

## **E-MAIL ACCEPTABLE USE**

E-mail is an efficient mechanism for internal and external business communications at Pojoaque Valley Public Schools (PVS). E-Mail is used to complement traditional methods of communication and to improve education and administrative efficiency. However, use of PVS' business E-Mail systems and services is a privilege, not a right, and must be used with respect and in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations and District policies and procedures. The expectation is that all employees will use their PVS e-mail account for all school related business.

The purposes of this policy are to (1) outline appropriate use of PVS' E-Mail systems and services in order to minimize disruptions to services and activities; and (2) comply with applicable District policies and procedures and federal and state laws and regulations that address public records retention and management and confidentiality, including, but not limited to, the New Mexico Public Records Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

This policy applies to all E-Mail systems and services owned by PVS (whether operated on local or Internet-based servers), all PVS E-Mail account holders, and all E-Mail messages and attachments sent or received using the PVS E-Mail systems and services.

“E-Mail” means a message transmitted electronically over a communications network. This includes any system that enables users to compose, transmit, receive, and manage electronic messages and images across networks and through gateways connecting to other local area networks. “Chat” applications that permit instantaneous communications are included in this definition. Because “chat” messages cannot be easily stored or maintained, “chat” messages should be used only for a matter of convenience for short communications, and shall not be used to conduct District business.

### **I. Account Activation/Termination.**

**A. Employee account activation.** All PVS employees will receive an E-Mail account upon the approval of their site administrator or supervisor and the execution by the employee of the Technology Use Agreement. It is the responsibility of the employee to protect the confidentiality of his or her account and password information.

**B. Non-employee account activation.** The Superintendent may determine on a case-by-case basis whether to assign a District E-Mail account to a third party, non-employee depending on (1) the nature of the business being conducted by the non-employee in relation to the District; (2) the duration of the non-employee's relationship with the District; and (3) the need for periodic and on-going District-related communications. Examples of third party, non-employees who may be assigned a District E-Mail account are board members for the duration of their terms or long-term substitute teachers during the duration of their assignments. Third party, non-employees must execute the Technology Use Agreement as a necessary condition of being assigned an E-Mail account.

**C. Account Termination.** E-Mail access will be terminated when the employment or on-going relationship between the District and the employee or third party is terminated. An account also may be suspended during internal investigations or terminated by the District as a disciplinary penalty for misuse or violation of the Technology Use Agreement. PVS is under no obligation to forward the contents of an individual's E-Mail account to a non-PVS E-Mail account or to store the contents of the E-Mail account, except as required by records retention laws and regulations and District policies and procedures.

## **II. Ownership; No Expectation of Privacy.**

PVS owns all E-Mail accounts and all data transmitted or stored using E-Mail systems and services. Users have no general expectation of privacy in E-Mail messages sent or received through the PVS system. The IT staff or other District administrators may access or monitor E-Mail files to maintain the system, or to investigate issues related to system security, system abuse, or violations of District policies or laws and regulations.

## **III. Data Retention.**

Individuals are responsible for saving E-Mail messages in compliance with District Policy 15 days (Records Retention), and any implementing procedures, as well as federal and state laws and regulations that require the retention of records.

Due to finite resources, PVS has the right to restrict the amount of user space on the E-Mail server, as necessary, and to purge and remove email accounts subject to records retention laws and regulations and District policies and procedures.

Archival and backup copies of E-Mails are created, despite end-user deletion, in compliance with PVS' document retention policy. The goals of these backup and archival procedures are to ensure system reliability, prevent business data loss, and meet regulatory and litigation needs. Back-up copies exist primarily to restore service in the event of a system failure. Archival copies are designed for quick and accurate access by District administrators for supervisory, business, or legal needs. It is a violation of this policy for an email account user to tamper with archival or back up copies of E-Mails.

## **IV. Appropriate Use.**

When using E-Mail as an official means of communication, District employees should apply the same professionalism, discretion, and ethical standards that they would use in written or in-person business communications.

## **V. Examples of Inappropriate Use.**

The inappropriate use of E-Mail is prohibited. A non-exhaustive list of examples of inappropriate use of E-Mail includes, but is not limited to:

- The creation and exchange of messages which are harassing, bullying obscene or threatening.
- The unauthorized exchange of proprietary information or any other privileged, confidential, or sensitive information.
- The creation and exchange of advertisements, solicitations, chain letters and other unofficial, unsolicited email, non-PVS communications, or political campaigning.
- Use by unauthorized third-parties.
- The creation and exchange of information in violation of any laws, including copyright laws, or District policies.
- The knowing transmission of a message containing a computer virus.
- The misrepresentation of the identity of the sender of an E-Mail.
- The use or attempt to use, view, alter or delete the accounts of others without their permission.
- Use of PVS' E-Mail systems and services in a manner that strains storage or bandwidth (e.g. e-mailing large attachments instead of pointing to a location on a network drive or the PVS intranet). The total size of an individual e-mail message sent to 1 or 2 recipients (including attachment) should be 25 MB or less.
- Setting a configuration or default setting to automatically forward all email to an external destination without prior approval from the PVS Network Administrator.
- Knowingly opening e-mail attachments from unknown or unsigned sources. Attachments are a primary source of computer viruses and should be treated with utmost caution.
- Sharing e-mail account passwords with another person, or attempting to obtain another person's e-mail account password. E-mail accounts are only to be used by the registered user.
- Limited personal use of PVS E-Mail. While limited personal communications are permitted, such communications shall not be in violation of federal and state laws and regulations or District policies, nor should the employee's personal use of E-Mail interfere with the employee's work responsibilities or cause any disruption in the work place or production of work.
- Inclusion of personally-selected messages, including by not limited to: quotes, personal or political messages or opinions, references to non-District approved team or other "spirit" slogans, or other non-District approved messages on the sender's email message.

## **VI. Confidentiality.**

Employees shall use extreme caution when communicating confidential or sensitive information using E-Mail. Employees must be aware that all E-Mails sent become the property of the receiver, and that all E-Mails containing school related business may become a public record.

Employees shall exercise judgment and caution when using the "Reply," "Reply All," or "Forward" command during E-Mail correspondence to ensure that the resulting message is not delivered to unintended recipients.

Each E-Mail account shall include the following confidentiality statement in the signature area of the E-Mail message:

*Confidentiality Notice: This e-mail, including all attachments is for the sole use of the intended recipients and may contain information that confidential and privileged under federal and state laws and regulations. Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure or distribution is prohibited, unless specifically provided by federal and state laws and regulations. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender and destroy all copies of this message.*

E-mail messages that contain personally identifiable information about a student or employee shall be maintained as a confidential record and shall not be distributed or disclosed, except as permitted pursuant by federal or state laws and regulations.

#### **VII. Reporting Misuse.**

Employees shall immediately report good faith beliefs that E-Mail systems and services are being misused or receipt of any offensive E-Mail to a site administrator, the school's IT Director or Superintendent. Employees shall not forward, delete, or reply to the message in question. The Superintendent or designee shall determine how to properly preserve and/or dispose of the message.

#### **VIII. Disciplinary Consequences.**

Violation of this policy shall subject the employee to discipline, up to and including discharge or termination. Violations of state or federal laws will be reported to law enforcement officials.