

Electronic communications policy

Policy statement

Bow Valley College is committed to ensuring that electronic communications are conducted in compliance with Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL) and other applicable laws. The college values transparency, consent, and security in all electronic interactions with students, employees, partners, and the broader community. This policy establishes guidelines to ensure that electronic communications are used responsibly and lawfully.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure compliance with CASL, protecting recipients from unsolicited electronic messages.
- Provide clear guidelines for obtaining consent before sending commercial electronic messages (CEMs), including Mixed-Purpose Messages.
- Protect the reputation of Bow Valley College by ensuring ethical and responsible use of electronic communication channels.
- Safeguard personal information and uphold privacy standards in electronic messaging.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, faculty, students, contractors, and volunteers who send electronic communications on behalf of the institution. It covers all electronic messaging platforms, including email communications, text messages (SMS/MMS), automated messaging systems, and other digital communication tools used for institutional purposes.

Principal objectives

1. Compliance with CASL: electronic communications must adhere to CASL requirements, including obtaining express or implied consent before sending commercial messages. Messages must include an opt-out mechanism and accurate sender identification.
2. Consent management: the college must maintain records of consent, ensuring that recipients have provided valid permission for electronic communications.
3. Commercial message content standards: all messages must be clear, relevant, and aligned with the college's strategic plan, avoiding misleading or deceptive content.
4. Opt-out requests: recipients must have the ability to unsubscribe from electronic communications easily and promptly, and requests must be processed within the legally mandated timeframe.
5. Ensure privacy, confidentiality, and access to records. All records stored on the College's electronic communications systems are subject to the access and privacy provisions of the Alberta Protection of Privacy Act (POPA), the Access to Information Act (ATIA) and other applicable legislation.
6. All CASL-related timeframes must be monitored and documented to ensure compliance. This includes:
 - **Implied consent validity:** two (2) years from the date a business or non-business relationship ends, or six (6) months following an inquiry or application.
 - **Opt-out processing:** within ten (10) business days of receiving an unsubscribe request.
 - **Record retention:** consent and unsubscribe records must be retained for a minimum of three (3) years after expiry to demonstrate compliance.



Compliance

Members of the college community are expected to adhere to the policies, procedures, and standards established by the college. These policies are designed to foster a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment that supports learning, teaching, and professional integrity.

Non-compliance may create risk for the college and will be addressed accordingly through applicable college policies, procedures and contracts. Consequences for breaches of compliance will be applied in alignment with the *Employee Code of Conduct Policy (200-1-13)*, *Student Code of Conduct (500-1-1)*, and *Information Security Policy (300-2-11)*. This may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination for employees and expulsion for students.

Definitions

Commercial Electronic Message (CEM):

Any electronic message that encourages participation in a commercial activity, including promotions, offers, or advertisements.

Express Consent:

Explicit permission obtained from a recipient to receive CEMs.

Implied Consent:

A temporary form of consent based on an existing relationship, such as an ongoing business or non-business relationship.

Mixed-Purpose Message: An electronic message that contains both informational and commercial content. If any portion encourages participation in a commercial activity, the entire message qualifies as a Commercial Electronic Message (CEM) under CASL.

Data sheet

Accountable officer

Executive Team member responsible for information technology security

Responsible officer

Chief Information Security Officer, IT Security
 Chief of Staff and Director, Communications

Approval

President and CEO

Contact area

IT Security

Relevant dates

Approved	Board of Governors: BOG200618-04
Effective	July 2021
Next Review	November 2026
Modification History	- Rebranded 2021 - Housekeeping changes December 2023 - Housekeeping changes December 2024

Associated policy(ies)

Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources (300-2-4)
 Copyright Policy (500-1-3)
 Delegated Signing Authority (100-2-5)
 Employee Code of Conduct (200-1-13)
 Fraud Policy (200-1-4)
 Information Management (300-2-9)
 Information Security, and Identity Management Policy (300-2-11)
 Student Code of Conduct (500-1-1)
 Student Records and Information-Collection, Access and Waivers (500-1-16)
 Privacy and Access (300-2-10)
 Purchasing Policy (100-1-2)
 Records Management (200-1-8)
 Violence in the Workplace Policy (200-2-5)

Directly related procedures

Electronic Communications Procedure (300-2-13)
 Employee Code of Conduct Procedure (200-1-13)
 Ethical Business Practice Procedure (200-1-5)
 Student Code of Conduct Procedure (500-1-1)

Related legislation

Canada's Anti-Spam Act (Canada)
Copyright Act (Canada)
Defamation Act (Alberta)
Electronic Transactions Act (Alberta)
Evidence Act (Alberta)
Protection of Privacy Act (Alberta)
Access to Information Act (Alberta)
Human Rights, Multiculturalism and Citizenship Act (Alberta)
Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (Canada)
Protection of Privacy Act (Alberta) Trade-marks Act (Canada)