

# **Medford Public Schools Medford, Massachusetts**

## **E-mail Guideline**

### **General Information on Passwords**

While you have a confidential password, users should be aware that this does not suggest that the system is for personal confidential communication, nor does it suggest that e-mail is the property right of the employee. The use of the e-mail system is for Medford business. Users should not share their password with anyone else.

Please read the following facts and tips about e-mail before you send an e-mail message.

### **The Facts of E-mail Privacy**

To date, the case laws clearly support the notion that workplace e-mail and Internet access belong to the employer. The key in each case was that the employee did not have a reasonable expectation of privacy.

E-mail is not exactly like a phone call. More information, including copies of the content of your messages, is routinely recorded about your use of e-mail than about your use of the telephone. Moreover, a broader, less controlled set of people have access to that information. E-mail is not like a letter in an envelope. The contents of your message are out in the open, and there's no easy way to mark a message "confidential." E-mail is most like a postcard. The contents of your message may be viewed during the mailing process. If it is inadequately addressed, or if there is a problem with routing equipment, a "postmaster" may read your message to try to redirect it correctly. Your message may be delivered to the wrong address. Your message can be forwarded or printed. Your message will probably be stored, perhaps in your directories, perhaps in the directories of the person who receives the message, and probably on system back-up tapes, which may be retained for very long periods of time.

We suggest you keep this "picture" of e-mail in mind as you compose e-mail messages. Don't put anything in an e-mail message that you wouldn't want posted on a bulletin board or used in a lawsuit or shared with the wrong person. Do use professional, courteous language that will not embarrass you later. People who may never meet you will be forming impressions about you based on the way you compose your e-mail messages. It's much easier to edit a message before you send it than to send an apology later. If you receive mail that was not intended for you, send a reply to the sender notifying them that they need to revise the address.

The technology of Medford's e-mail systems is constantly being upgraded. Over time, the technical ability to ensure privacy of e-mail communication will increase. But it is best to assume that e-mail is a public medium and to avoid using it for confidential communication.

**The Policy of Medford**

Medford has adopted a policy regarding use of electronic communications resources, which includes electronic mail. You need to be aware of this policy as you use any of the electronic communications resources.

E-mail and Internet access, including, but not limited to, facsimile machines, computers, electronic mail and voice mail, are to be used solely for Medford school business. Medford reserves the right to monitor for any purpose all communications and access usage via the Medford computing systems. All communications, information or materials delivered via such resources must be transmitted, stored, and accessed in a manner that safeguards appropriate confidentiality. Medford may require a copy of any password necessary to access e-mail messages or files, as well as a copy of any password used by any employee.

Employees and others working for Medford may not:

1. *Under any circumstances* , transmit, access, or download offensive, fraudulent, or defamatory images or text, such as pornography or off-color jokes, or anything that may be construed as illegally harassing or offensive to others.
2. Transmit or download copyrighted images, games, music, video or text belonging to third parties without the copyright-holder's permission.
3. Download or open any file received from any source outside Medford without first scanning the same for viruses using an approved virus-checking program.

Employees who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action. This policy includes all Medford locations at which any employee may be working.

**Acknowledgement of Understanding**

I have read and agree to comply with the terms of this policy governing the use of Medford Public Schools' E-mail policy. I understand that violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including possible termination and civil and criminal penalties.

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Signature

Date

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Printed name