

## **District Email Information**

### **April 2011**

The District's electronic equipment and information systems are intended for professional business use in performing the duties of an employee's job.

With few exceptions, everything in government relating to the conduct of government or the performance of governmental functions, whether written, recorded, taped, or electronically stored is subject to public inspection. The following guidelines should be followed for records retention of email. For these and other reasons, while email is less formal than memoranda or letters, it should still follow the standards of good business etiquette.

1. Informal messages with no retention value and that do not relate to the functional responsibility of the recipient or sender, such as meeting notices, reminders, telephone messages and informal notes, should be deleted once their administrative purpose is served.
2. All other messages used in connection with Petaluma City Schools business constitute a public record. Such records are subject to public inspection and copying.
3. Email should not be used without authority when seeking legal advice or to discuss matters of pending litigation or other "confidential" District business, including personnel issues. In general, email is discoverable in litigation, and even deleted email is not necessarily removed from the system.
4. Email shall be used primarily for purposes related to employment and personal use should be limited.
5. Employees should ensure that no personal correspondence appears to be an official communication of the Petaluma School District since employees may be perceived as representatives of the Petaluma School District and, therefore, damage or create liability for the Petaluma School District.
6. Employees must bear in mind that email is not private, and its source is clearly identifiable. Email messages may remain part of the School District's business records long after they have been supposedly deleted.
7. Employees should not expect immediate response to their email requests. Allow three working days for employees to review and respond to an email.

#### **Right of Inspection:**

The electronic mail system is intended for business purposes. Electronic mail communications constitute public records, and the District has the right to access or monitor messages for work-related purposes, security, or to respond to public record requests. All messages should be composed with the expectation that they are public. Users shall have no expectation of privacy in email messages. Use of electronic mail shall be considered consent to District officials, managers, and other employees to inspect, use, or disclose any electronic mail or other electronic communications and/or data without further notice.

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### **Prohibition of Inappropriate Message Content:**

Electronic mail should be businesslike, courteous, and civil. All District policies, including policies prohibiting discrimination and sexual harassment, shall apply to use of email. Email should not be used for the expression of unlawful or discriminatory ill will or bias against individuals or groups, offensive material such as obscenity, vulgarity, or profanity, or other non-businesslike material. Sexually-explicit material, cursing, and name-calling are expressly prohibited.

### **Forwarding Email:**

A user forwarding a message, which originates from someone else, may not make changes to that message without clearly disclosing the exact nature of the changes and the identity of the person who made the changes.

Messages received from the Prosecuting Attorney or deputies, or private attorneys acting on behalf of the District, its officers or employees, may be privileged communications and, therefore, confidential; and these messages shall not be forwarded to non-District persons without the prior approval of the author.

### **Automatic Email Forwarding:**

To reduce domain blacklisting and to provide better service and more reliable information to its employees, the Petaluma City Schools will discontinue the policy that permits Group Wise and PCS Group Wise Web Access accounts to be auto forwarded to third party accounts.

### **Misdelivered Messages:**

If an electronic mail message comes to a user by mistake, the user should stop reading as soon as they realize the message was not meant for them and notify the sender or system administrator immediately.

### **User's Responsibility for Security:**

Users are responsible for the security of their electronic mail account password and any electronic mail that is sent via a user account. To protect a user account against unauthorized use, the following precautions should be taken:

- a. Log off from, or lock access to, the District computer before leaving it unattended. If user ID logon is left open, and someone else uses it, it will appear as if the user sent the message; and the user will be held accountable.
- b. Do not give out passwords. Users are responsible for messages sent via user account. Correspondingly, do not use or tamper with someone else's account without his/her knowledge and consent. Unauthorized use of an electronic mail account is in violation of this policy.

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### **Use of Non-District Email Accounts:**

Non-District email accounts (like AOL, Gmail, Hotmail, Comcast.net, Yahoo!) may not be used to conduct District business unless approved in advance by the Superintendent or designee. District employees are issued District email accounts and Internet addresses. Using a personal email account will open that account to legal discovery if law enforcement subpoenas it. Automatic forwarding to a non-District email account is *prohibited or discouraged?*

### **Transmission of Confidential Information:**

Confidential material must not be sent via electronic mail without authority. Email messages may be intercepted, viewed, and used for non-approved purposes, especially when corresponding via the Internet, a medium over which the District has no control.

### **Using Email for Mass Mailing:**

Users are encouraged to establish distribution lists in their contacts for multiple users to which they communicate regularly. Mass mailings that contain attachments utilize a large amount of disk space. The District uses other electronic publications to communicate information that are more efficient and cost effective.

### **Shared Decision-Making Using Email**

Shared Decisions should not routinely be done via email. On a limited basis when time is of the essence, and with the consent of the majority of the stakeholders, email may be use for shared decision-making.

### **Parent and Community Email Correspondence:**

If an employee receives a complaint from a parent or community member they should notify their supervisor. If a parent or community member emails an employee beyond a reasonable number of times, the employee should inform their supervisor.