OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT   **PROPERTY**
YOUNGSTOWN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT   **7540.05/page 1 of 8**
ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINE

PROPER USE OF E-MAIL ACCOUNT

Depending on the content of an e-mail message, it may be a public record *or an educational record* that needs to be maintained by the District in accordance with Policy *8310 – Public Records or Policy 8330 – Student Records,* and made available for inspection and/or copying upon request by a member of the public, *or a parent or student age eighteen (18) or older. In addition, an e-mail may constitute electronically stored information that is subject to a Litigation Hold pursuant to Policy 8315 – Information Management.* The following procedures are established so that the District's e-mail and Internet capabilities are not compromised, and e-mail messages are maintained in accordance with *State and Federal* law.

OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:

    A. Types of E-Mail Prohibited

        1. General Rule: Do not put anything in an e-mail that you would not put on School District letterhead.

        2. Do not send e-mails of ten (10) megabytes or more. (For example, this would most likely be the following: multiple attachments on one (1) e-mail, pictures, Powerpoint presentations, Adobe files, jpg images, etc.)

        3. Do not respond to chain letters via your District e-mail account. These letters often come from outside sources, which increase the risk of e-mail based virus infection. Such e-mails multiply exponentially, and cost the District in terms of time, money and resources.

        4. Do not use your District e-mail account to communicate with friends and family throughout the work day, except in case of emergency and when they cannot be reached by telephone.

    B. Proper Use of the Distribution Lists in the District's Global Address Book

        1. When using a District-wide or building-wide distribution list, all members of that group should be intended targets. Distribution lists are only to be used when it is necessary to convey information to <u>every member</u> of a group whenever possible. This includes all distribution lists.

        2. It is your responsibility to know to whom your information will be sent if you choose to utilize a District-wide or building-wide distribution list.

PUBLIC RECORD CONSIDERATIONS:*

E-mail messages that are kept by the District and that serve to document the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the District are public records, unless they meet one of the statutory exceptions, and must be maintained in accordance with the Board's Records Retention Policy and made available for inspection and/or copying by the public. The length of retention of an e-mail message is dependent upon its content and the purpose it serves.   The content, transactional information, and any attachments associated with an e-mail message are considered a record if they meet the statutory criteria.

For the purposes of this guideline, there are four (4) categories of e-mail retention: non-record messages, transitory messages, intermediate messages, and permanent messages.

    A.   Categories of E-mail

        1. Non-Record Materials

E-mail messages that do not meet the criteria of the Ohio Revised Code definition of a public record may be deleted at any time, unless they become part of some official record as a result of special circumstances or must be preserved pursuant to Policy 8315 - "Information Management" and AG 8315 - "Litigation Hold Procedure."   These types of messages may include:

    a. *Personal Correspondence*

Any e-mail not received or created in the course of District business, may be deleted immediately, since it is not an official record: the "Let's do lunch" (not a District-business lunch) or "Can I catch a ride home" type of note.

    b. *Non-District Publications*

Publications, promotional material from vendors, and similar materials that are "publicly available" to anyone, are not official records unless specifically incorporated into other official records.

In the electronic world, this includes listserv messages (other than those you post in your official capacity), unsolicited promotional material ("spam"), files copied or downloaded from Internet sites, etc.

These items may be immediately deleted, or maintained in a "Non-Record" mail box and deleted later, just as you might trash the unwanted publication or promotional flyer.

However, for example, if you justify the purchase of a "Zippo Filing System" by incorporating the reviews you saved (from the "Files R Us Listserv") in your proposal to your supervisor, those listserv messages become official records and must be retained in accordance with the retention schedule for purchasing proposals.

2.   Official Records – Retain As Required

E-mail messages that meet the definition of a public record in the Ohio Revised Code are official records and must be scheduled, retained and disposed of as such.   These official records fall into the following categories:

a.   *Transient Retention*

Much of the communication via e-mail has a very limited administrative value.   For instance, an e-mail message notifying employees of an upcoming meeting would only have value until the meeting has been attended or the employee receiving the message has marked the date and time in his/her calendar.

Transitory messages do not set policy, establish guidelines or procedures, certify a transaction or become a receipt. The informal tone of transitory messages might be compared to a communication that might take place during a   telephone conversation   or   conversation   in   an   office   hallway. Transient documents include telephone messages, drafts and other limited documents that serve to convey information of temporary importance in lieu of oral communication.   Transient documents should   be   retained   in   accordance   with   the   Board's Records   Retention   Policy   and   the   Board's   Information Management Policy.

b. *Intermediate Retention*

E-mail messages that have more significant administrative, legal and/or fiscal value but are not scheduled as transient or permanent should be categorized under other appropriate record series. These may include (but are not limited to):

1. General Correspondence: Includes internal correspondence (letters, memos); also, correspondence from various individuals, companies, and organizations requesting information pertaining to the District and legal interpretations and other miscellaneous inquiries. This correspondence is informative (it does not attempt to influence Board/District policy).

