San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools
Policy 4012.4

ORGANIZATIONAL E-MAIL POLICY

Electronic mail and other digital communication tools are essential to the daily operations of the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools (SBCSS). This policy governs the appropriate use, retention, and administration of all SBCSS-provided communication systems to ensure legal compliance, data security, and operational integrity.

Definitions

- Email refers to messages sent or received using SBCSS-managed email servers and systems, including attachments, calendar items, and any related metadata.
- SBCSS Communication Tools include email, messaging platforms, and other approved electronic systems used for official SBCSS business.
- SBCSS-Owned Technology Systems refer to any devices assigned to SBCSS employees or students for business use, including desktop computers, laptops, and mobile computing devices.
- Spam and Malicious Content refers to unsolicited or harmful electronic messages, including advertising, phishing attempts, or content containing malware or viruses.

Authorized Use

- SBCSS-provided email and communication tools are intended primarily for official business use.
- Email accounts may be issued to SBCSS employees and students. Access for consultants, contractors, partners, or volunteers must be approved by Human Resources and is subject to the same usage standards and policies as staff accounts.

Privacy

- All SBCSS messages are considered public records under the California Public Records Act. SBCSS may monitor, access, or retain communications without user notice. Employees should have no expectation of privacy when using SBCSS systems.

Retention

- All messages transmitted through SBCSS communication systems are archived for a minimum of three (3) years.
- Messages may be purged from the archive after the retention period unless legal or operational requirements mandate extended retention.
- Upon notification of pending litigation, investigation, or records request, relevant communications will be retained indefinitely until SBCSS legal counsel authorizes their release.
- Departments, in coordination with SBCSS Legal, may identify categories of communication requiring longer retention periods (e.g., financial or personnel records). These may be stored in the standard archive or in designated retention systems.
- Spam, phishing, and messages containing malicious content are automatically removed and are not retained.

- Personal messages created on SBCSS systems that are unrelated to SBCSS business may be deleted at any time but may be subject to discovery if retained.

eDiscovery

- The SBCSS Communications Department is responsible for reviewing and coordinating eDiscovery requests related to electronic communications.
- When an official request for records is received, the Communications Department will determine the scope of the request and notify the Assistant Superintendent of Technology Services or designee. Technology Services will then perform a search of SBCSS communication systems based on search parameters provided by Communications. These may include date ranges, sender and recipient information, keywords, and file types.
- All search results will be provided directly to the Communications Department for further review and response. SBCSS maintains the capability to export records in response to legal inquiries, litigation holds, or public records requests in accordance with applicable laws and policies.

User Responsibilities and Acceptable Use

- All SBCSS employees, contractors, and affiliated users are responsible for using organizational communication tools in a manner that aligns with SBCSS policies, applicable laws, and professional standards.
- Users are expected to:
    1. Use only SBCSS-approved platforms for work-related communications.
    2. Retain messages that may have administrative, personnel, fiscal, or legal significance in accordance with SBCSS retention policies.
    3. Comply with litigation hold directives issued by SBCSS Legal, Human Resources, or Risk Management.
- The following activities are prohibited:
    1. Deleting or modifying messages subject to legal hold or relevant to ongoing administrative, personnel, or legal matters.
    2. Sending unsolicited bulk communications, chain messages, or other forms of spam.
    3. Engaging in harassment, impersonation, or other inappropriate conduct via electronic communications.
    4. Using personal accounts or unauthorized platforms to conduct official SBCSS business.
    5. Sharing or distributing content that is offensive, illegal, or unrelated to the work of SBCSS.
    6. Using SBCSS communication systems for unauthorized commercial, political, or non-business-related purposes.
- Failure to adhere to this policy may result in disciplinary action in accordance with SBCSS policies and procedures.

Administration and Enforcement

- The Technology Services branch is responsible for the administration and management of SBCSS communication systems, including the archiving and retrieval of messages. The Assistant Superintendent of Technology Services, or designee will coordinate responses to litigation hold and eDiscovery requests as needed.

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