**Email Guidance for Children’s Services Social Care Staff**



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| **Practice Note:** | Email Guidance  |
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The purpose of this guidance is to support the forming of relationships when using email communication, as well as reducing errors in sending emails to unintended recipients.

Remember a conversation often works better; so please use Teams calls or face to face conversations when you can. Immediate responses should not be expected from email communication; if it is urgent, then use phone calls instead.

1. **Upload your Outlook profile photograph**

Upload your Outlook profile photograph to personalise your emails. This helps new starters in learning who other members of the service are. In addition, adding photos helps to reduce accidental sending of emails to the wrong person, as the photo is a quick and easy check to know who you are sending the message to.

Open Outlook, select ‘File’, go to ‘Info’, and then under the profile picture icon, select ‘Change’. You will then be asked to sign in – use your email address and Windows network password to continue. A page will open which will allow you to upload your photograph, selecting the ‘Upload photo’ option. Please see the attached guidance for step-by-step guidance.

1. **Use a clear, professional subject line**

Show your recipient clearly what the email is about, and what the email will cover. A subject line that is clear and to the point will make it easier for the recipient to track through their inbox and prioritise communication.

1. **Proof read emails**

Proof read emails before sending them to ensure there are no spelling errors or grammatical errors. Ignoring these errors can compromise professionalism and credibility. Make sure you have attached or linked any relevant documents noted in your email. Check you are not forwarding long email trails, particularly where this could be a breach of data protection.

1. **Reply to emails**

Replying to emails is good etiquette, especially if the sender is expecting a response. If you are unable to give the sender a full response immediately, acknowledge you have received the email and will get back to the sender at a later date.

Be cautious about replying to all, particularly where this could result in a breach of data protection.

1. **Use the appropriate level of formality**

Begin with ‘Dear -----‘, and use ‘please’ and ‘thank you’ where necessary. Avoid over-using exclamation marks and capital letters – this can impact upon the tone of the email.

1. **Automatic Replies (out of office)**

Automatic replies should only be used when you are out of the office for a full day or more and will not be checking your emails, for example when on training or on annual leave. The message should include the date you are out of the office, the date you plan to return to work, and a contact for people who need a more immediate response. The following can be used as an example:

*I am out of the office from 22nd May 2023 and will return to work on 29th May 2023. If support is needed before I return, please contact the team at ------------------. If you require a more immediate response, then please contact -------------------.*

1. **Email signatures**

Only corporate messages should be added to your email signature.