



**NGCAA**  
NATIONAL GOLF CLUBS'  
ADVISORY ASSOCIATION



**Tel**  
01886 812943

**Fax**  
01886 812935

**Email**  
info@ngcaa.co.uk

**Website**  
www.ngcaa.co.uk

## Title: **Internet, Emailing & Social Media Template**

**This template can be downloaded for your use and help you to develop an email, internet and social media policy for your club. We advise that you also adapt this document to produce a policy for club members.**

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National Golf Clubs' Advisory Association Limited

Registered Address: The Threshing Barn, Homme Castle Barns, Shelsley Walsh, Worcestershire WR6 6RR.  
VAT No: 598 3758 66 | Company Number: 8904597 Registered in England

## **E-MAIL AND INTERNET POLICY**

### **E-mail and Internet usage**

Some employees have access to e-mail and the Internet in connection with the club's business and as part of their normal day to day duties. The purpose of these rules is to protect the Club's legal interests. Unregulated access increases the risk of employees inadvertently forming contracts through e-mail and increases the opportunity for wrongful disclosure of confidential information. In addition, carelessly worded e-mail can expose the Club to an action for libel. As such, e-mail to clients and customers must follow the Club's designated house style, which will be supplied to authorised users. Failure to follow house style is a disciplinary matter and will be dealt with under the Club's disciplinary procedure. E-mail should not be used for unsolicited correspondence or marketing campaigns and employees may not commit the Club financially by e-mail unless they have been granted a specific level of authority to do so.

Employees who are authorised users are not permitted to surf the Internet or to spend excessive time "chatting" by e-mail for personal and private purposes during their normal working hours. Employees are also prohibited from using e-mail to circulate any non-business material. Not only does excessive time spent online lead to loss of productivity and constitute an unauthorised use of the Club's time, sexist, racist or other offensive remarks, pictures or jokes sent by e-mail are capable of amounting to unlawful harassment. As "cyber bullying" is an emerging risk, employees are also prohibited from using the Club's electronic communications as a means of intimidating or bullying employees or third parties.

Employees who are discovered contravening these rules may face disciplinary action under the Club's disciplinary procedure. Depending on the seriousness of the offence, it may amount to gross misconduct and could result in the employee's summary dismissal.

Use of instant messaging systems must be expressly approved in advance by the employee's manager.

Employees must never use their work e-mail address to make orders for personal goods and services or to sell their personal goods and services. Likewise, if an employee wishes to make a complaint to the third party supplier or manufacturer about personal goods or services received, a work e-mail address must never be used under any circumstances. These are entirely personal transactions and so the employee must not hold themselves out as acting for or on behalf of the Club or must not in any way indicate that the transaction is connected to the Club.

[Employees who are authorised users are not permitted to log on to eBay (or any other online auction website), social networking and video sharing websites such as Facebook, MySpace, Bebo, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr and YouTube or use the Club's IT systems to keep a personal weblog ("blog") at any time unless authorised to do so by the Club

Logging on to sexually explicit websites or the downloading and/or circulation of pornography or other grossly offensive, illegal or obscene material or using the Internet for gambling or illegal activities constitutes gross misconduct and could render the employee liable to summary dismissal under the Club's disciplinary procedure. "Rogue" websites exist that appear harmless but instead direct the user automatically to another website that may contain inappropriate material. If this occurs, please contact your line manager immediately.

### **Social networking and video sharing websites**

When logging on to and using social networking and video sharing websites and blogs at any time, including personal use on non-Club computers outside the workplace, employees must not:

- publicly identify themselves as working for the Club, make reference to the Club or provide information from which others can ascertain the name of the Club

- write about their work for the Club - and they must ensure also that any views expressed are clearly stated to be theirs alone
- conduct themselves in a way that is detrimental to the Club or brings the Club into disrepute
- use their work e-mail address when registering on such sites or provide any link to the Club's website unless authorised to do so by the Club.
- allow their interaction on these websites or blogs to damage working relationships between employees and members of the Club
- include personal information or data about the Club's employees, contractors, suppliers, customers or clients without their express consent (an employee may still be liable even if employees, contractors, suppliers, customers or clients are not expressly named in the websites or blogs as long as the Club reasonably believes they are identifiable) - this could constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act 1998.
- make any derogatory, offensive, discriminatory or defamatory comments about the Club, its employees, contractors, suppliers, customers or members (an employee may still be liable even if the Club, its employees, contractors, suppliers, customers or clients are not expressly named in the websites or blogs as long as the Club reasonably believes they are identifiable)
- make any comments about the Club's employees that could constitute unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying contrary to the Equality Act 2010.
- disclose any trade secrets or confidential or sensitive information belonging to the Club, its employees, contractors, suppliers, customers or members or any information which could be used by one or more of the Club's competitors, for example information about the Club's work, its products and services, technical developments and staff morale
- breach copyright or any other proprietary interest belonging to the Club.

