HAMILTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

Information Technology

Tips to spot and avoid malware/viruses in email

1. **Check the sender's email address** – Virus and scam emails are often sent from strange addresses. Any legitimate email from Hamilton County Schools will come from an @hcde.org address.
2. **Look at the subject** – Does it create a sense of urgency? These are typically viruses. Does it have one word in it but appears to be a response like "Re: Document"? – This is also a telltale sign of a virus.
3. **Look at the message body** – If the sender is a recognized sender, does it follow their normal emailing criteria? Does it have a salutation? Does it have a signature for the sender? Does that signature match the name of the person identified in the email address? Does it have the company's contact information and/or graphics that you've been accustomed to seeing?
4. **Pay attention to the content** – Is it just asking you to open a file or go to a website link? Does it have 'syntax' gone wrong (code such as </html1) or broken sentences? Does it ask you to open an attachment? Does it create a sense of urgency? With viruses, often the purpose of the body is to entice you to open an attachment or click a link. A common method is by fear and urgency.
5. **Check the attachment** – Is it a zip file? Is it a PDF? Is it a docx or doc? – how big is it? If it's small, around 1kb to 22kb, it is most likely a virus. This combined with any of the above criteria is a good indication of an email virus.

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