University Policy 600.03
E-MAIL

Responsible Administrator: Vice President for Planning, Assessment and Information Services
Responsible Office: Office of Information Technology
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Policy Statement

The e-mail system at Claflin University is an official means of communication. Emails are routinely sent to the "Claflin University Family" and the Claflin University "Student Body" and/or other subgroups of individuals affiliated with the University. It is the policy of Claflin University to ensure appropriate, safe, and effective e-mail use.

Statement of Purpose

This policy is intended to help Claflin University to provide a convenient means to communicate within and outside of the University and to protect the security of the University's computer network.

Applicability

This e-mail policy is applicable to all administrators, faculty, staff, and students at Claflin University.

DEFINITIONS

1. Auto Responder - A predetermined response to anyone who sends an email to a certain address. Employees who will not have access to email for an extended period of time commonly use auto responder to notify senders of their absence.
2. "The Claflin University Family" **-** E-mail recipients including University employees and students.
3. Data Leakage - (also called data loss) refers to data that is pilfered in small amounts or otherwise removed from the network or computer systems. Leakage is sometimes malicious; other times, used inadvertently by users with good intentions.
4. Chain E-mail – An e-mail which in the body or the subject requests the recipient(s) to forward the e-mail to multiple persons.
5. E-mail - (short for electronic mail) refers to electronic communication sent between networked computer users and/or between networked and other users.

6. Encryption - The process of encoding data with an algorithm so that it is unintelligible and secure.
7. Spam **-** Unsolicited bulk e-mail which normally includes advertisements, but which can include malware, links to infected websites, or other malicious or objectionable content.
8. The "Student Body" – E-mail recipients including all Claflin University students.

GUIDELINES

E-mail users at Claflin University are strongly encouraged to use personal and professional courtesies and considerations in e-mails. University management has established general guidelines for the use of the e-mail system. However, because these guidelines do not encompass many possible situations, it is ultimately at the discretion of University management to determine appropriate and inappropriate e-mail usage. The University's guidelines under respective headings follow.

Appropriate E-mail Usage includes (but is not limited to):

- Use related to the University's education mission;
- Use for the purpose of or in support of educational research; and
- Use related to the administrative and other support activities of the University.

Inappropriate E-mail Usage includes (but is not limited to):
- Use which violates Federal, South Carolina, and other laws and/or University policies;
- Sending or forwarding chain e-mails;
- Sending or forwarding e-mails which harass or intimidate;
- Sending or forwarding spam, solicitations, junk mail, threats, or pyramid schemes;
- Sending or forwarding information of a pornographic, immoral or obscene nature;
- Sending or forwarding the illegal download of music and/or literary material;
- Sending or forwarding e-mails which may cause embarrassment, and/or damage to the reputation or other harm to the University.
- Sending or forwarding e-mails that may cause disruption to the workplace environment or which may create a hostile workplace. (This includes sending emails that are intentionally inflammatory, or that include information not conducive to a professional work environment.)
- Using the University's e-mail system for commercial use.

Other Relevant E-mail Usage includes (but is not limited to):

1. **Auto Responder Feature** - As a means to provide good customer service, University management recommends the use of the auto responder feature if the user will be out of the office for a minimum of a workday. The auto-response should notify the sender that the user is out of the office, the date of the user's return, and who the sender should contact if immediate assistance is needed.

2. **Confidential Data** – E-mail is an **insecure** means of communication. The University requires that any e-mail containing confidential information, regardless of whether the recipient is internal or external to the University network, be encrypted. A user should consult personnel in the Office of Information Technology regarding the encryption of confidential data.

3. **Data Leakage** - E-mail poses a particular risk to the control of the University's data. Unauthorized e-mailing of University data, confidential or otherwise, to external e-mail accounts for the purpose of saving this data external to the University's systems is prohibited. If a user needs access to information from external systems (such as from home or while traveling), rather than e-mailing the data to a personal account or otherwise removing it from the University's systems, the user should notify his or her supervisor who in turn will notify the Office of Information Technology.