   Retention: (See Records Retention Policy; ex. one (1) year, then destroy.)

2. Routine Correspondence: Referral letters, requests for routine information, or publications provided to the District, which are answered by standard form letters.

   Retention: (See Records Retention Policy; ex. six (6) months, then destroy.)

3. Monthly and Weekly Reports: Document status of on-going projects and issues; advise supervisors of various events and issues.

   Retention: (See Records Retention Policy and Information Management Policy.)

4. Minutes of Staff Meetings: Minutes and supporting records documenting internal policy decisions.

   Retention: (See Records Retention Policy and Information Management Policy.)

  c. *Permanent Retention*

  E-mail messages that have significant administrative, legal and/or fiscal value and are scheduled as permanent also should be categorized under the appropriate record series. These may include (but are not limited to):

  1. Executive Correspondence: Correspondence from the Superintendent, Treasurer, or other administrator that deals with significant aspects of the administration of their offices/buildings. Correspondence includes information concerning Board/District policies/guidelines, program, fiscal and personnel matters.

  Retention: (see Records Retention Policy; and Information Management Policy.)

  2. Departmental/Building Policies and Procedures: Includes published reports, unpublished substantive reports and policy studies.

  Retention: (See Records Retention Policy and Information Policy).

Not all e-mail messages will fall into these record series. For more suggested retention periods, consult the Board's Records Retention Policy.

 B. <u>Mailbox Management</u>

  Guidelines and Best Practices for Managing E-Mail

  1. Record Copy E-Mail

  E-mail users should be aware that e-mail messages are often widely distributed to a number of recipients. Determining which individual maintains the record copy of the message, i.e., the original message that must be retained per the retention schedule, is vital to e-mail management. If the holder of the record copy is not identified and aware of his/her responsibility, the District may find that no one retains the message or that everyone retains the message. Neither of these scenarios is appropriate.

For example, Board/District policy/guidelines documents that are transmitted to multiple recipients via an e-mail system need not be maintained by each recipient beyond his/her need for this information if record copy responsibility is established so that the record is maintained by some office, employee or agent for its established retention period. In this example, a logical record copy responsibility rests with the creator or original distributor of the policy/guideline document. Prompt deletion of duplicate copies of e-mail messages from an e-mail system makes the system as a whole much easier to manage and reduces disk space consumed by redundant information.

Generally speaking, the individual who sends an e-mail message should maintain the record copy of the message. However, the varied uses and wide distribution of e-mail may result in many exceptions to this rule that will have to be dealt with internally.

2. Filing

Non-transitory e-mail messages should be filed in a way that enhances their accessibility and that facilitates records management tasks. Procedures and systems configurations may vary according to the building's/users' needs and the particular hardware and software in use.

In addition to the IN and OUT boxes that come with your mail account, you usually have the option of creating other "mailboxes" or folders". After brief periods in your IN-OUT boxes messages should be transferred to other boxes, based on business and retention requirements.

Employees should be responsible for classifying messages they send or receive according to content, the District's folder/directory structure, and established records series.

3. Distribution Lists

If you send to a "distribution list" (not a listserv, but a specified list of individuals), you must also keep a copy of the members of that list for as long as you are required to keep the message itself. It is of little value to know that the "Security Alert!" notice went to "Building Principals", without knowing whether Arnold S. received the message. Nicknames present a similar problem.

4. Subject Lines

Fill in the subject line on your e-mail both to help your recipient identify and file messages, and to help you file your OUT box messages that must be retained for some period. Subject lines should be as descriptive as possible.

The following are some examples of poor and good subject lines for the same message:

Poor, confusing subject lines	Better, descriptive subject lines
"helpful info"	"contact info"
"report"	"quarterly financial report"
"minutes"	"Jan 99 Board minutes"
"important"	"revised admin. procedures"
"today?"	"lunch plans today?"
"news"	"new agency head appointed"

* This Section has been adopted from the Ohio Electronic Records Committee's publication entitled "Managing Electronic Mail – Guidelines for State of Ohio Executive Agencies."

See: http://www.ohiohistory.org/ohiojunction/erc/email/emailguidelines.html

C. Mailbox Maintenance and Cleanup

1. Each e-mail user is responsible for keeping his/her e-mail account at a manageable size.

2. The maximum permissible total storage size is dependent upon what is allowable by the Service Provider.

3. If you do not maintain your mailbox and permit its size to grow beyond the recommended levels, your mailbox could become corrupt. The District's staff is not responsible if the mailbox cannot be recovered do to lack of user maintenance.

4. Your District e-mail account is not meant to be a storage folder.   Before developing your personal mailbox maintenance and cleanup procedure, you must review the District's Public Records Policy, Information Management Policy, and any accompanying administrative guidelines to these policies. Any questions regarding these policies should be directed to the Superintendent and/or his/her designee.

5. If you want to retain all e-mail items with your work records, you must implement a storage solution outside your e-mail account. Such records shall continue to be the Board's property and may not be removed from the Board's premises for any reasons.

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