

# ***St. Nathy's School Policies - Effective: September 2010***

## ***E-MAIL & INTERNET POLICY (staff)***

**Introduction** Electronic mail enables St. Nathy's College staff to communicate promptly and efficiently with colleagues internally within the school and enables a prompt and efficient service from St. Nathy's College to outside agencies and contacts. E-mail can also be used to communicate with other individuals and organisations with whom St. Nathy's College staff interact with.

**While E-mail brings many benefits** to St. Nathy's College in terms of its communications internally with members and externally, it can also bring risks to the organization - particularly where employees use it outside of their specific roles in St. Nathy's College.

**It also brings risks** where employees also have more general access to the internet. For this reason it is necessary to have a code of practice which regulates its use and which sets down its specific rules for the use of e-mail and internet. Every employee has a responsibility to maintain the school's image, to use these electronic resources in a productive manner and to avoid placing the school at risk for legal liability based on their use.

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### **Use of E-mail**

E-mail is a personal computerised and efficient communication system which enables the sending and receiving of messages between staff and between St. Nathy's College and outside agencies and contacts. Documents and materials can be attached to E-mails. The E-mail can effectively by-pass typewritten documents, faxes and the need to post documents. There are, however, risks attached to the sending of E-mails and they are:

1. Your message may go to persons other than the intended recipient and if confidential or commercially sensitive, this could be damaging to St. Nathy's College.
2. E-mail messages can carry computer viruses which are particularly dangerous to St. Nathy's College's computer operations generally.
3. Letters, files and other documents attached to E-mails may belong to others and there may be copyright implications in sending or receiving them without permission.
4. E-mail is speedy and, as such, messages written in haste or written carelessly are sent simultaneously

and without the opportunity to check or rephrase. This could give rise to legal liability on St. Nathy's College's part such as claims for defamation, etc.

5. An E-mail message may legally bind St. Nathy's College contractually in certain instances without the proper authority being obtained internally.
  6. It should be remembered that all personal data contained in E-mails may be accessible under Data Protection legislation and, furthermore, a substantial portion of E-mails to Government and other public bodies may be accessible under Freedom of Information legislation.
  7. E-mails should be regarded as potentially public information which carries a heightened risk of legal liability for the sender, the recipient and the organisations for whom they work.
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## **Rules for E- mail use**

In order to avoid or reduce the risks inherent in the use of E-mail within

St. Nathy's College the following rules are necessary:

1. St. Nathy's College's name is included in the heading carried with every message sent by a St. Nathy's College staff member. This reflects on St. Nathy's College's image and reputation. Therefore, E-mail messages must be appropriate and professional.
2. E-mail is not for private purposes nor should E-mail be used for any purpose, other than St. Nathy's College business. All E-mails issued from St. Nathy's College will carry a disclaimer saying the E-mail is intended only for St. Nathy's College business use and if used for any other purpose the school Principal should be contacted immediately.
3. Particular care should be taken when sending confidential or commercially sensitive information. If in doubt please consult the Principal.
4. Great care should also be taken when attaching documents as the ease with which employees can download files from the Internet or cut and paste materials from electronic sources increases the risks of infringement of the rights of others - particularly the intellectual property and other proprietary rights. Also, attaching documents may give rise to the release of information not intended, hence the importance of vetting attachments. Again, if in doubt, please consult the Principal.
5. Extra caution needs to be taken with E-mail messages in respect of any disparaging remarks that may be contained therein. An E-mail should be regarded as a written formal letter, the recipients of which may be much wider than the sender intended, hence any defamatory or careless remarks can have very serious consequences as can any indirect innuendo. Avoid the use of indecent, obscene, sexist, racist or other inappropriate remarks whether in written form, in cartoon form or otherwise.
6. Do not subscribe to electronic services or other contracts on behalf of St. Nathy's College unless you have the express authority to do so. Permission for authorizing subscriptions (including electronic subscriptions) rests with the school Principal. Therefore, you have no authority to enter into any binding commitment on St. Nathy's College via the E- mail or the internet.
7. If you receive any offensive, unpleasant, harassing or intimidating messages via the Email you are requested to inform the school Principal immediately. It is important that we trace such E-mails as quickly as possible.
8. Any important or potentially contentious communication which you have received through E-mail should be printed and a hard copy kept (e.g. confirmation of order etc.) Where important to do so, you should obtain confirmation that the recipient has received your E-mail.
9. Documents prepared by St. Nathy's College for outside agencies or contacts may be attached via the E-mail. However, excerpts from reports other than our own (if substantial) may be in breach of copyright and the author's consent ought to be obtained particularly where taken out of its original context.

10. St. Nathy's College reserves and intends to exercise the right to review, audit, intercept, access and disclose all messages created, received or sent over the electronic mail system for any purpose. All computer pass codes must be provided to the school Principal upon request. No pass code may be used that can remain unknown to the company. Notwithstanding the company's right to retrieve and read any electronic mail messages, such messages should be treated as confidential by other employees and accessed only by the intended recipient. Employees are not authorised to retrieve or read any e-mail messages that are not sent to them. Any exception to this policy must receive prior approval from the Principal. However, the confidentiality of any message should not be assumed. Even when a message is erased it is still possible to retrieve and read that message. If any breach of our E- mail policy is observed then disciplinary action up to and including dismissal may be taken.