

## E-MAIL POLICY

**Purpose**

The North Middlesex Regional School District (NMRSD) provides electronic mail resources for use in support of district business and educational goals. *Educational goals* are defined as activities that provide for education, career and professional development, and high quality research. The purpose of this policy is to establish acceptable use guidelines for the electronic mail system provided by NMRSD.

**Privacy, Confidentiality and Public Records Considerations**

The District will make reasonable efforts to maintain the integrity and effective operation of its electronic mail systems, but users are advised that those systems should in no way be regarded as a secure medium for the communication of sensitive or confidential information. Because of the nature and technology of electronic communication, the District can ensure neither the privacy of an individual user's use of the District's electronic mail resources nor the confidentiality of particular messages that may be created, transmitted, received, or stored thereby.

Massachusetts law provides that communications of district personnel that are sent by electronic mail may constitute "correspondence" and, therefore, may be considered public records subject to public inspection under Massachusetts Public Records Act. Any email sent to or from an NMRSD provided email system is archived for 7+ years in compliance with Massachusetts General Law (MGL), Chapter 4, Section 7(26) ([MGL c.4, § 7\(26\)](#)) and MGL Chapter 66, Section 10 ([MGL c.66, § 10](#)). Email is subject to a public records request and must be made available unless an exemption applies. To that end, it is most wise to exercise caution when sending correspondence via NMRSD email, and to use a personal email address for any business that is not district related.

All aspects of the computer, technology and communication system are the property of the school district, therefore the district has access to all files on its property.

**Permissible Uses of Electronic Mail**

Only NMRSD faculty, staff, and other persons who have received permission under the appropriate district authority are authorized users of the District's electronic mail systems and resources.

The use of any district resource for electronic mail must be related to district business and educational goals. Incidental and occasional personal use of electronic mail may occur when such use does not generate a direct cost to the District, interfere with district operations, or violate any applicable laws and/or district policies.

All school or district related electronic communications with parents, students, and community members should be conducted in a professional manner. Use NMRSD provided systems in order to ensure that all such communications are legally recorded for the protection of all parties involved.

If identification of students is deemed necessary for a particular electronic communication:

- Never discuss sensitive or confidential information through electronic communications
- When possible, students should only be identified in electronic mail by their identification number
- Use of a student's first name is permissible when in direct communication with that student's parent/guardian(s) provided no sensitive or confidential information is included.
- Use of student names in electronic mail is permissible when communicating public information among district staff, particularly when the information is relevant to school operations and/or public awards. Permissible examples include homeroom and class lists, field trip and school activity lists, requests for creation/support of student technology accounts, and announcements praising students having received public awards.
- Use of student names in electronic communications may be granted by a principal or senior administrator.

### **Prohibited Use of Electronic Mail**

- Personal use that creates a direct cost for the District is prohibited.
- The District's electronic mail resources shall not be used for personal monetary gain or for commercial purposes that are not directly related to district business.
- Sending of messages that contain derogatory, inflammatory, offensive or harassing remarks about another person's or group's sex, race, religion, national origin, disability or sexual orientation is prohibited.
- Downloading and /or transmission of software that you know is copyrighted or trademarked material is prohibited.
- Solicitation for political, religious, or other personal causes is prohibited.
- Use of electronic communications to engage in any criminal activity is prohibited.
- Construction of an electronic mail communication so it appears to be from someone else is prohibited.
- Electronic discussions which include specified sensitive or confidential information pertaining to an identified individual are prohibited.