

Email



What about it?

Email. It's your go-to resource for searchable information and everything important, right? You can scroll through your inbox to refresh your memory of recent discussions and decisions. You can search for past conversations when you need to recall something specific. Email may also be your substitute for water cooler conversations; you can keep up with your mates without leaving your seat! Yes, email is lots of things to lots of people....but did you know that school board emails are considered organizational *records* and, as such, are subject to legislation governing all school boards?

Know What to Keep

Not every email in your inbox is considered a business record.

- ✓ Are you or your department responsible for the retention of the information in the e-mail?
- ✓ Is the e-mail the most current or only record of this information?
- ✓ Does the e-mail provide evidence of a board/school decision, accountability, or provide support for transparency?

If the answer is yes to all of these questions, the e-mail record should be retained as per the board's retention schedule based on its content.

Sort Your Email

Transitory: short term value (e.g., meeting date, holiday memo), emails you have been copied on, information made obsolete by new information. You can delete these.

Reference: emails you may want to keep because of their reference value to you (e.g., instructions on submitting mileage claims). Keep them until you no longer need them.

Personal: for communicating to colleagues informally and outside of a work context. You can delete these.

Challenge: Take 10 minutes and see how many emails you can sort into *records*, *transitory*, *reference* and *personal*. See how many can be deleted.

3 Things to Know



1. Records management rules apply to your emails. That means that business-related emails (emails of value to the board because they document how decisions are made and how we function) need to be organized so they can be easily retrieved; they need to be retained (i.e., not deleted) according to the applicable document retention schedule.
2. Your emails are subject to FOI (Freedom of Information) requests and can be requested by a member of the public. For example, someone could file a request with the Board for all email conversations about an event that took place or an administrative decision that was made in a school, or a parent can request copies of all emails about their child or emails in which the parents themselves are mentioned.
3. Even if you use a personal email account to discuss Board business, there is a good chance that those emails, too, will be considered records belonging to the Board and subject to FOI.