4. **E-mail Contents** – University e-mail users should not open e-mails that appear suspicious. If a user is particularly concerned about an e-mail, or believes that it contains illegal content, he or she should notify his or her supervisor.

5. **E-mail Deletion** - To reduce the University's need to store and to backup unnecessary email messages, University management encourages users to periodically delete e-mails which are no longer needed. However, the University strictly prohibits deleting e-mails in an attempt to hide a violation of a law, a violation of University policy, or which may be relevant to an active investigation or litigation.

6. **E-Mail Subject Line** – As a means to ensure good customer service and to ensure that e-mails get appropriate attention, University management recommends completion of the e-mail subject line to reflect the nature of the e-mail.

7. **Mass E-mails** – Only persons authorized by the Office of Information Technology at Claflin University can send e-mails to large segments of the University's population, such as all staff, faculty, or the student body.

8. **Personal E-mail Use** - Personal use of the University's e-mail system is permitted as long as such usage does not negatively impact the University's computer network and/or the user's job performance.

9. **E-mails to Multiple Recipients –** The clarity of communications is important. Users should use caution in sending e-mail to make sure that all recipients included in an e-mail are necessary; for example, some recipients may need to be aware of parts of an e-mail but not the e-mail in its entirety; in such cases, it may be beneficial to verbally communicate with those individuals rather than communicating through e-mail.
10. **Opening E-mail Attachments** - Viruses, Trojans, and other malware can easily be delivered as an e-mail attachment. University users should be careful when opening attachments that are unexpected and/or from unknown sources.
11. **"Reply All" E-Mail Feature –** E-mail users should use the "reply all" e-mail feature sparingly. The feature should not be used if only the original sender(s) or particular (not all) persons need to receive the reply.
12. **Sending E-mails** - Careful sending of an e-mail will help the University avoid the unintentional disclosure of sensitive or non-public information. An e-mail must be addressed and sent carefully. Users must take extreme caution when typing in addresses, particularly when email address auto-complete features are enabled.
13. **Sending Large E-mails** - E-mail systems are not designed to transfer large files and as such e-mails should not contain attachments of excessive file size. University management recommends that e-mail users limit attachments to 10 megabytes or less.

14. **The Three Email Rule - If you exchange more than three e-mails on a topic, call the recipient; as appropriate, consider visiting the recipient.**

Management's Rights and Responsibilities Regarding E-mails

Computer use (including use of the e-mail system) at Claflin University is a privilege, not a right. University management has the right to deny computer use to individuals who have not complied with the University's Computer Use Policy (Policy Number 600.01) or this e-mail policy.

The University owns and maintains all legal rights to its e-mail system and its computer network. University rights may include but are not limited to transmission and storage of file messages. This may include the interception and review of any e-mails, or other messages sent or received, inspection of data stored on personal file directories, hard disks, and removable media.

When a user leaves the University, or his or her email access is officially terminated for another reason, the University will disable the user's access to the account by password change, disabling the account, or another method. The University is under no obligation to block the account from receiving e-mail, and may continue to forward inbound email sent to that account to another user, or

set up an auto-response to notify the sender that the user is no longer employed by the University.

Any individual found to have violated this policy is subject to disciplinary action which may include suspension, restriction of access, or more severe penalties up to and including termination of employment. Where illegal activities are suspected, the University may report such activities to the applicable authorities. If any provision of this policy is found to be unenforceable or voided for any reason, such invalidation will not affect any remaining provisions, which will remain in force.

An individual who has questions about this e-mail policy should contact the University's Office of Information Technology.

E-mail Use/Etiquette

E-mail has a unique protocol related to specifics such the type of lettering. For example, using all CAPS in an e-mail is perceived as shouting.

The following **suggested references** may assist e-mail users at Claflin University regarding the protocol for sending and receiving e-mails in the workplace.

- www.**email**replies.com/ (E-mail Etiquette)
- **email**.about.com/od/**email**netiquette/tp/core_netiquette.htm (E-mail Etiquette)

In addition, many other references are available on the internet.