

SUPERIOR-GREENSTONE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

<i>Section</i>	PROGRAM	
<i>Management Guideline</i>	ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS	
<i>Applicable Policy</i>	ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS	607

Board Approved: April 28, 2003

1.0 OBJECTIVE

To provide guidelines for the use of electronic communications within the Superior-Greenstone District School Board (DSB).

2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **The Superior-Greenstone DSB Electronic Communications System.** This electronic mail and conferencing system is designed to provide rapid and efficient communication among staff at all levels in support of the Board's directive: To provide a high-quality education for the students of the Superior-Greenstone DSB region. All permanent staff will be provided with an account to send and receive electronic mail, transmit electronic documents and files and to provide access to electronic discussion areas (Conferences/Public Folders) intended to promote communication and ensure professional growth.
- 2.2 **Electronic mail (e-mail):** is the electronic transfer of messages to one or more persons. E-mail is typically a one-to-one or one-to-many communication. Mailing lists can be maintained so that repetitive mailings to many recipients can be automated. E-mail can be of two types:
- a) internal e-mail: e-mail originating from within the system, addressed to someone within the system; and
 - b) external e-mail: e-mail which either originates from or is addressed to a person or organization outside the Superior-Greenstone DSB, usually sent by means of the Internet.
- 2.3 An **Electronic Conference:** is a folder or directory on a server to which messages may be posted for reading and a response if appropriate. Responses, if the conference is structured to permit them, are typically public, so that everyone who reads the conference can read both the original posting as well as the response to it. Conferences normally have different levels of access control, allowing different groups of users to post, read and respond to the postings depending on the intent of the conference and the access privileges granted to the user or group of users.
- 2.4 An **inappropriate message**, for purposes of this policy, means a statement that it is unsuitable or unacceptable, violent or hateful, for example a negative statement by a staff member about any other staff member, student or Board official.

- 2.5 **Official Board Conferences:** (including Public Folders) are official communication conferences to which Board business messages and correspondence will be posted by authorized staff only. These messages should be read by the designated school or site staff daily. "Superior-Greenstone DSB Communications" and "Director's Notes" are examples of this type of conference. Many of these conferences will not allow the posting of responses as their role is to disseminate information rapidly and efficiently, with no necessity for discussion.
- 2.6 A **mailing list:** is a list of e-mail addresses. When an electronic mail message is addressed to a mailing list, the message is simultaneously transmitted to all those on the list. Users can create custom mailing lists, and if there is sufficient demand and resources permit, some mailing lists may be maintained centrally as public lists.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITY

Coordinator of Information Technology.

4.0 PROCEDURES

4.1 Electronic Mail Accounts

4.1.1 Account Entitlement and Update

- a) All permanent staff members are entitled to an account on the Superior-Greenstone DSB electronic communications system. Accounts will be created directly from the Human Resources database, and will normally have a standard user identification number and password determined by information held in that database, such as employee number, first name and last name.
- b) When an employee retires from the Board, he or she may request that a retiree account be created. This account will normally be active for six months. If there is no activity on the account for a period of three months, however, the account will automatically be deleted.
- c) Accounts for employees who are not permanently employed by the Board will be activated if their supervisor so requests. These accounts will remain active as long as the user has a continuing relationship with the employer. Accounts which are inactive for a period of six months will be automatically deleted.
- d) Part-time employees, occasional teachers, term employees and contractual workers are encouraged to acquire accounts, as the majority of information affecting their work will be distributed through the e-mail system.
- e) All staff will be given external (Internet) e-mail addresses attached to their internal mail accounts. Staff should be aware, however, that the reliability of external mail is frequently beyond the control of the Superior-Greenstone DSB.
- f) Every effort will be made to preserve channels of communication among the Board, management, teachers, support staff and their federations and unions. The value of clear and open communication is understood by all, and access will not be withdrawn or limited unless abuse occurs.

4.1.2 Account Holder Responsibility

- a) Account holders must abide by the guidelines for this system, the policies and guidelines of the Superior-Greenstone DSB, and other legislated guidelines concerning communication, information-sharing and confidentiality.
- b) Account holders must be professional in their conduct when communicating within this system. Proper etiquette should be observed. Slanderous, abusive, violent or hateful language directed towards individuals or the Board or its policies is unacceptable. Account holders should also be aware of, and conform to, any standards of professional communication and etiquette upheld by their unions and federations.
- c) Account holders are solely responsible for the maintenance of their personal mailboxes, including filing, printing, organizing and deleting messages, saving and printing of attachments, and tracking messages for which they are accountable.
- d) Account holders should check their mailbox as frequently as possible, and promptly delete messages from their account. This will improve system performance and responsiveness. Important messages and attachments should be filed locally, on the user's hard drive or local server drive.
- e) Confidentiality of messages on this system is limited by the willingness of the user to treat their passwords with respect. Passwords should:
 - i) never be shared with a friend or family member;
 - ii) be changed frequently;
 - iii) be arbitrary combinations of letters and numbers;
 - iv) not be the name of a son, daughter or favourite pet; and
 - v) not be saved under the "Setup" screen of the client software, especially on a computer located in a shared environment or school.
- f) Account holders will be held responsible for all violations of these guidelines occurring while they are logged into the system, including activities carried out by anyone else using their account as a result of account holder negligence or with their knowledge.
- h) There is no ultimate guarantee of confidentiality of messages on this (or any other) e-mail system. Despite the best technical efforts, messages can be inadvertently forwarded, copied inappropriately or indiscriminately replied to using the "Reply All" function. All account holders should assume that the contents of their messages may at some point be public knowledge, and treat their correspondence accordingly.
- i) Messages and attachments should be printed only if absolutely necessary. Printing uses paper unnecessarily and adds to the risk of a confidential message being made public. As well, a primary goal of this system is to eliminate paper to the greatest extent possible.
Printing messages defeats that purpose.

4.1.3 Information Technology (IT) Department Responsibility for System Availability, Reliability and Quality of Service

- a) The Superior-Greenstone DSB internal electronic mail and conferencing system will be considered a mission-critical system, with a seven-day, 24-hour service availability with the following exceptions:
 - i) daily backups performed during the period from 0100 to 0700;
 - ii) monthly scheduled maintenance (usually carried out on Saturdays);
 - iii) occasional downtime,(if possible) always pre-announced, required for critical upgrades; and
 - iv) circumstances beyond the control of staff, such as power failures, equipment failures or disasters.
- b) Internet mail depends on many factors beyond the control of the Superior-Greenstone DSB. While every effort will be made to ensure its reliability, it cannot always be guaranteed to function with the same reliability as internal systems

4.2 Official Board Conferences

- 4.2.1 As these conferences are official distribution channels for conducting Board business, the creation of new Official Board Conferences must be approved by the Superintendents of Business and Education and the Coordinator of Information Technology. The purpose of these administrative conferences, and the assignment of access privileges with regard to who can read, post and reply to these conferences, should be well defined as part of the request to create them.
- 4.2.3 Messages posted to these official conferences must include the intended recipient's position, as well as the sender's name and position.
- 4.2.4 Principals, managers and supervisors must ensure that the administrative conferences for their area or group are checked and read daily.

4.3 Conferences

- 4.3.1 Schools or outside organizations operating their own e-mail and conferencing systems are welcome to establish gateways to the Board system if they wish, on condition that:
 - a) the school-level system is administered completely by staff;
 - b) IT Department is satisfied that the gateway does not present a breach of security or confidentiality, when operated under normally foreseeable conditions; does not impede network performance in any fashion or require modification to board equipment; and
 - c) such a gateway has been approved by the IT Department.