



Nutfield Parish Council Email Usage Guidelines

1. OFFICIAL NPC EMAILS

All official emails need to be sent out by the Clerk unless agreed by full Council for a councillor to do so.

2. LANGUAGE FOR FORMAL EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

Official language English should be used for email correspondence which is formal in nature. Avoid using local dialects and short messaging system (sms) forms of communication. Use memo style if applicable for formal email correspondence.

3. BE CAREFUL WITH ADDRESSES

Be careful when addressing mail. There are addresses which may go to a group but the address looks like it is just one person. Know to whom you are sending. In particular verify all addresses before initiating long or personal discourse.

4. HAVE A MEANINGFUL SUBJECT LINE

Focus on one subject per message and always include a pertinent subject line for the message.

5. NAME THE RECIPIENTS

While some mailers will display a recipients' name (as opposed to just their email address) this does not always happen. In consequence it is helpful, particularly if you are sending to a group of people, to name them at the start of the email.

6. USE A SIGNATURE

Most mailers support the creation of a 'signature' which can be attached to the end of your messages. Your signature footer should include your name, position, affiliation and contact information and web address. Always include your signature at the bottom of email messages when communicating with people who may not know you personally.

7. USE OF CAPITALISATION AND EMPHASIS

Capitalize words only to highlight an important point or to distinguish a title or heading. Capitalizing whole sections of text is generally termed as SHOUTING! Remember that capitalized text is more difficult to read than mixed mode text.

8. ENRICHING MESSAGES

Be careful when using sarcasm and humor. Without face-to-face communications your joke may be viewed as criticism.

9. LANGUAGE, AND INTERNATIONAL AND CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

Remember that the recipient is a human being whose culture, language, and humor have different points of reference from your own. Remember that date formats, measurements, and idioms may not travel well. To avoid misinterpretation of dates spell out the month name: eg. 24 September 1999. "Reasonable" expectations for conduct via email depend on your relationship to a person and the context of the communication. Norms learned in a particular email environment may not apply in general to your email communication with people across the Internet. Be careful with slang or local acronyms.

10. FORMATTED MAIL MESSAGES AND THE USE OF FONT CHARACTERISTICS

Proprietary mail systems may allow the use of facilities such as bolding or including colored text. If you use these facilities consider whom you are sending the message to. The mail software they are using may not appropriately interpret such formatting, and may actually make your mail message very difficult to read (particularly if their mail program displays the control characters used for the formatting). If you send tabular information in the text of an email message using a monospaced font informed the recipient to view it with a monospaced font.

11. THE USE OF ACRONYMS

Acronyms can be used to abbreviate when appropriate, although messages that are filled with acronyms can be confusing and annoying to the reader. The following are in common use in emails

IMHO= in my humble/honest opinion, FYI = for your information, BTW = by the way, Flame = antagonistic criticism

12. FLAMING

A good rule of thumb: Be conservative in what you send and liberal in what you receive. Wait overnight to send emotional responses to messages.

13. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We usually expect email to be delivered very quickly, even across the world. However, there is a possibility of delays at all stages of the transmission via the different Internet hosts on the way. If you think the importance of a message justifies it, or the sender has explicitly requested a response, immediately reply briefly to an email message to let the sender know you got it, even if you will send a longer reply later. A long delay before reply can leave the sender thinking that you have not yet received the message.

14. REPLYING TO OR FORWARDING MESSAGES

When quoting another person, edit out whatever isn't directly applicable to your reply. Don't let your mailing software automatically quote the entire body of messages you are replying to when it's not necessary.

It is bad practice to simply reply to a message by including the entire previous message. Take the time to edit any quotations down to the minimum necessary to provide context for your reply. Nobody likes reading a long message in quotes for the third or fourth time, only to be followed by a one-line response: "Yes I agree." Check the reply address when you reply to messages. Frequently replies are sent back to the address which originated the post -which in many cases is the address of a list or group! You may accidentally send a personal response to a great many people.

In general, it's a good idea to at least check all your new mail subjects before responding to a message. Sometimes a person who asks you for help (or clarification) will send another message which effectively says "Never Mind". Also make sure that any message you respond to was directed to you. You might be cc:ed rather than the primary recipient.

Watch cc's when replying. Don't continue to include people if the messages have become a 2-way conversation.

If you are forwarding a message you've received, do not change the wording. If the message was a personal message to you and you are re-posting to a group, you should ask permission first. You may shorten the message and quote only relevant parts, but be sure you give proper attribution. The auto-reply feature found in some mailers may be useful in some situations, but quite annoying when sent to entire mailing lists. Use auto-reply with care.

