

INTERNET AND E MAIL USAGE POLICY INCLUDING SOCIAL MEDIA

Policy

The use of the internet, e mail and computers generally is very much part of our business. Social media is widely used as a communications tool and care must be exercised in expressing views that could bring the Company's reputation into disrepute.

The integrity of any computer network can be harmed by misuse, e.g. by introducing unauthorised software.

It is therefore necessary to adopt certain rules to protect our business.

We reserve the right to access and monitor electronic communications, including e mails and internet activity without the consent of or consultation with the individuals being monitored.

We may intercept communications to protect against computer viruses, monitor how staff are dealing with our clients, ensure that staff are not using the internet to access offensive or illegal material or in any other way using equipment for non-business purposes or purposes that may be harmful or prejudicial to the Company and staff.

Use of the internet

Use of the internet is provided for business reasons. Use of the internet during working hours for personal use should not be made.

If it is discovered that excessive personal use has been made of the internet provided by the Company either in or outside working hours, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

Downloading of material that could be deemed offensive, obscene or indecent such as of a pornographic, racist, sexist or insulting nature is strictly prohibited. Circulating such material is strictly prohibited. Offences of this nature constitute gross misconduct and may lead to summary dismissal.

The internet and e mail must not be used, amongst other things, for

- Circulating information of an untrue, defamatory or damaging nature concerning an individual, client, contractor or supplier within or outside the Company
- Private or freelance business
- Purchasing goods and services for personal consumption (during normal office hours or without prior permission)
- Entering into contracts or commitments in the name of or on behalf of the Company, unless specifically approved in advance by Directors
- Gambling
- Visiting pornographic sites
- Conducting political activities
- Breaching confidentiality
- Doing anything that may damage the reputation and/or business interests of the Company

If you receive material that you consider offensive you should report it to the Directors.

Use of e mail

You should take care in the way you communicate in e mails and remember that anything written in an email is treated in the same way as any other form of writing.

Staff should ensure that e mails are sent in the Company's house style with contact details in the signature box and an appropriate disclaimer message.

Be guarded in the way you express yourself in an e mail. Always write as if a third party could read your message. Do not use sarcasm or send angry e mails. Any e mail message which is abusive, offensive, discriminatory or defamatory is strictly forbidden and the sender could be liable to dismissal. Be careful not to breach any software copyright licences.

Remember that e mails are more permanent than people think and accessible even after they have been deleted due to back-up systems.

Care should be taken when using the e mail system to ensure that it is used appropriately and individuals are not mailed unnecessarily. Please consider whether other communications methods are more appropriate, such as face to face communication or telephone rather than always using e mail.

Personal use of the Company's e mail system should be restricted to emergencies.

Use of social media at work

The Company recognises that many employees make use of social media in a personal capacity outside the workplace and outside normal working hours. While they are not acting on behalf of the Company in these circumstances, employees must be aware that they can still cause damage to the Company if they are recognised online as being one of its employees. Therefore, it is important that the Company has strict social media rules in place to protect its position.

When logging on to and using social media websites and blogs at any time, including personal use on non-Company computers outside the workplace and outside normal working hours, employees must not other than in relation to the Company's own social media activities or other than where expressly permitted by the Company:

- publicly identify themselves as working for the Company, should refer to the Company or provide information from which others can ascertain the name of the Company
- write about their work for the Company – and, in postings that could be linked to the Company, they must also ensure that any personal views expressed are clearly stated to be theirs alone and do not represent those of the Company
- conduct themselves in a way that is potentially detrimental to the Company or brings the Company or its employees, clients, contractors or suppliers into disrepute, for example by posting images or video clips that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate website content
- use their work e-mail address when registering on such sites or provide any link to the Company's website
- allow their interaction on these websites or blogs to damage working relationships with or between employees and clients, contractors or suppliers of the Company, for example by criticising or arguing with such persons
- include personal information or data about the Company's employees, clients, contractors or suppliers without their express consent (an employee may still be liable even if employees,

clients, contractors or suppliers are not expressly named in the websites or blogs as long as the Company reasonably believes they are identifiable) – this could constitute a breach of data protection legislation

- make any derogatory, offensive, adverse, discriminatory, untrue, negative, critical or defamatory comments about the Company, its employees, clients, contractors or suppliers, or any comments which might reasonably be considered to insult, damage or impugn the Company's or their reputation or character (an employee may still be liable even if the Company, its employees, clients, contractors or suppliers are not expressly named in the websites or blogs as long as the Company reasonably believes they are identifiable)
- make any comments about the Company's employees that could constitute unlawful discrimination, harassment or cyber-bullying contrary to the Equality Act 2010 or post any images or video clips that are discriminatory or which may constitute unlawful harassment or cyber-bullying – employees can be personally liable for their actions under the legislation
- disclose any trade secrets or confidential, proprietary or sensitive information belonging to the Company, its employees, clients, contractors or suppliers or any information which could be used by one or more of the Company's competitors, for example information about the Company's work, its products and services, technical developments, deals that it is doing, future business plans and staff morale
- breach copyright or any other proprietary interest belonging to the Company, for example, using someone else's images or written content without permission or failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce particular work – if employees wish to post images, photographs or videos of their work colleagues or clients, contractors or suppliers on their online profile, they should first obtain the other party's express permission to do so.

Employees must remove any offending content immediately if they are asked to do so by the Company.

Should employees observe inaccurate information about the Company on any web sources of information, they should report this to their Manager in the first instance.

Failure to comply with any of the requirements of this policy may result in disciplinary action being taken under the Company's disciplinary procedure. Depending on the seriousness of the offence, it may amount to gross misconduct and could result in the employee's summary dismissal.