

WASHINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

USE OF INTERNET/ SCHOOL DISTRICT'S NETWORK BY STUDENTS

No. 546

PURPOSE

The technology and telecommunication resources available in the District represent a large capital investment by our communities. The Board intends that access to the Internet, and to the School District's network system, be made available to students for legitimate and lawful educational purposes; considers the Internet to be like a "digital" library where students are expected to be responsible and accountable for their actions in accessing resources just as they are in a traditional library; and expects students to act as the School District's ambassador when accessing the Internet as they do when traveling on field trips.

To this end the Board established *Responsible Use Guidelines* to ensure proper and ethical student use; to provide consistent, responsible student access management; to conform usage with current law; to define parameters for acceptable use; and to impress upon students that inappropriate use may result in a serious penalty.

Just like preparing to get a driver's license, a student who learns the rules of this electronic highway and agrees to be responsible and accountable for his/her conduct "on line", provided his/her parents consent, will be eligible to use the Internet/School District's network system.

The following *Responsible Use Guidelines (RUGs)* apply to all students when they access any Washington School District network **computer, network or Internet connections using any computer equipment and/or communications services owned or leased by the District.**

AUTHORITY

Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) of December 21, 2000.

RESPONSIBLE USE GUIDELINES (RUGs)

GUIDELINES

1. Cooperation

It is understood that cooperation is critical in the use of the Internet/District network at the Washington School District. It is the goal of the use of the Internet/District network to prepare students to become technologically literate in an increasingly technological world. It is understood that a student's independent use of the Internet/School District's network may be necessary to attain such a goal, subject to procedures and standards for appropriate network behavior and communication.

2. Discipline

Violations of these *Responsible Use Guidelines* will result in appropriate student discipline, in accordance with the School District's Student Discipline Policy. This may include loss of the privilege to

access the Internet/School District network for a defined period or permanently, suspension/expulsion from school, and/or criminal or legal proceedings if a law has been violated.

3. Access

Only those students who receive training, sign a Student Use Agreement, receive parents' permission, receive teacher permission, and are subject to teacher/faculty supervision, are authorized to use the Internet/network at the School District.

4. Copyright

Transferring copyrighted and/or licensed materials to or from any Washington School District network without the express consent of the owner of the copyright/license is a violation of federal law and is expressly prohibited.

5. Use is a Privilege - User Accountability

It is understood that the use of the Internet/District network is a privilege. **The equipment, hardware, software or communications services allowing access to the Internet/District Network are the property of and/or under the control of the School District.** Use shall be reserved to those students who utilize materials that are of "educational value" to the programs of the Washington School District. For the purposes of these Guidelines, "educational value" shall mean those areas of network access that have a direct or indirect impact on the student educational program at the School District. The use of the Internet/District network for E-Mail to be remitted to friends, chatting, reading jokes, searching MTV, searching sport sites, farming out information on games, other actions that are not directly or indirectly related to the school's curricula or actions which threaten or harass or otherwise constitute violations of criminal or civil laws or constitute a prohibited use or unauthorized access or commercial use or otherwise violate the *Responsible Use Guidelines* as described below, are not deemed to be of "educational value" and will not be permitted.

6. Other Prohibited Uses

The use of the system for defamatory, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually explicit, threatening, and racially, ethnically, religiously offensive, and illegal material or other prohibited activities **which materially disrupts or is reasonably expected to materially disrupt class work or the educational process, invades the right of others and/or is lewd or vulgar** shall also not be permitted, and the Washington School District will use any and all efforts available to it, within the confines of the law, to prevent such material from entering the system.

Use of electronic mail and other network communications facilities to harass, defame, offend, or to disseminate sexually explicit, threatening, racially, ethnically, or religiously offensive, or illegal material, or otherwise annoy other users of the network is forbidden.

Students should not tamper, interfere or intercept another user's E-Mail.

