



EMAIL COMMUNICATION POLICY

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Introduction

Diversional Therapy Australia (DTA) is committed to professional communications in its administration and management.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

- To convey a more appropriate image for our association through email communication.
- To ensure DTA generates efficient emails get to the point and are more effective.
- It shows respect for your fellow email users.

Authorisation

Renee Dunne
DTA Secretary

Principles

Our fundamental principles in administration and management of email communication is to present the most professional and efficient practices that lie within our technological and financial constraints.

Policy

To ensure good email communication DTA has adopted these principles:

1. Use a signature and adopt the following format for your signature

Mary Smith
President
Diversional Therapy Australia
T: 02 9887 5035
E: enquiries@diversionaltherapy.org.au
W: www.diversionaltherapy.org.au

2. Be concise and to the point

Email is harder to read than paper communication, so shorter emails are more likely to be read than long ones. Sentences should be no longer than 15-20 words. However when writing your email consider the tone in which the recipient will read your email. If emails are too short they have the potential to be considered rude, curt or dismissive to the recipient.

3. Respond to all questions

Answer all questions in the original email; otherwise unnecessary time will be wasted through emails going backwards and forwards. Also try to pre-empt other relevant questions.

If a reply is required it should preferably occur within 24 hours. If you require more time for the response, send an email indicating this. People are generally more patient when they are kept informed. Even if you have nothing to add or no comments to make, respond by stating this to the person.

4. Assume that email is not secure

Unless you are using an encryption device, you should assume that mail on the Internet is not secure. So never use email to transmit sensitive information, or to discuss confidential information.

5. Use appropriate layout, spelling and grammar.

Use short paragraphs and blank lines between each paragraph.

If your program has a spelling option, why not use it? Poor spelling or grammar is difficult to read and can totally change the meaning of the text. It also gives a poor impression of the association.

Formatting should be used with care. Remember when using formatting in your emails that the recipient might not be able to view the same formatting or the same fonts.

6. Indicate a meaningful subject and keep the message thread

When replying to an email you must include the original mail in your reply so that the recipient knows what you are replying to. So click 'Reply' rather than 'new mail'.

For emails that have been sent to all members of the Board for review or response "reply to all" must be used and this can be listed in the 'To' line of the email.

For emails that have been sent to Board members and other members or non members outside of association 'Senders', 'Forwarder' and 'Repliers' need to use the BCC line of the email to protect the privacy of others on the email.

7. Read the email before you send it & Disclaimers

By reading through the email in the eyes of the recipient, before you send it, you can make adjustments resulting in a clearer message, and hopefully less spelling or grammatical errors. This a great opportunity for you to reflect on the tone language used within the email to ensure the recipient does not misread your response.

For Board members, the legal disclaimers etc are unnecessary in the normal course of their dealings.

8. Rich text and HTML

Be aware that when you send an email in rich text or HTML format the sender might only be able to receive plain text emails. If this is the case the recipient will receive the message as a .txt attachment. Also be considerate of the size of the email sent and any 'download' files attached to the email. Remember that your recipients have to pay for any download affected through receiving the email.

9. Do not overuse Reply to All

Though we have stated previously that within the Board the 'Reply to All' must be used, only use 'Reply to All' if you really need your message to be read by everyone who received the original message.

10. Do not overuse URGENT and IMPORTANT or the high priority option

Only use Urgent and Important if the message really is such. By overusing this, or the high priority button, just like the boy who cried wolf, it will lose its function when you really need it.

11. Do not attach unnecessary files

Large attachments can annoy other Board members and most Individual Service Providers have size limit on emails. Most will not accept or send emails larger than 10MB. Only send attachments when they are productive. Ensure you have a good virus scanner in place as other Board members will not be happy if you send an email full of viruses.

12. Do not write in capitals

In emails, any words written in upper case are shouted and taken in the context of an aggressive tone. Keep your email quiet and use upper and lower case as you would in writing a letter.

13. Do not forward chain letters

As we are a voluntary association and the amount of emails received by Board members are already extensive, it is strongly recommended that chain letters not be circulated.

14. Do not ask to recall a message

It is most likely that your message has already been received when you realise that you did not mean to send it. The best solution is to send an email to say that the email was sent in error.

15. Do not copy a message or attachment without permission

Please be careful you need to ask permission first (unless granted within the text of the email), you might be infringing copyright laws.

16. Do not forward emails that are libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene

Even as a joke you must never make, or forward, any libelous, sexist or racially discriminating comments in emails.

17. Using emoticons and abbreviations

When communicating in person you use visual cues and tone of voice to receive a clearer message. Since there are not visual or auditory cues with email, emoticons can be used to clarify what you mean. These

should be used with care in emails to colleagues and should not be used in emails to persons outside of the Board. Here are some examples:

:-) Smile

;-) Wink

:-(Frown (anger or displeasure), or sad

:-/ Perplexed

Abbreviations should not be used in any business emails.

Responsibility

The Board is responsible for the implementation and regular review of this policy.

All Board members, casual, permanent and contract staff and volunteers are responsible for adhering to this policy.