

Archdiocesan Email Guidelines

Revised 20230403

Guidelines regarding the use and retention of email records are defined below and apply to all official archdiocesan email accounts for Chancery employees and Priests. When referring to Chancery employees, these guidelines exclude GRACE Scholars, the Catholic Foundation of North Georgia, and Catholic Charities.

Purpose and Scope

The archdiocesan email guidelines are intended to establish the retention and disposition requirements for archdiocesan email records as well as the proper use of email by Chancery employees and Priests.

These guidelines apply to all emails, including copies or printouts of emails, created or received by Chancery employees (including temporary employees, contractors, and volunteers) and Priests while conducting business for or on behalf of the Archdiocese of Atlanta. Please refer to the [General Records Policy](#) for details regarding email as a record.

Email Retention

The Archdiocese provides for the economical and efficient management of official archdiocesan email accounts through the use of an electronic content management system (ECMS). The ECMS is administered by the Office of Archives and Records (ARC).

All email sent and received by employees is classified in the ECMS with a retention period based on an employee's department/job role. Unless specified by a litigation hold, emails are automatically deleted from employees' Outlook account after the designated retention has been met and are twice yearly destroyed within the ECMS by ARC staff. Employees are responsible for saving any emails they deem to have lasting value in a location outside of their email account. For questions about the retention of archdiocesan records, please reference the [Records Retention Schedule](#).

The following email classifications have been created by the Office of Archives and Records.

Classification	Definition	Retention Description
Two Year Email	All sent and received archdiocesan emails for majority of employees and priests, unless otherwise specified.	2 years
Seven Year Email	All sent and received archdiocesan emails for a selection of employees in certain departments based on legal needs.	7 years
Twelve Year Email	All sent and received archdiocesan emails for a selection of employees in certain departments based on legal needs.	12 years
Permanent Email	All sent and received archdiocesan emails of select executives, such as the Archbishop, Auxiliary Bishops, and Chancellor.	Permanent

Proper Use of Email

All archdiocesan email accounts are intended for use by Chancery employees and by priests for official purposes and therefore should be treated as work product. Please do not subscribe to non-work-related email listservs or alerts, such as travel/store sales alerts or political ad campaigns, as these create unnecessary clutter and drastically increase storage requirements for both Outlook and the ECMS.

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Please note that Chancery employees should only send emails to priests' archdiocesan issued @archatl.com email account as that is their official point of contact. This ensures that priests' emails are captured by the ECMS for appropriate management, retention, and legal purposes. If a Chancery employee receives an email from a priest's personal or parish account, the employee should respond with a message similar to the following:

Thank you for contacting me. All archdiocesan employees are required to communicate with priests via their official archdiocesan-issued e-mail account. (Policy can be found here) Please check your @archatl.com email account for my response to this message.

Should you require further assistance accessing your archdiocesan-based email account, please submit a ticket the Office of Information Technology's help desk which can be found at <http://help.archatl.com>.

Additionally, priests should frequently check their @archatl.com email accounts for official communications from the archbishop, the auxiliary bishops, and the Chancery departments. Important updates such as litigation notices and event memos are sent to priests' official email accounts, not to any personal or parish accounts, via the Office of Communications. This is to provide priests and the Archdiocese with a consistent point of contact, no matter where a priest may be assigned over the years. Regularly checking their @archatl.com email account not only allows priests to receive timely updates, but also provides information security as unused email accounts are vulnerable to hacking.

There is also no auto-forwarding allowed on any @archatl.com email accounts. While it may look like you can successfully enable that feature, it is in fact disabled organization-wide and will not work. This is to protect archdiocesan information and to avoid co-mingling of personal and work email accounts.

Lastly, we highly recommend that if you choose to check your work email on a personal device that you either login via the Outlook Web Application (OWA) linked from the archdiocesan intranet page or that you download the standalone Outlook app. We do not recommend setting up your @archatl.com email access via the default Mail application on your phone that merges your inboxes for all of your email accounts. This has the same potential risks to it as auto-forwarding your work email to your personal account.

