

Internet, Email and Social Media Safety Policy

Who is covered by this policy?

All members of staff, volunteers, trustees and sub-contractors while acting for Suffolk Artlink.

What is covered by this policy?

This policy clarifies what is and is not acceptable behaviour with regard to internet, emails and any forms of social media, including X, Facebook and Instagram.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect Suffolk Artlink's staff, volunteers, trustees and sub-contractors from abuse, honest mistakes and harm, and the subsequent consequences of these things.

Context

The internet is considered a form of publication, which means that both words and pictures posted on the internet can be judged libellous and Suffolk Artlink may find itself liable for the action of its staff.

The internet is legally considered a public place, and as such it is an offence to publish or distribute obscene material; this includes pornographic material and material likely to cause personal offence.

The policy

Suffolk Artlink staff must remember that all internet activity can be logged by their device, Suffolk Artlink's internet server, Suffolk Artlink's Internet Service Provider (ISP) and by the ISPs of any sites visited. This information is legally available to the police (among others) and will be traceable back to Suffolk Artlink. Similarly, all email can be traced, intercepted and recorded by third parties. Email should be treated like a postcard: it is not a private or secure means of communication.

Use of the internet

- Suffolk Artlink understands that staff may use work equipment to access the internet for personal reasons, but staff must keep such access reasonable and may have this privilege summarily revoked if, in the opinion of the line manager, it is being abused.

- Staff are not permitted to knowingly distribute or access any material which discriminates or encourages discrimination or harassment on the grounds of race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, age, nationality, religion, disability or any other characteristic protected by the Equality Act 2010. To do so may lead to disciplinary action.

- As required by the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR) staff must not disclose or transmit personal data other than their own unless in accordance with Suffolk Artlink's Data Protection Policy.

- Staff are not permitted to access illegal, obscene or offensive material on the internet while in a professional capacity or otherwise representing Suffolk Artlink.

- Staff are not permitted to access illegal, obscene or offensive material on the internet using Suffolk Artlink's equipment.

- If staff find that they have accessed such material unintentionally, they must leave the website immediately. They should also inform line manager as soon as possible to ensure that such accidental access has not put the organisation's IT security at risk.

- Under usual circumstances, the internet should be used for reference only.

- Staff, volunteers, trustees and sub-contractors must not save Suffolk Artlink's files or material on their desktops. Everything must be saved under the folders backed up to the cloud and the charity's server. If this is not possible, then files must only ever be saved on the desktop temporarily and deleted once the work is complete. All Suffolk Artlink's material is kept on synced to cloud-based storage, and a member of Suffolk Artlink's team can access it for those people who cannot do so.

- Staff may not publish or distribute any obscene, offensive or defamatory messages online, via email or on any form of social media.

Use of email

- All staff are expected to check their email as often as practicable but no less than twice a day on work days.

- The sending and receiving of personal emails using Suffolk Artlink email addresses is not permitted. Personal emails, if within Suffolk Artlink's system, are not private and can be accessed by Suffolk Artlink and/or its sub-contractors.

- Any suspicious emails should either be immediately deleted or forwarded to the General Manager for investigation.

Use of social media

- Any use of social media by a member of Suffolk Artlink's staff which associates them formally with Suffolk Artlink must comply with the guidelines for the use of the internet above.

- If you want a social media account formally associated with Suffolk Artlink, this must be with permission from the Director, notified to the General manager, and comply with Suffolk Artlink's guidelines. Any such social media accounts will be accessible to Suffolk Artlink. Formal association with Suffolk Artlink includes, for example, using a handle such as @suffolkartlink or @suffolk_artlink or mentioning your job title or place of work in your social media details.

- You should note that if any of your personal social media accounts put the brand and reputation of Suffolk Artlink, its staff or any associates at risk, you may face disciplinary action and may be dismissed.
- Suffolk Artlink does not permit any of its staff to discuss Suffolk Artlink's business, colleagues or associates on social media without express permission.

The Director and General Manager have the right to monitor any internet, social media or email use by Suffolk Artlink's staff but will only do so in order to protect both Suffolk Artlink and its employees.

Any breaches of the policy may result in investigation and disciplinary procedure.

This policy is not a definitive statement. Suffolk Artlink expects you to exercise common sense and good judgement, and to at all times conduct yourself in a manner that will not cause harm to Suffolk Artlink or its staff and in accordance with the spirit of this policy statement.

6. Monitoring and Review

The Board of Trustees will review this policy triennially.

Date	Signed	Role
20/07/2026	Alistair Winch	Company Secretary on behalf of the Board of Trustees