

Student Use of the Internet and Electronic Communications

The Internet, a global computer network referred to as the World Wide Web, and electronic communications (e-mail, chat rooms and other forms of electronic communication) have vast potential to support curriculum and student learning. The district believes they should be used in schools as a learning resource to educate and to inform.

Use of the Internet and electronic communications require students to think critically, analyze information, write clearly, use problem-solving skills, and hone computer and research skills that employers demand. Use of these tools also encourages an attitude of lifelong learning and offers an opportunity for students to participate in distance learning activities, ask questions of and consult with experts, communicate with other students and individuals, and locate material to meet educational and personal information needs.

The district believes the educational opportunities inherent in these tools far outweigh the possibility that users may procure material not consistent with the education goals of the district. However, the Internet and electronic communications are fluid environments in which students may access materials and information from many sources, including some that may be harmful to students. The district acknowledges that while it is impossible to predict with certainty what information students might locate or come into contact with, it desires to take all reasonable steps to protect students from accessing material and information that is obscene, child pornography or otherwise harmful to minors, as defined by the district. Students shall take responsibility for their own use of district computers and computer systems to avoid contact with material or information that may be harmful to minors.

Blocking or filtering obscene, pornographic and harmful information

Software that blocks or filters material and information that is obscene, child pornography or otherwise harmful to minors, as defined by the district, shall be installed on all district computers having Internet or electronic communications access. Students shall report access to material and information that is obscene, child pornography, harmful to minors or otherwise in violation of this policy to the supervising staff member. If a student becomes aware of other students accessing such material or information, he or she shall report it to the supervising staff member.

No expectation of privacy

District computers and computer systems are owned by the district and are intended for educational purposes at all times. Students shall have no expectation of privacy when using the Internet or electronic communications. The district reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review and store (at any time and without prior notice) all usage of district computers and computer systems, including all Internet and electronic communications access and transmission/receipt of materials and information. All material and information accessed/received through district computers and computer systems shall remain the property of the school district.

Unauthorized and unacceptable uses

Students shall use district computers and computer systems in a responsible, efficient, ethical and legal manner.

Because technology and ways of using technology are constantly evolving, every unacceptable use of district computers and computers systems can not be specifically described in policy. Therefore, examples of unacceptable uses include, but are not limited to, the following.

No student shall access, create, transmit, retransmit or forward material or information:

- that promotes violence or advocates destruction of property including, but not limited to, access to information concerning the manufacturing or purchasing of destructive devices or weapons
- that is not related to district education objectives
- that contains pornographic, obscene or other sexually oriented materials, either as pictures or writings, that are intended to stimulate erotic feelings or appeal to prurient interests in nudity, sex or secretion
- that harasses, threatens, demeans, or promotes violence or hatred against another person or group of persons with regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, marital status, disability or handicap
- for personal profit, financial gain, advertising, commercial transaction or political purposes
- that plagiarizes the work of another without express consent
- that uses inappropriate or profane language likely to be offensive to others in the school community
- that is knowingly false or could be construed as intending to purposely damage another person's reputation
- in violation of any federal or state law, including but not limited to copyrighted material and material protected by trade secret
- that contains personal information about themselves or others, including information protected by confidentiality laws
- using another individual's Internet or electronic communications account without written permission from that individual
- that impersonates another or transmits through an anonymous remailer
- that accesses fee services without specific permission from the system administrator

Security

Security on district computer systems is a high priority. Students who identify a security problem while using the Internet or electronic communications must immediately notify a system administrator. Students should not demonstrate the problem to other users. Logging on to the Internet or electronic communications as a system administrator is prohibited.

Students shall not:

- use another person's password or any other identifier
- gain or attempt to gain unauthorized access to district computers or computers systems

- read, alter, delete or copy, or attempt to do so, electronic communications of other system users

Any user identified as a security risk, or as having a history of problems with other computer systems, may be denied access to the Internet and electronic communications.

Safety

Students shall not reveal personal information, such as home address or phone number, while using the Internet or electronic communications. Without first obtaining permission of the supervising staff member, students shall not use their last name or any other information that might allow another person to locate him or her. Students shall not arrange face-to-face meetings with persons met on the Internet or through electronic communications.

Vandalism

Vandalism will result in cancellation of privileges and may result in school disciplinary action and/or legal action. Vandalism is defined as any malicious or intentional attempt to harm, destroy, modify, abuse or disrupt operation of any network within the school district or any network connected to the Internet, operation of any form of electronic communications, the data contained on any network or electronic communications, the data of another user, usage by another user, or district-owned software or hardware. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses and the use of encryption software.

Unauthorized software

Students are prohibited from using or possessing any software that has been downloaded or is otherwise in the user's possession without appropriate registration and payment of any fees owed to the software owner.

Assigning student projects and monitoring student use

The district will make every effort to see that the Internet and electronic communications are used responsibly by students. Administrators, teachers and staff have a professional responsibility to work together to monitor students' use of the Internet and electronic communications, help students develop the intellectual skills needed to discriminate among information sources, to identify information appropriate to their age and developmental levels, and to evaluate and use information to meet their educational goals. Students shall have specifically defined objectives and search strategies prior to accessing material and information on the Internet and through electronic communications.

Opportunities shall be made available on a regular basis for parents to observe student use of the Internet and electronic communications in schools.

All students shall be supervised by staff while using the Internet or electronic communications at a ratio of at least one staff member to each 20 students. Staff members assigned to supervise student use shall have received training in Internet and electronic communications safety and monitoring student use.

Student use is a privilege

Use of the Internet and electronic communications demands personal responsibility and an understanding of the acceptable and unacceptable uses of such tools. Student use of the Internet and electronic communications is a privilege, not a right. Failure to follow the use procedures contained in this policy will result in the loss of the privilege to use these tools and may result in school disciplinary action and/or legal action. The school district may deny, revoke or suspend access to district technology or close accounts at any time.

Students and parents/guardians shall be required to sign the district's Acceptable Use Agreement annually before Internet or electronic communications accounts shall be issues or access shall be allowed.

School district makes no warranties

The school district makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, related to the use of district computers and computer systems, including access to the Internet and electronic communications services. Providing access to these services does not imply endorsement by the district of the content, nor does the district make any guarantee as to the accuracy or quality of information received. The School District shall not be responsible for any damages, losses or costs a student suffers in using the Internet and electronic communications. This includes loss of data and service interruptions. Use of any information obtained via the Internet and electronic communications is at the student's own risk.

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LEGAL REFS.: 47 U.S.C. 254(h) (*Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000*)
 47 U.S.C. 231 (*Child Online Protection Act of 1998*)
 20 U.S.C. 6801 *et seq.* (*Elementary and Secondary Education Act*)

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