

SWANSCOMBE & GREENHITHE TOWN COUNCIL  
**ACCEPTABLE IT USAGE POLICY.**

(This Policy was reviewed by the full Council at the Town Council meeting held on 14 May 2025, minute 20/25 -26.)

This Acceptable Usage Policy covers the security and use of all Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council's information and IT equipment. It also includes the use of email, internet, voice, and mobile IT equipment. This policy applies to all Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council employees, Councillors, contractors, and agents (hereafter referred to as 'individuals').

This policy applies to all information, in whatever form, relating to Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council business activities worldwide, and to all information handled by Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council relating to other organisations with whom it deals. It also covers all IT and information communications facilities operated by Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council or on its behalf.

### **Computer Access Control – Individual's Responsibility**

Access to the Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council IT systems is controlled by the use of User IDs and passwords. All User IDs and passwords are to be uniquely assigned to named individuals and consequently, individuals are accountable for all actions on the Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council IT systems.

#### Individuals must not:

- Allow anyone else to use their user ID/token and password on any Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council IT system.
- Leave their user accounts logged in at an unattended and unlocked computer.
- Use someone else's user ID and password to access Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council's IT systems.
- Leave their password unprotected (for example writing it down on a 'post it note' and leaving it stuck to the computer or laptop screen).
- Perform any unauthorised changes to Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council's IT systems or information.
- Attempt to access data that they are not authorised to use or access.
- Exceed the limits of their authorisation or specific business need to interrogate the system or data.
- Connect any non-Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council authorised device to the Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council network or IT systems unless authorisation has been sought and provided by Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council Management.
- Store Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council data on any non-authorised Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council equipment.
- Give or transfer Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council data or software to any person or organisation outside Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council without the authority of Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council Management.

Line managers must ensure that individuals are given clear direction on the extent and limits of their authority regarding IT systems and data.

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## **Internet and email Conditions of Use**

Use of Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council internet and email is intended for business use. Personal use is permitted where such use does not affect the individual's business performance, is not detrimental to Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council in any way, not in breach of any term and condition of employment and does not place the individual or Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council in breach of statutory or other legal obligations.

All individuals are accountable for their actions on the internet and email systems.  
Individuals must not:

- Use the internet or email for the purposes of harassment or abuse.
- Use profanity, obscenities, or derogatory remarks in communications.
- Access, download, send, or receive any data (including images), which Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council considers offensive in any way, including sexually explicit, discriminatory, defamatory or libellous material.
- Use the internet or email to make personal gains or conduct a personal business.
- Use the internet or email to gamble.
- Use the email systems in a way that could affect its reliability or effectiveness, for example distributing chain letters or spam.
- Place any information on the Internet that relates to Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council, alter any information about it, or express any opinion about Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council, unless they are specifically authorised to do this.
- Send unprotected sensitive or confidential information externally.
- Forward Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council mail to personal (non-Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council) email accounts (for example a personal Hotmail account).
- Make official commitments through the internet or email on behalf of Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council unless authorised to do so.
- Download copyrighted material such as music media (MP3) files, film, and video files (not an exhaustive list) without appropriate approval.
- In any way infringe any copyright, database rights, trademarks, or other intellectual property.
- Download any software from the internet without prior approval of the IT Department.

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## **Clear Desk and Clear Screen Policy**

To reduce the risk of unauthorised access or loss of information, Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council enforces a clear desk and screen policy as follows:

- Personal or confidential business information must be protected using security features
- Computers must be logged off/locked or protected with a screen locking mechanism controlled by a password when unattended.
- Care must be taken to not leave confidential material on printers or photocopiers.
- All business-related printed matter must be disposed of using confidential waste bins or shredders.

## **Working Off-site**

It is accepted that laptops and mobile devices will be taken off-site. The following controls must be applied:

- Equipment and media taken off-site must not be left unattended in public places and not left in sight in a car.
- Laptops must be carried as hand luggage when travelling.
- Information should be protected against loss or compromise when working remotely (for example at home or in public places).
- Care should be taken with the use of mobile devices such as laptops, mobile phones, smartphones and tablets. They must be protected at least by a password or a PIN code.

## **Mobile Storage Devices**

Mobile devices such as memory sticks, CDs, DVDs, and removable hard drives must be used only in situations when network connectivity is unavailable or there is no other secure method of transferring data. Only Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council authorised mobile storage devices must be used, when transferring sensitive or confidential data.

## **Software**

Employees must use only software that is authorised by Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council on Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council's computers. Authorised software must be used in accordance with the software supplier's licensing agreements. All software on Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council computers must be approved and installed by the Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council IT Contractor (MPR-IT).

## **Individuals must not:**



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Store personal files such as music, video, photographs, or games on Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council IT equipment.

## **Viruses**

The IT Contractor (MPR-IT) has implemented centralised, automated virus detection and virus software updates within the Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council IT System. All PCs have antivirus software installed to detect and remove any virus automatically.

### Individuals must not:

- Remove or disable anti-virus software.
- Attempt to remove virus-infected files or clean up an infection, other than using approved Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council anti-virus software and procedures.

## **Telephony (Voice) Equipment Conditions of Use**

Use of Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council voice equipment is intended for business use only. Individuals must not use Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council voice facilities for sending or receiving private communications on personal matters, except in exceptional circumstances. All non-urgent personal communications should be made at an individual's own expense using alternative means of communications

### Individuals must not:

- Use Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council voice system for conducting private business.
- Make hoax or threatening calls to internal or external destinations.
- Accept reverse charge calls from domestic or international operators unless it is for business use.

## **Actions upon Termination of Contract / No longer a Councillor**

All Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council equipment and data, for example laptops and mobile devices including telephones, smartphones, USB memory devices and CDs/DVDs, must be returned to Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council at termination of contract or within 7 days of when a person stops being a Councillor.

All Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council data or intellectual property developed or gained during the period of employment remains the property of Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council and must not be retained beyond termination or reused for any other purpose.

## **Monitoring and Filtering**

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All data that is created and stored on Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council computers is the property of Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council.

IT system logging will take place where deemed appropriate, and investigations will be commenced where reasonable suspicion exists of a breach of this or any other policy. Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council has the right (under certain conditions) to monitor activity on its systems, including internet and email use, to ensure systems security and effective operation, and to protect against misuse. Any monitoring will be carried out in accordance with audited, controlled internal processes, the UK Data Protection Act 1998, the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and the Telecommunications (Lawful Business Practice Interception of Communications) Regulations 2000 and the 2018 GDPR.

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

- Computer Misuse Act 1990
- Data Protection Act 1998
- GDPR 2018

It is your responsibility to report suspected breaches of security policy without delay to your line management, the IT contractor, or your Data Protection Officer.

All breaches of information security policies will be investigated. Where investigations reveal misconduct, disciplinary action may follow in line with Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council disciplinary procedures.