In accordance with Pennsylvania Child Internet Protection Act, use of any computer equipment and/or communications services owned or leased by the Washington School District for sending, receiving, viewing or downloading visual depictions of obscenity, child pornography or material that is harmful to minors, as those terms are defined in the Act (24 P.S. § 4603 is prohibited. In order to implement and enforce these prohibited uses, the Washington School District shall use SurfControl Web Filter software to block access to any visual depictions prohibited under the Child Internet Protection Act.

7. Reporting Inappropriate Behavior

Each student user shall be responsible for reporting all such knowledge or entry of materials in the School District's system immediately to the building principal. Only those contacts leading to appropriate educational and personal growth on the Internet are permitted.

8. Potential Student Liability

All students using the Internet/School District network are charged with recognizing that E-Mail or network messages may contain thoughts, conclusions, and certain biased perceptions that were never intended for publication. There may be liability for defamation for spreading false and disparaging information about third parties, particularly comments on employees, students, personnel applicants, or various vendors. Such discussions or use on the network is expressly prohibited.

9. Compliance with Relevant Laws

No personnel or student information, which is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, and/or other applicable statutes, shall be disseminated through the network.

10. Protection of Confidentiality

All users of the Internet/School District network must comply with the Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986, as amended, and the Communications Decency Act. These Acts prohibit the unauthorized interceptions or disclosure of E-Mail messages by third parties. They also regulate the propriety of certain material transmitted on the Internet. These statutes do permit interception or disclosure of E-Mail messages if either the sender or receiver of the message consents. Moreover, this legislation recognizes and the School District, therefore, reserves the right to monitor a student's E-Mail messages, as long as the interception device is included in the E-Mail equipment.

11. No Privacy Rights

Students who use the Internet/School District network are charged with recognizing that the District Administration does have the authority to intercept E-Mail messages of all users and that there will be no privacy right construed by the District to exist in the statements made in the network. Users of the Internet/School District network are discouraged from storing extensive E-Mail messages; in fact, messages which are no longer useful or necessary should be eliminated daily and no message may be stored longer for more than fourteen (14) calendar days. No use of the Internet by the student shall be considered private and all communications and information accessible on the school network should be assumed to be property of the Washington School District.

12. System Security

Student users shall not allow any other person to use their password or to share their account. It is the user's responsibility to protect E-Mail accounts from unauthorized use by changing passwords periodically and using passwords that are not easily guessed.

13. Unauthorized Access Prohibited

Any attempt to circumvent the system security, guess passwords, gain unauthorized access to local or wide area network resources or attempt to harm the system or infect it with a virus is forbidden.

14. Commercial Use

Use of the Internet/School District network for solicitation, commercial gain, gambling, or profit is not allowed.

15. **Equipment Tampering Prohibited**

Students may not move, repair, reconfigure, modify, or attach external devices to the computer/network without permission of the District's Business Manager or his designee.

16. **Future Rules**

Additional rules and restrictions may be added if the need arises. Students are similarly responsible for reading and following these rules.

17. **Equity of Use**

Student time restrictions on use of the Internet/School District network may be imposed by the faculty to ensure equity of use of District equipment, and/or avoid interference with the delivery of the District's educational program to student's during the student day.

18. **Reduction of Cost**

From time to time, the District may encourage students to use certain other informational sources in order to minimize costs.

19. **Monitoring for Educational Use**

The District Administration reserves the right to use electronic devices, cards, or any other means of monitoring the manner in which research is performed **and Internet sites visited**, to determine whether the student is using the system for an appropriate educational purpose.

20. **Faculty Role with respect to Student Use**

Members of the School District's faculty shall use their best judgment and discretion in authorizing student access and monitoring student use of the Internet/School District network. In accordance with this policy, student users will be required to execute a Student Use Agreement which is approved by a parent and a faculty member that signifies eligibility to access the Internet/School District network. The student user and his/her parents must sign the attached consent form prior to the student's use of the system.

