



EMAIL ETIQUETTE GUIDANCE

Aim of Guidelines

This Guidance is intended to reduce the likelihood of misunderstanding, unintentional rudeness or offence when communicating using email. Emails to Town Council members should only contain Town Council related business. Emails containing Town Council discussions should NOT be circulated to non-council members.

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| 1. | Have a clear subject, title or topic line | It is frustrating for those who receive a lot of emails not to be able to quickly gauge the relevance and subject matter of a message they have received. Similarly searching for a previously opened ambiguously titled message amongst other ambiguously titled messages wastes time. The subject / topic /title line of an email should therefore be worded clearly and accurately to represent the content of your message. Consider this carefully when replying or forwarding an email, as you have the opportunity to make changes to the title. |
| 2. | One message, one topic | Don't try to cram multiple topics into one message, particularly if you require replies to different questions. It is usually less anxiety producing and easier to read when receiving several shorter emails rather than one long one. It also makes it easier for your recipient to manage their emails, as specific messages can be categorised easily. |
| 3. | Be responsive | People expect a reply to most messages. |
| 4. | Write emails as though the public could see them | There are a variety of legitimate and illegitimate ways an email could be seen by people you had not intended to see it. Regardless of how it ended up being seen the embarrassment and potential consequences will be yours. It is therefore recommended that when you write emails to assume they will be seen by people other than your intended recipients. If the information you are sending is confidential or private it may be best to consider other methods of communication, such as the postal service. |
| 5. | Always read your email | Read your email before you send it. This will help you catch |

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| | before sending | any mistakes and keep your recipients from being confused. Particularly if you wrote it in the heat of the moment or off the cuff you may want to rethink the tone and content. Remember that once you send something, you've lost control of the information. It is also a good idea to check your intended recipients, particularly when replying. |
| 6. | Keep it Brief | Most people do not enjoy reading emails off of a computer screen, particularly if they are longer than the visible height of the screen. Where possible, keep it short. |
| 7. | Keep emails to a minimum | Email is so easy and convenient to use people tend to send them without considering how many emails their recipient may get in a day. |
| 8. | Don't send more messages than you need to | Make sure that the messages you are sending are necessary. Many people receive lots of emails, so they find it difficult to answer all the emails and get their work done. |
| 9. | Don't include more people than necessary | Only include relevant people. Where your conversation has a lot of messages going back and forth between a limited number of people, don't include the people who are not involved with the conversation as a whole. Whenever possible, cut the number of people on the to: and cc: lists to only those necessary. Remember that you can always send the email later if they need to know the whole conversation. |
| 10. | Inappropriate 'mob mail' | A common type of email that is usually unnecessary is the "mob-mail"; an email that includes lots of people in its "to:" and "cc:" lists in order to solicit support or add the threat or weight of authority. Usually these extra people do not appreciate being included and would rather stay out of the conversation until they are needed. Remember that if you do need other people's support you can always send the whole email later with an explanation of the issue. Alternatively remember that if you are included in a "mob-mail" it is not impolite to excuse yourself from the conversation. Finally if you are on the receiving end of the email it is unusually not impolite to strip the unnecessary people from the "to:" and "cc:" lists down to the people who are directly participating in the conversation or issue. Check the email chain to see who is part of the conversation. |
| 11. | Keep it Simple | Email tools usually provide a variety of ways to format the messages you send. Not all of the options available aid in communication and changes from the standard template of black lettering in a standard font on a white background should be used sparingly. |
| 12. | Make it readable | Arial Text is easiest to read on a computer screen, while Times New Roman is best on a printed page. |
| 13. | Common Courtesies <i>Be tolerant</i> | We all make mistakes. |

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| | <p><i>Ignore or delete what is asked of you</i></p> <p><i>Email erroneously sent to you</i></p> <p><i>Don't be Rude, Abusive or Defamatory</i></p> | <p>If someone asks you to ignore a message that they sent or to delete something without reading it is common courtesy to do so. If you have read it already and it was obviously not for you it is polite to pretend it did not exist.</p> <p>If you receive email addressed to you by mistake it is polite to inform the sender that they have sent the email to the wrong person. Note that to keep, act upon and/or forward an email not intended for you may be breaking the law.</p> <p>As with other forms of communication, it is at least impolite to be rude, abusive or defamatory in an email. You should also be aware that it may be against the law, and that emails are legitimate legal documents that may be used in court.</p> |
| 14. | <p>Common Courtesies to Other People</p> <p><i>Including others you've spoken of</i></p> <p><i>Don't use other people's words without acknowledgement</i></p> <p><i>Don't change someone else's words</i></p> <p><i>Don't pretend you are someone or something</i></p> | <p>If you mention another person in your message, and it is appropriate to do so, send them a copy of the message by placing their email address in the "CC" field.</p> <p>It is very easy to copy and paste other people's messages into your own. When doing so it is polite to indicate whose words you've used are so as not to plagiarise.</p> <p>If you do copy another person's words into your message, it is best to leave them exactly as the other person wrote them or indicate where you have made changes. Remember that changing them may inadvertently change the message and you would be misrepresenting what they had said.</p> <p>This is rather obvious. Asides from potentially breaking the law, pretending you are something or someone else breaks the trust. Since no one can see who you are or where you are, they have to trust what you say in the email is the truth.</p> |
| 15. | <p>What to do when you are receiving too many emails</p> | <p>Unfortunately the only person that can effectively manage the number of emails you receive is yourself. Be careful when requesting a reduction or complete stop of incoming emails because you may inadvertently make people cautious about sending any email to you at all.</p> |
| 16. | <p>Ignore and Delete at your peril</p> | <p>It is highly impolite to ignore or delete emails without reading them. Asides from the impoliteness it is not recommended to delete or ignore unread emails because you cannot be sure of what they contain. The person sending you the information sent it to you because they felt you should have it. The sender's duty is only to get the information to you, and if you don't read the email then the consequences are yours. At the very worst people may simply stop sending you emails, since they will assume that you are ignoring them. This is a risky strategy of reducing your email intake, as people will likely stop sending you important information as well.</p> |

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