

EMAIL, INTERNET AND PHONE USE POLICY

1) Email

The use of email and the internet is now critical to all organisations in facilitating communication and delivering services effectively and efficiently. St Peter's Baptist Church email addresses should only be used for communication on matters directly concerning Church business. Employees should be aware that business emails may be shared by others, particularly where computers are shared.

The Church authorises a number of people to use its IT and Email systems. If you are an authorised person and wish to check your *personal* emails (e.g.: via a Hotmail/Gmail email address for example) and this can be done with no additional cost to the Church, you may do so during lunch breaks or break periods. You should be mindful that you are still in a work environment and should comply with the good practise guidelines below. In particular, opening attachments that have the potential to offend or distress others should be avoided.

If you are not an authorised user at the Church Centre then you should use your own home computer or public facilities in the library or internet café to access your personal emails.

Email guidelines:

- Presentation – the style and content of emails should be as professional as any other form of written communication. Sending emails typed in capital letters should be avoided because this is regarded as shouting.
- Circulation – emails should only be sent to those to whom it is relevant.
- Appropriateness – emails should not be used as a substitute for face to face communication. Particularly 'flame-mails' (abusive, angry or antagonistic) which could damage working relationships.
- Planning – written communication can cause more misunderstandings than verbal, so all emails should be well thought out and not sent in haste.
- Contracts – offers or contracts for services made by email are as binding legally as those made on paper.

- Bullying/harassing - you should be careful never to send any message that could be construed as bullying or harassing (e.g.: on the grounds of race, disability or sex).
- Jokes/pictures/chain letters/junk mail – even if these are forwarded from partner organisations, employees are advised to delete them rather than opening and/or forwarding. These emails are known to carry viruses and St Peter’s Baptist Church computers may not have the necessary virus software protection.
- Confidentiality – extreme care should be taken when sending confidential information about employees, volunteers or clients’ via email. Ensure that the person to whom the information is being sent has a legitimate right to that information and that the appropriate consent has been obtained for you to act on their behalf. If in doubt you should speak to your line manager/Senior Minister.

2) Internet

During working periods, all Internet access must be work related. If you are an authorised person and wish to access the Internet for *personal* use and this can be done with no additional cost to the Church, you should do so during lunch breaks/after work or break periods. Again you should be mindful that you are still in a work environment. You should avoid accessing sites that have the potential to offend or distress others.

Internet guidelines

- Copyright – Downloading or distributing copyright information and/or software should be avoided because its illegality could result in criminal proceedings against the employee or the Church.
- Unauthorised sites – Whilst at work, accessing pornographic, obscene or gambling web sites is prohibited.

3) Telephones

If you are issued with a work phone you are responsible for keeping it safe. You should not normally use office phones or work mobiles for personal use except in an emergency. Most people have their own mobile phones which can be used for making personal calls. If you need to use the Church phone please ask your manager first. You may be asked to pay for overseas calls or calls that result in a high charge to the Church.

4) Appropriate Use of Email, Internet and Telephones

The Church reserves the right to undertake checks on staff and volunteer use of email, internet and telephone usage of Church equipment and services. If it transpires that employees have used email, internet or telephones inappropriately a formal investigation may be undertaken in accordance with the Church’s disciplinary procedure.

January 2012