Employees should remember that social networking websites are a public forum, even if they have set their account settings at a restricted access or "friends only" level, and therefore they should not assume that their entries on any website will remain private. Employees must also be security conscious when using social networking websites and should take appropriate steps to protect themselves from identity theft, for example by restricting the amount of personal information they give out, such as date and place of birth, schools attended, family names and favourite football team. This information may form the basis of security questions and/or passwords on other websites, such as online banking.

If employees are asked to contribute to an official blog or newsfeed connected to the Club, then special rules apply and the employee will be briefed in detail about what to write.

Employees who are discovered contravening these rules, whether inside or outside the workplace, may face disciplinary action under the Club's disciplinary procedure. Depending on the seriousness of the offence, it may amount to gross misconduct and could result in the employee's summary dismissal.

### Downloading information from the Internet and file sharing

Due to our faster computer networks, employees may be tempted to make illegal downloads of material that is subject to copyright. This includes, but is not limited to, music, film and business software. As this and any subsequent file sharing of this material constitutes an infringement of copyright, it is prohibited on any Club computer. This also applies to any download or dissemination of material made outside of normal working hours. Any breach is likely to lead to disciplinary action being taken.

You may need to download documents and information from the Internet in order to undertake your job duties. You should only download documents and information that you are sure about and which is required to fulfil the job duties you are undertaking. With the rapid spread of computer viruses via the Internet, care should be taken when accessing websites that you are not familiar with or when downloading documents or information.

You must not download any programs from the Internet without the prior approval of the line manager. Some websites require additional add-in software to display the page completely. These add-ins usually provide additional sound or visual effects. Under no circumstances should these be downloaded without the prior approval of the line manager.

## E-mail and Internet monitoring

The Club reserves the right to monitor employees' internal and external e-mails and use of the Internet, both during routine audits of the computer system and in specific cases where a problem relating to excessive or unauthorised use is suspected.

The purposes for such monitoring are to:

- promote productivity and efficiency
- ensure the security of the system and its effective operation
- ensure there is no unauthorised use of the Club's time, e.g. that an employee has not been using e-mail to send or receive an excessive number of personal communications
- ensure the smooth running of the business if the employee is absent for any reason and communications need to be checked
- ensure that all employees are treated with respect and dignity at work, by discovering and eliminating any material that is capable of amounting to unlawful harassment
- ensure that inappropriate websites are not being accessed by employees
- ensure there is no breach of commercial confidentiality.

Communications of a sensitive or confidential nature should not be sent by e-mail because it is not guaranteed to be private.

When monitoring e-mails, the Club will, except in exceptional circumstances, confine itself to looking at the address and heading of the e-mails. However, where circumstances warrant it, the Club may open e-mails and access the content. In this case, the Club will avoid, if possible, opening e-mails clearly marked as private or personal.

The Club reserves the right to restrict, deny or remove e-mail or Internet access to or from any employee.

## Reading and storing e-mails

You must check your mailbox regularly during normal working hours. It is your responsibility to read and action any e-mail you receive.

The e-mail system is not to be used as a storage area. Unwanted messages should be deleted completely. Important information or files should be saved into your private or communal data areas or into e-mail folders.

If you are going to be out of the office for a day or longer and as such you will be unable to check your e-mail, you should switch on your "out of office assistant" message. E-mail received in your absence will not normally be read by other members of staff unless you have specifically requested a colleague to undertake this task. However, e-mail may need to be checked by managers for business-related reasons when the employee is absent for any reason. It may therefore be unavoidable that some personal e-mails might be read in these circumstances.

## E-mail viruses and spam

All incoming and outgoing external e-mails are checked for computer viruses and, if a virus is found, the message will be blocked. E-mails may also be checked for other criteria, for example, having an attached image file or containing offensive or inappropriate material or including a "banned" word or from a "banned" user under the criteria in the Club's spam software which indicates the message is spam. Again, the e-mail will be blocked. The Club reserves the right for the IT department to block and then read these messages to ascertain whether they are business-related.

If you receive an e-mail or data file that is in a format or comes from a source that you do not recognise, do not open the item but contact the IT department immediately. Any executable (.exe) files received by e-mail must be referred to the IT department for clearance before any other action is taken.

If you receive any unsolicited e-mails or spam that manages to bypass the Club's spam software, you must not respond in any way but you must add the sender to the list of banned users. Some spam e-mails may offer the option to opt out of receiving them. Be aware that this is sometimes used as a way by unscrupulous spammers of validating a live e-mail address.

### Temporary workers

From time to time, the Club may need to use temporary staff in order to cover busy periods or annual leave. Should any temporary worker need to use a computer with access to e-mail and the Internet as part of their job role, the manager responsible for their day-to-day supervision will be required to bring this policy and its contents to their attention.

### **Contravention of this policy**

Failure to comply with any of the requirements of this policy is a disciplinary offence and may result in disciplinary action being taken under the Club's disciplinary procedure.