for access to Town E-mail, G Suite, and other Systems must be obtained through the Systems administrator. Once authorization is approved, each user is responsible for the security of his or her account password and will be held responsible for all use or misuse of such account (see Section III, Security, above).

C. Compliance with Laws. Users must not utilize the Internet to knowingly violate any state, federal or local law, or the laws of any other nation. United States copyright and patent laws may apply to information and material(s) accessed through the Internet, and care should be taken to not violate the copyrights or patents of others on or through the use of the Internet.

D. Viruses. All appropriate precautions should be taken to detect viruses, including scanning all computer files (including attachments) that are downloaded and/or opened from the Internet, before installation or execution of such files/attachments. Users should direct any questions regarding the proper use of virus detection software to the Systems administrator prior to downloading and/or opening any computer files/attachments.

E. Town Monitoring. As noted above, users should not have any expectation of privacy as to their computer or Internet usage, including the receipt and sending of e-mail. It is possible for the Town to monitor Internet usage histories and/or patterns, and the Town may inspect, without limitation, any portion of its Systems, including files stored either on the computer hard drive or the Town's server, to the extent necessary to ensure compliance with this Policy or any other applicable state, federal, or local law or Town policy.

F. Prohibited Practices.

(1) Users shall not use Town computers knowingly to download or distribute pirated software or data. Any software or files downloaded via the Internet may be used only in ways that are consistent with their licenses or copyrights. The downloading of games or other programs for amusement/entertainment purposes is strictly prohibited.

(2) Users shall not make an unauthorized attempt to enter into another employee's computer (commonly referred to as "hacking").

(3) All computer hardware and software shall at all times remain the property of the Town, and may not be removed from their respective sites or downloaded onto personal computer equipment without the express written approval of the Systems administrator. The installation or upgrade of computer software programs on computer hardware, without the express written approval of the Systems administrator, is strictly prohibited.

(4) Users must not utilize the Internet to deliberately propagate any virus, worm, "Trojan horse," trap-door or back-door program code, or knowingly disable or overload any computer system or network, or to circumvent any system intended to protect the privacy or security of another user.

(5) Users shall not disclose confidential information or promote personal political beliefs, discrimination, sexual harassment, and any unlawful activity; nor shall the Town's computers be used for private financial gain, or commercial, advertising or solicitation purposes.

(6) Use of the Town's Systems, including computers, to display any kind of image or document that is obscene, pornographic, sexually explicit or sexually suggestive, is prohibited. Additionally, these materials may not be archived, stored, distributed, edited, or recorded using Town network, printing, or computing resources.

(7) Users shall not utilize the Town's Systems for the purpose of sending "chain-letters", unsolicited mass e-mails, or other "spam."

(8) Users shall not maliciously use or disrupt the Town's computers, networks, or Internet services; nor breach the Systems' security features; nor misuse or damage the Town's equipment; nor misuse passwords or accounts; nor attempt to access unauthorized sites; nor use the Town's Systems after such access has been denied or revoked; nor attempt to delete, erase or otherwise conceal any information stored on any portion of the Town's Systems.

G. Town Policies. All existing Town personnel policies apply to employee conduct on the internet, especially (but not exclusively) those that deal with employee performance, personal conduct, intellectual property protection, privacy, misuse of Town resources, sexual harassment, information and data security, and confidentiality. Employees must conduct themselves honestly and appropriately on the internet, and respect the copyrights, software licensing rules, property rights, privacy, and prerogatives of others. Unlawful or inappropriate internet usage may garner negative publicity for the Town and expose the Town to significant legal liabilities.

V. ELECTRONIC MAIL AND OTHER ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS ("E-MAIL")

E-mail, including electronic mail, text messages, and other electronic communication systems, provide a useful way to exchange ideas, share files, and maintain relationships with colleagues, and are a valuable asset. These communications are subject to several restrictions:

A. E-Mail does not guarantee the privacy and confidentiality of information. Sensitive material transferred over the Internet may be at risk of detection by a third party. Users must exercise caution and care when transferring such material in any form.

B. Public Records Law. The Secretary of State's Office of the Commonwealth has determined that e-mail

qualifies as "public records", as defined in Chapter 4, section 7(26) of the Massachusetts General Laws. Therefore; all e-mail mail sent by or received through the Town's Systems shall be archived by the Systems administrator. All users shall retain either a printed or digital record of e-mail sent by or received through the Town' s Systems, in the same manner that other paper records are kept by their departments, and in accordance with the Record Retention requirements.

C. Open Meeting Law. Town employees who are appointed or elected members of boards, committees, commissions, or other deliberative public bodies are subject at all times to the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law. Employees are responsible for ensuring that electronic messaging is not used in violation of this law. E-mail may be used for non-deliberative communications, including setting meeting dates, times, and agendas, but a quorum of board members may not engage in deliberation outside of an announce open meeting including using e-mail.

D. Users should be aware that opening programs or files attached to email messages may cause computer viruses to infect the Town's Systems, and thus should only open such attachments from anticipated and trusted sources.

E. Employees shall not broadcast messages to all employees via e-mail without permission from the Systems administrator.

F. Use of Personal E-Mail Accounts. Employees who choose to use personal e-mail accounts for town-related e-mail are responsible for ensuring that all messages are appropriately archived in accordance with the Massachusetts Public Records Law. In the event that a public records request is received, an employee who uses a personal e-mail account shall give the Town's Records Access Officer the ability to search that personal e-mail account for town-related messages.

VI. PERSONAL USAGE

Town Systems (including computers, Internet access, telephones, cellular phones, smart phones, and other handheld devices) are provided for Town business use and may not be used in connection with compensated outside work or for the benefit of individuals or organizations not related to Town of Plainfield, except in connection with official Town activities (such as employees publishing public and employee activities).

Incidental and short duration personal use of Town Systems, including telephone calls and access to the internet, may be permitted, provided such use occurs on the employee's own time and such use is legal, ethical, reflects community values, does not compromise the Town's reputation or the public's confidence in the Town organization, and does not compromise the Town's systems.

Any incidental use (such as electronic communications or storing data on single-user machines) must not interfere with other users' access to resources (computer cycles, network bandwidth, disk space, printers, etc.) and must not be excessive. Managers/department heads are responsible for monitoring their employees' personal usage of Systems. Excessive usage for non-Town related purposes, as well as misuse of telephones, such as to make harassing or threatening calls, may result in discipline, up to and including termination from employment.

VII. VIOLATIONS OF POLICY

A violation/violations of this Policy may result in either the suspension or permanent loss of the privilege to use the Town's Systems. It may also result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee, up to and including termination from employment. Additionally, users shall be personally liable for any losses, costs or damages incurred by the Town related to violations of this Policy. Similarly, the illegal use of the Town's Systems may result in referral to law enforcement authorities. Employees shall report violations of this Policy to their supervisor, or in the case of department heads, directly to the chair of the Select Board. Retaliation against another user for reporting a violation or violations of this Policy, including the use of e-mail or the Internet in a retaliatory manner, is strictly prohibited by the Town.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AND COMPUTER USAGE POLICY

This acknowledges that I have received and reviewed the Electronic Communications and Computer Usage Policy of the Town of Plainfield ("Policy"). By signing this form, I agree to abide by the Policy and any Guidelines promulgated thereunder, and I agree to review periodically any changes or modifications. I recognize that the law and associated Policy regarding the use of the Internet, electronic mail and the Town's electronic communications and information systems are continually evolving. Therefore, I understand that my regular review of this Policy, as it may be amended, is required.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

To be included in employee's personnel file.