

FIDDLEHEADS FOOD COOP
GUIDELINES FOR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Approved July 17, 2012

Revisions September 30, 2014

1. WHEN BOARD MEMBERS SHOULD **NOT** USE EMAIL

- If there is a need for a discussion prior to making a decision, there is a need for an in person meeting.
- If confidential information will be distributed, there is a need for a meeting.

2. WHEN BOARD MEMBERS SHOULD USE EMAIL

- To share factual information such as logistics, meeting details, documents. Use .pdf format to share final documents.
- To add items to the meeting agenda.
- To communicate personal/professional events not directly related to board work but which may be of interest. Use OPT at the beginning of the subject line to let board members know this is not a board obligation.

3. EMAILING TO BOARD VS MEMBERS

- Items directly related to board work are sent to board members only
- Items of general interest can be emailed to a broader audience
- Items emailed to board members by coop members should be forwarded to the board president to be included in the next meeting agenda, not discussed over email.

4. HOW TO WRITE SUBJECT LINES

- Always include a subject line and make the subject line concise.
- If your email comprises multiple topics, consider breaking it into multiple messages.
- Include important information such as meeting dates.

5. HOW TO REPLY

- Use Reply when answering a question of attendance or expressing thanks.
- Use Reply All when your reply is useful to every recipient or you have something to add which all the recipients need to see.
- Be thoughtful about copying the entire board.
- When RSVP appears on the subject line, a response is needed.
- When NRR appears in the subject line, no reply is needed.

6. COMMUNICATION BASICS

- Be concise: the fewer words, the lower the probability of misunderstanding. More than three paragraphs is probably better as a conversation. Make each message in the reply chain shorter than the preceding one.
- Take responsibility: assume every communication is made with good intention.
- Practice non-violence: observe before judging, respect feelings, identify needs.
- Focus on task, not relationship issues.
- Remember email does not work for conveying emotion or humor.

7. NO CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS.

- Before sending a message, let the message rest a few minutes and then reread for unclear content and grammar. Count to 10 before you ‘flame.’
- Good communication takes awareness and practice!