

Lutheran Church of Australia

MODEL EMAIL POLICY

Ownership of emails

All emails sent or received by users are, and shall always be, the property of <the organisation>.

Privacy of electronic mail

<The organisation> reserves the right to access and/or archive any or all email records created or received by its employees. However permission may need to be provided to access confidential material as detailed below.

Privacy of emails of pastors and lay workers

In the case where a parish or congregation supplies a computer for the pastor or lay worker to do their work, even though the parish owns the computer, all the emails and other work is considered confidential and are not to be accessed by other parties, including parish officials and committees, unless the pastor/lay worker concerned, or the district president gives permission.

Both pastor/lay worker and parish need to be aware of their responsibilities under privacy legislation and the church's understanding of the confidentiality of much of a pastor/lay worker's work, including correspondence with parishioners, other pastors and church workers, his president etc.

Archiving copies of emails

Because emails form a significant and important part its "corporate memory" <the organisation> should have in place a way of storing copies of emails received and sent. This archive should be stored in a form which is accessible by <the organisation> when needed. Confidential material must be archived in an appropriate way to ensure confidentiality is retained (eg encryption, password protection etc).

Password security

Users are responsible for their password. A password is not to be shared with another person under any circumstance. If a user has reason to believe that their password has been compromised then the password is to be changed immediately.

Personal use

Email is provided to staff as a for the work of Church organisations, departments and agencies; however, <the organisation> recognises that, consistent with the provision of a family friendly work environment some personal use is reasonable. Therefore limited personal use of email is permitted where:

- There is no additional cost to <the organisation>
- It does not interfere with the user's work and the activities of other employees
- It does not disrupt the system and/or harm <the organisation>'s reputation and
- Use is not classified as inappropriate.
- Use for reasonable incidental personal purposes does not include:
 - Use for the purposes of a third party (eg another business, a club society or organisation)
 - Use for conducting personal business affairs (eg a second job);
 - Use which disparages <the organisation> or harms its reputation (eg sending to persons outside <the organisation> comments that are critical, abusive or derogatory of <the organisation> or its management, even where the views are expressed as being personal).

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Email Content

Email is a communication tool to be used for distributing church-related information. The following conditions apply to email content.

1. **Email is a record:** Management of email must comply with existing legislation, regulations, policies, and standards (eg. the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act). It is also subject to legal disclosure processes.
2. **Inappropriate material:** Users may not send or distribute email containing inappropriate material, such as offensive jokes (text or graphic). This includes, but is not limited to, sound files, movie files or any form of such material.
3. **Profanity or pornography:** Users may not send or distribute email containing profanity or pornography. Safe Place Policy and Equal Employment Opportunity laws apply to email content. Sending pornographic material (of any degree) by email is an extremely serious matter and may lead to termination of employment.
4. **Derogatory or inflammatory information:** Users may not send or distribute email containing derogatory, inflammatory, insulting or libellous information about any other user, church member, associate or any other person whatsoever.
5. **Altering forwarded information:** Altering forwarded information is not recommended. Wherever practical, where forwarded emails require comments or clarification this text should be contained in a separate section rather than changing the original email.
6. **Impersonating or misrepresenting someone else via email:** Impersonating or misrepresenting someone else in any manner, including via email, for example a user logging onto a functional ID and sending an email signing it with someone else's name, is strictly prohibited.

Digitised Signatures

Use of scanned written signatures pasted into electronic mail messages or other documents is discouraged.

Spam Mail

Spam mail is electronic junk mail. In general, senders of spam mail have two purposes:

- to encourage recipients to purchase goods or services from the sender
- to gather live email addresses for future use or for selling on to other spammers.

Users are not to respond to or encourage the receipt of spam mail. All spam email should be deleted.

Chain Letters

A chain letter is a communication that includes an incentive to forward it on to others. This incentive takes the form of a promise for reward and/or a threat.

Forwarding of chain letters does not constitute useful application of the email facility. Forwarding or sending of improper communications is a waste of resources.

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Users are encouraged not to forward chain letters.

Responsibilities

<The supervisor> has the responsibility to ensure users are fully aware of this policy. Users are responsible for ensuring that their use of email is appropriate and compliant with this policy. Serious breaches may be referred to the appropriate manager.

<The supervisor> is responsible for taking appropriate action when this policy has been breached.

Consequences

Users involved in an alleged inappropriate use of the email technology will be dealt with according to the policy. After appropriate investigation, sanctions may include but are not limited to disciplinary action that may include eventual dismissal.

Use of disclaimers

Individual users are not required to include any disclaimer. Staff are to be informed of the authorised use of any applicable organisational disclaimer.

Report email abuse

If the content of a message is offensive, the appropriate policy or procedure should be immediately brought to the attention of the person's supervisor.