15. USING MAILING LISTS

Be careful to send subscribe and unsubscribe messages to the appropriate address. It is your responsibility to learn how the lists work, and to send the correct mail to the correct place. Save the subscription messages for any lists you join. These usually tell you how to unsubscribe as well.

In general, it's not possible to retrieve messages once you have sent them. Even your system administrator will not be able to get a message back once you have sent it. This means you must make sure you really want the message to go as you have written it. If you are using a mailer with the option to send mail immediately set on, consider turning the option off. This will then give you a second chance to retrieve and modify mail for a limited time.

Some mailing lists are left open to allow anyone to mail to them, even if you are not a member of the list. Don't assume this openness is an invitation to send to the mail list. If the right to mail to the list is not obvious contact the list owner to seek permission to mail before proceeding.

When sending a message to more than one mailing list, especially if the lists are closely related, apologize for cross-posting -this ensures the recipients of multiple copies understand what has happened. If you ask a question on a list, it is usual to post a summary. When doing so, truly summarize rather than send an accumulation of the messages you receive.

If you find yourself in a disagreement with one person, make your responses to each other rather than continue to send messages to the list. If you are debating a point on which the group might have some interest, you may summarize for them later.

16. PRIVACY AND SECURITY

Whether the sender or receiver of an email message has a right to privacy is irrelevant-email can be intercepted and does record in places other than the receiver's and sender's computers. Email on Internet is not secure unless encryption is used. Never include in an email message anything that you want to keep private and confidential. Never send something that you would mind seeing on the evening news.

17. PASSWORDS

DO use a password with mixed-case letters. Do not just capitalize the first letter, but add uppercase letters in the middle. DO use a password that can be typed quickly, without having to look at the keyboard. This makes it harder for someone to steal your password by looking at your keyboard. DO use a minimum of 8 characters for your password. This makes it harder for someone to guess your password. DO change your password regularly.

DO NOT use your user id in any form (as-is, reversed, capitalized, doubled, etc) as the password. DO NOT use your first, middle or last name in any form. Do not use your initials or any nicknames you may have. DO NOT use your partner's or child's name. DO NOT use a word contained in English or foreign dictionaries, spelling lists, or other word lists. DO NOT use other information easily obtained about you. This includes license plate numbers, telephone numbers, identification numbers, the brand of your automobile, the name of the street you live on, etc. DO NOT write your password down, or store it on-line. DO NOT reveal your password to anyone – including the Clerk.

18. COPYRIGHT

Respect the copyright on material that you reproduce. Almost every country has copyright laws. Obey copyright laws and cite all quotations, references and sources.

19. THE LEGAL STATUS OF EMAIL

Remember that while email is often used as a casual form of communication it has the same status as any written communication. The laws of copyright, misrepresentation, defamation, obscenity etc., do pertain to email communication.

20. CHAIN LETTERS

Never send or forward chain letters. Chain letters are considered a form of "spamming". These messages can quickly clog an email system.

21. THE SIZE OF YOUR EMAIL, AND EMAIL ATTACHMENTS

Know how large a message you are sending, especially if you are sending to a list. Attaching graphics or video clip files, for example, may make your message so large that it cannot be delivered by some mail systems. Large files can be sent in more appropriate ways, including transfer between 'folders' in Macintosh or Windows computers. If the material is already on a Web page just quote the URL. Before attaching a Word Processor file consider whether your recipient will have appropriate software to read it.

Don't attach a Word Processor file when its only content is a few lines of (unformatted) text. Include the text in your email message instead.

22. UNACCEPTABLE USE OF EMAIL

Don't send large amounts of unsolicited information to people. Email makes people very accessible. Remember to follow chain of command procedures for corresponding with superiors. For example, don't send a complaint via email directly to the "top" just because you can.

23. ASPECTS TO CONSIDER WHEN YOU ARE UNABLE TO CHECK YOUR MAIL FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD

Consider unsubscribing from mailing lists or setting a "no mail" option (when it's available) when you cannot check your mail for an extended period. Delivery receipts, non-delivery notices, and vacation programs are neither totally standardized nor totally reliable across the range of systems connected to Internet mail. They are invasive when sent to mailing lists, and some people consider delivery receipts an invasion of privacy.

24. HOUSEKEEPING OF MAIL BOX

Users should periodically do housekeeping to their mail box (e.g., archiving their mails and compacting their mail box), This is to avoid that problem of "Mailbox exceed quota" occurring and causing the users to be unable to have access to email services.

Dated: November 2012