

Policy Name: Select Board Correspondence	First Review: December 15, 2025
Applies to: Town Manager’s Office & Select Board	Final Review/Approval: January 6, 2026

Overview: The Tyngsborough Select Board values and encourages public engagement through all mediums, including through in-person testimony during public hearings and citizen/business time, digital correspondence, written correspondence, and through messages left with the Town Manager’s Office. It also regularly receives important updates from other Boards & Committees as well as other external agencies that may be pertinent to the broader community. The Select Board believes that this type of correspondence should be easily accessible to members of the public to ensure that the entire Community has access to the same information.

Applicability: For the purposes of this policy, the Select Board understands and acknowledges that under the Massachusetts Public Records Law, nearly all correspondence (in any form) is subject to discovery by any interested member of the public and that only limited exceptions to this exist. For the purposes of this policy, any correspondence with the Select Board, whether digital or hand-written shall be called “correspondence”. With that in mind, the Select Board considers the following to be “correspondence” for the purposes of this policy:

1. Correspondence from other Boards/Committees, both in Tyngsborough and in surrounding communities, addressed to the Select Board. This category includes, but is not limited to: meeting agendas and meeting minutes.
2. Correspondence from external agencies notifying the Select Board of something happening in our area or that may impact Tyngsborough;
3. Correspondence from any local (within Tyngsborough) non-profit organization sharing information about upcoming events in Tyngsborough or that directly benefit a cause in Tyngsborough.
4. Correspondence from residents or resident groups addressed to the Select Board and not falling under any of the categories above, but only subject to the below procedure:
 - a. Whenever correspondence of any type is received by the collective Select Board (at least three members), the Select Board’s Clerk shall respond to confirm receipt and in doing so shall notify the sender that unless the sender directs otherwise, **the correspondence will not be added to the public packet.**
 - i. Should the Clerk not be on the original mailing list, it is the responsibility of the other Select Board members to distribute the correspondence to the Clerk to respond. Any member who receives the correspondence should confirm receipt to the sender.
 - ii. If the correspondence is about the Clerk, the Vice-Chair or Chair shall assume the responsibility of confirming receipt as described in 4a.

- iii. If the letter or other correspondence is directed to the Town Manager's Office, the Town Manager's Office shall ensure it is sent to the Clerk for response and distribution. The Town Manager's Office shall respond to the sender notifying them that the correspondence had been passed on.
- b. **Nothing about this policy exempts the correspondence from discovery upon the receipt of a public records request.**

This policy explicitly exempts any document that is otherwise exempt from discovery under the public records law.

The absence of an item being covered by this policy **does not** inherently mean the document is "private" and individuals should know that most correspondence -- whether subject to this policy or not -- is subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law.

Publishing of Correspondence: Any correspondence sent to the Select Board, which is to be included in the packet per the guidelines under "Applicability", shall be included in the next meeting packet if submitted by the prior Wednesday at 12:00 PM for a Monday meeting. Any correspondence sent after that date/time, and subject to inclusion as identified under "Applicability" will be added to the following meeting's packet.

The town will proactively redact the home address, personal email address, and personal telephone number of individuals who submit letters to the Select Board, but individuals should note that the public records law does not permit such redaction should the document be requested in full through a public records request.

The town will redact any personally protected information (PPI) that is allowable under the Massachusetts Public Records Law and even in the event of a public records request will not produce an unredacted version so long as the redactions are allowable by law.

All correspondence can be found in the meeting packet which is posted in each calendar event for Select Board meetings at tyngsboroughma.gov. A copy of the full packet, including correspondence, can also be obtained digitally or in hard copy form from the Town Manager's office upon request.