21. **Review of Prohibited Uses**

The Board is aware that due to the vastness of information on the Internet, situations may occur when these Responsible use Guidelines or the blocking software or devices may prohibit access to material being sought for legitimate research of "educational value" directly related to a curricular project. If a student reasonably believes that this policy is denying him access to material that is not within the prohibition of these Responsible Use Guidelines, he may first request permission from the faculty member supervising the student's access to the Internet/E-Mail. If that permission is denied, the student may set forth in writing to the Building Principal:

- (1) the information the student is seeking to retrieve or send, and, if applicable, the Internet site he or she wishes to access; and
- (2) the reason for obtaining or sending that information

The Building Principal shall inform the student, based upon interpretation of this Policy, of his or her decision to allow or deny access within five (5) days of receipt of the written request. This decision shall be final.

If the Building Principal agrees that access should be permitted for legitimate bonafide research of “educational value”, or other lawful purpose, and the information sought is inaccessible due to the blocking software or device, then the Building Principal may have the blocking software or device disabled temporarily to allow access. Prior to disabling any blocking software or device, the student shall provide written consent, signed by a parent or guardian allowing such access.

DISSEMINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

This policy shall appear on a bulletin board where all users log-on to the system. It is a reminder to the user of **the policy’s** significance.

Student handbooks will contain a copy of this policy and the attached consent forms. Teachers will review and explain this policy to the students of the District. The Student Use Agreement to the Internet/District Network form shall be distributed to the students after the review for signature by the student and his/her parent/guardian. This policy will also be posted in each library.

The Board delegates to the Superintendent authority to implement these *Responsible Use Guidelines* through the Administration and staff and to select an appropriate Internet filter.

REVIEW AND REVISION OF PLAN

The District Technology Committee composed of administrators, faculty, and community members will be responsible for monitoring implementation of the policy as well as reviewing data and making recommendations to the Superintendent. Student input will be acquired via surveys and/or focus groups.

Legal Authority

Federal Child Internet Protection Act (20 U.S.C. § 6077)

Pennsylvania Child Internet Protection Act (24 P.S. §4601, et seq.)

Adopted - 10/15/01

Revised -

STUDENT USE AGREEMENT TO THE INTERNET/DISTRICT NETWORK

I have read, I understand, and I will accept and abide by the *Washington School District Responsible Use Guidelines for Students* as adopted October 15, 2001 and revised March 23, 2005. I understand that violation of these provisions will result in my loss of use privileges, and may result in disciplinary action. This may include revocation or suspension of network privileges, suspension/expulsion from school, and/or appropriate legal action.

Washington School District Student User Signature

Grade

Date _____

This Section must be signed by a Washington School District Teacher.

I certify that _____ ha successfully completed the training required for use of the Washington School District Internet network facilities.

Teacher Signature

Date

This section must be signed by a parent or guardian.

I understand that the Internet and the School District's network system have opened up a vast resource for student use. I understand that students now have opportunities to access research data bases that previously were unavailable. I understand that the Internet opens the possibility that students may gain access to defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually-oriented, threatening, racially-offensive, ethnically intimidating, religiously-bigoted, or illegal material by surfing through the Internet.

The Washington School District will use its best efforts to block inappropriate access and limit use only to those areas that are age appropriate and of educational value. Further, I understand that my child may be subject to discipline for violating the Responsible Use Guidelines set forth in the Use of Internet/School District's Network by Students Policy.

However, I understand that no matter how much supervision and monitoring the Washington School District provides, there will always be the possibility that my child may come into contact with inappropriate material. I understand that because of First Amendment concerns, it is difficult to implement any form of monitoring system to filter out everything that might offend. Notwithstanding this fact, I recognize the importance of my child becoming technologically aware in an increasingly technological society, and I permit my child to use the Internet access provided by the School District.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Please return this signed permission form to your teacher who will keep it on file.

A copy of the Use of Internet/School District's Network by Students Policy is available upon request to the student's Principal.