

Head, Clara & Maria Policies and Procedures			
DEPARTMENT: Administration			POLICY #: A-01
POLICY NAME: Customer Service and Communication Policy			
DATE:	REV. DATE: February 2021	APPROVED BY: Council	PAGE #: 1 of 4

## PURPOSE

To provide guidelines on how to maintain the highest standards in providing customer service and maintaining respectful communications.

## POLICY

### Client Service

1. We are committed to providing superior customer service. In support of this, we expect all employees to:
  - identify client needs and expectations by listening, being accessible and resolving problems quickly and politely;
  - conduct yourself in a friendly, courteous and professional manner with all coworkers, residents, ratepayers, suppliers and members of the public;
  - maintain the highest ethical standards and refrain from gossip;
  - co-operate freely, contribute to the efforts of the team and offer your assistance wherever required, whether or not such assistance falls within the normal duties of your job;
  - be honest, trustworthy and dependable in fulfilling all of your duties;
  - speak in a professional manner and avoid swearing, sarcasm or threatening language; and
  - remain friendly and co-operative, even when dealing with individuals who are upset or irate.
2. All employees are expected to maintain a level of personal conduct during working hours that reflects positively on the municipality.
3. Remain in compliance with all aspects of the Accessibility Policy.

## Communications

### Written Communications

1. All written communications should be professional, accurate and clear. Employees are expected to ensure that any documents that are prepared have proper spelling, punctuation and grammar.

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2. To reflect our commitment to equal opportunity, all business communications must be written in gender-neutral language, as follows:
  - Use “Dear Sir or Madam” or directly address the person to whom you are writing if you are sure of their preferred pronoun (i.e., “Dear Ms. Smith” or “Dear Mr. Jones”).
  - Do not identify women by their marital status by addressing them as “Miss” or “Mrs.”, unless they ask you to do so; use “Ms.” instead.
  - Do not use terms of endearment such as “dear”, “honey”, etc.
  - Use “he, she or them”, plural references or repeat the noun, e.g., “the employee must work 37 hours per week unless the employee is working a compressed work week”.
3. Please be respectful of any language differences between you and your co-workers, Council members or any member of the public. If you are in the company of others who speak different languages, make every effort to ensure that everyone understands and is included in the conversation.

#### ***E-mail Communications***

1. Although e-mail is an acceptable form of business communication, any e-mail messages you send must be in accordance with our guidelines on written communications.
2. Please observe good e-mail etiquette, as follows:
  - Do not send e-mail messages unnecessarily. Only send messages to those who require the information (do not cc or bcc unnecessary recipients).
  - Use a complete subject line that lets people know if the e-mail is urgent, e.g., “Please respond to this message today”.
  - Avoid becoming overly familiar or excessively curt in e-mail messages, as they can be easily misunderstood.
  - If the information will be longer than one page, create a memo and attach it to the e-mail.
3. Respond promptly to e-mail messages. If you are unable to provide the required response quickly, send the individual a brief message acknowledging the e-mail and stating when you will be able to respond.
4. E-mail is not confidential. If you need to distribute confidential information, make sure it is properly encrypted or password protected.

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5. If the e-mail message requires a response from someone else, let the sender know that you are forwarding the message and provide contact information about the individual to whom you are forwarding the message.
6. E-mail is not always the most appropriate form of communication. In many situations it can help build relationships to have a telephone or face-to-face conversation with a person. This is especially true if the subject matter is complicated. Please keep that in mind when selecting the most appropriate method of communication.

### ***Telephone Communications***

1. Your telephone greeting often represents the first impression that callers will have of you. Therefore, answer the telephone with a warm and welcoming tone and always state your name and ask how you may be of assistance.
2. Do not place callers on hold when answering the phone until you have asked them if they mind being put on hold and they have had the opportunity to reply. Do not put callers on hold for more than two minutes. If it will take longer than two minutes before you can respond to the caller, ask if you can call back at a more convenient time.
3. Find out how you can assist the caller. Wherever possible, answer callers' questions yourself rather than transferring them to other individuals. If you must transfer the call, apologize to the caller and explain why you are transferring the call.

### ***Virtual Meetings***

1. Be Prepared
  - Arrive on time, appropriately dressed, and have meeting materials on hand.
2. Be Attentive
  - Show that you understand with a head nod, hand gestures or feedback icons.
3. Be Active
  - Take notes. Use chat or raise your hand to share questions or ideas.
4. Be Polite
  - Mute microphone unless you are speaking.

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- Turn camera off if you are in a distracting space.
- Avoid background noises when your microphone is unmuted (rustling papers, eating, etc).

#### ***Voice Mail***

1. Check voice mail regularly and return phone calls promptly, preferably on the same day. If the call will require a lengthy follow-up and you are unable to provide an immediate response, place a short call to the individual to let them know that you have received the message and provide an expected time when you will be able to respond in full.
2. If you leave a voice mail message for someone, please provide sufficient detail about the reason for your call.