

<b>Chapter:</b>	Technology and Facilities Management		
<b>Title:</b>	Electronic Communication and Internet Usage		
<b>Policy:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Procedure:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Review Cycle:</b> Triennial  <b>Author:</b> DO and HR	<b>Adopted Date:</b> 08.2020  <b>Review Date:</b> 07.2024	<b>Related Policies:</b> <a href="#">Information Management and Security</a> Social Media <a href="#">Standards of Conduct</a>

**Purpose:**

Hopeful Horizons (HH) has adopted the policy to establish and clarify its expectations for the appropriate use of electronic communications and the internet.

**Scope:**

This policy applies to:

- All HH Staff                       Selected HH Staff, as specified:
- HH Board Members               HH Volunteers
- Other: Contractors assigned HH technology equipment

**Policy:**

As a productivity enhancing tool, HH encourages the business use of electronic communications provided their use is in accordance with this policy.

- A. **Internet Access:** HH internet access is password protected and is provided to employees, volunteers and guests with permission. The internet access provided by HH shall be used for business purposes and is not intended for entertainment or other personal use.
- B. **Electronic Communication, Email, Internet Usage:** This policy applies to all electronic communications, equipment and devices including, but not limited to, telephones, e-mail, voice mail, instant messaging, internet, fax, computers, and servers. HH provided technology is intended for business purposes.
- C. **Professional Communications:** All communications from HHs' equipment, devices and email address shall be made in a professional manner consistent with the organization's mission, vision, values, ethical standards and policies and procedures of the organization.
- D. **General Prohibited Activities:**
  1. **Copyright violations:** This includes the act of pirating software, music, books and/or videos or the use of pirated software, music, books and/or videos and the illegal duplication and/or distribution of information and other intellectual property that is under copyright
  2. **Illegal activities:** Use of HHs' technology equipment and/or information resources for or in support of illegal purposes as defined by federal, state or local law is prohibited
  3. **Political activities:** The use of HH technology equipment and/or information resources for political activities is prohibited
  4. **Harassment:** HH prohibits the use of computers, e-mail, voice mail, instant messaging, texting and the internet in ways that are disruptive, offensive to others, or harmful to morale

5. **Junk E-mail:** All communications using HHs' technology equipment and information resources shall be purposeful and appropriate. Distributing "junk" mail, such as chain letters, advertisements, or unauthorized solicitations is prohibited

E. **Electronic Communications with Clients:** Electronic communication and social media present the potential for inappropriate behavior, increased access to vulnerable clients, and privacy violations. Employees, volunteers, and clients participating in HHs' programs, events, and activities shall adhere to the following electronic communication guidelines:

1. Do not engage in behavior or comments that are or could be construed by any observer to be harsh, abusive, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
2. Do not engage in personal attacks, sexually oriented conversations, or discussions about sexual activity.
3. Be a positive role model by exhibiting professionalism in all interactions; portray an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact, and maturity.
4. Only program-related messaging may be communicated electronically between employees and volunteers of the organization and clients and/or their parents/guardians. Such communication should generally occur during standard business hours using approved email or communication platforms.
5. Employees and volunteers are prohibited from sending private messages to clients and/or replying to private messages from a client. If a client attempts to privately communicate with an employee or volunteer electronically, their supervisor must be notified immediately.
6. Personal social networking profiles and/or blogs of employees and volunteers shall be private and not shared with clients. Employees and volunteers with profiles on social networking sites shall not request to be "friends" with or follow clients or approve friend or follow requests from clients.
7. Employees and volunteers may not engage in electronic communication or social media contact with other family members or friends of clients except parents/guardians.
8. Never reveal sensitive or confidential information, including identifiable details or photos of a consumer without written consent from them and/or their parent/guardian.
9. Employees and volunteers may not post or share on their personal social media accounts any photographs or videos of clients participating in the organization's programs.
10. Employees and volunteers may not post or share inappropriate photos or comment on photos of clients.
11. Employees and volunteers engaging in social media and online communication become a public figure associated with the organization and are responsible to help protect the organization and its clients.
12. Employees and volunteers must adhere to uniform standards of electronic communication and social media use as outlined HHs' Social Media policy.
13. Clients and parents/guardians may request in writing that a client not be contacted through any form of electronic communication by an employee or volunteer of the organization.

F. **Administrative Access and Monitoring:** Generally, while it is not the practice of HH to monitor the content of routine electronic communication, HH is responsible for servicing and protecting the organization's equipment, networks, data, and resource availability and therefore may be required to access and/or monitor electronic communications from time to time with or without notice.

HH reserves the right, at its discretion, to review any employee’s files or electronic communications to the extent necessary to ensure all electronic media and services are used in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations and HH policies. Employees should structure all electronic communication with recognition of the fact that the content could be monitored, and that any electronic communication could be forwarded, intercepted, printed or stored by others.

- G. Policy Violations: Violations of this policy including any improper use of HH provided technology equipment is subject to discipline up to and including discharge.

**Communication and Training:**

The Board shall receive a copy of the policy at the time of periodic review and will have an opportunity to ask clarifying questions during the approval process. Employees and volunteers shall receive notice of the Board’s policy review and approval including notice of any substantive changes. The notice will provide a link to the policy located on the HH website.

**Definitions:**

1. Private: Actions, activities, communications not associated work or cases.
2. Technology Equipment: technology assets including computers, servers, printers, monitors, hard drives, memory and storage devices.

**Other Related Materials:**

NA

**References/Legal Authority:**

[Technology and Information Management, Risk Prevention and Management Standards \(RPM\) 4, Council on Accreditation, 2023.](#)

**Change Log:**

Date of Change	Description of Change	Responsible Party
3.2024	Updates the policy to the new template; provides additional clarification to the policy expectations; adds communication & training, definitions and resources.	N. Miller, Prog. Eval. Consultant in consultation with J. Brown, Dir of Operations and R. Lucovich, HR Spec.
07.2024	Updates the policy to address an insurance audit and related compliance requirements including standards for electronic communication with clients.	N. Miller, Prog. Eval. Consultant