

## **DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY RESPONSIBLE USE POLICY**

Education is built on sharing: of ideas and information; of facts and opinions; of input and output. With this collaboration comes the ability to generate extraordinary change—to make a difference in our own lives and in the lives of others. The Westport Community Schools supports the building of learning communities, the pursuit of academic achievement, and the realization of personal fulfillment for our stakeholders through the use of traditional, current, and emerging technologies. In order to achieve this growth and collaboration, the Westport Community Schools encourages the use of digital technology for exploring the world, for completing educational assignments, and for meeting professional responsibilities. Thus, the primary purpose of providing digital technology within the district is to support the educational goals and objectives of Westport Community Schools with the expectation that all digital technology users will respect the rights of others and will act in a way that reflects proper ethical and legal standards.

The following Digital Technology Acceptable Use Policy applies to all faculty, staff, students, community members and guests who use the district's digital technology or who access our network. Any violation of the terms spelled out below may result in loss of access to district digital technology and/or disciplinary/legal action.

### **1. Definitions and Purposes**

- 1.1. **Network:** Westport Community Schools provides access to its data network and Internet portal (the "network") for employees, students and authorized guests. This network includes all hardware used to deliver and receive data, as well as all software instrumental in viewing and working with data over the network. Any computer—whether purchased by the district or owned by an individual—that is connected to our network at any time is considered to be part of the network and, thus, is subject to the terms of this DTAUP.
  - 1.1.1. The network has been developed for educational purposes. It is intended to assist students and teachers by providing access to a wide range of information resources. The network also allows for efficient communication within the district, with parents, social service agencies, government agencies, businesses, and other educational entities.
  - 1.1.2. Incidental personal use of digital technology and the network may be permitted as long as it does not interfere with the educational mission of the Westport Community Schools and the completion of professional duties or educational obligations.
- 1.2. **User:** "User" refers to any staff member, administrator, student, community member or guest who connects to the Westport Community Schools' network, who uses digital technology belonging to the Westport Community Schools or who accesses our network.
- 1.3. **Digital Technology:** "Digital technology" is any device that creates, transmits, or accesses digital information, whether connected to the network or used in a stand-alone situation. "Digital information" or "digital media" is any data that is created, transmitted, or accessed by digital technology.

## **2. Staff and User Responsibilities**

- 2.1. The Technology Department will oversee access to the network and will establish processes for authorizing software installation, for the archiving of email and databases, for maintaining virus and spam protection, and for complying with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). CIPA requires school districts that receive federal funding through E-rate, which Westport does, to filter all access points to the Internet in order to block content that CIPA deems to be harmful to minors. For more information, please, visit the following site: <http://www.fcc.gov/guides/childrens-internet-protection-act>.
- 2.2. The building principal will maintain user agreements for students and staff; he or she is responsible for enforcing the DTAUP on-site.
- 2.3. When using the Internet for class activities, teachers will preview and select materials appropriate to the students and relevant to course objectives. Teachers will help students develop critical thinking skills (i.e. assessing the reliability of information found on the Internet) and provide guidelines and resources to assist their students in focused research activities. While their students are online and under their supervision, staff must be actively vigilant of websites visited by students.
- 2.4. No staff member may access the online grades or personal information of any student except for those students with whom he or she has a direct, professional relationship at that time.
- 2.5. No staff member may access the online personal or professional information of another staff member unless he or she is the employee's direct supervisor or is fulfilling his or her professional responsibilities.
- 2.6. Accessing or attempting to access another user's account without permission is strictly prohibited. Users may not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, data or associated with other users on the network.
- 2.7. All passwords or other means of accessing computers, servers, software, or the network within the Westport Community Schools is the property of the school district. No person shall access the Westport Community Schools' network or the district's databases stored by companies with whom the district does business without authorization.
- 2.8. Each user will protect his or her personal safety by not giving out his or her full name, home address, or phone number.
- 2.9. Any user who finds objectionable material on any digital device should inform an administrator immediately. This includes material that any user might locate by connecting to a website—whether intentionally or accidentally—or might find residing on a computer or the network.
- 2.10. The network will not be used for commercial purposes.

**3. District Limitation of Liability**

- 3.1. Westport Community Schools makes no warranties of any kind, either expressed or implied, that the functions or the services provided by or through its network will be error-free or without defect.
- 3.2. The district will not be responsible for any damages users may suffer, including but not limited to, loss of data or interruptions of service, or personal physical, psychological, or monetary damages.
- 3.3. The district is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through or stored on the network.
- 3.4. The district will not be responsible for unauthorized financial obligations arising through the use of the network.

**4. Due Process**

- 4.1. While on the network, the user agrees to take full responsibility for his or her actions. The Westport Community Schools will not be held liable for the actions of anyone connecting to the Internet through this network. Therefore, all users shall assume full liability—legal, financial, or otherwise—for their use of the network.
- 4.2. Violations of the DTAUP can carry serious consequences and could result in the immediate suspension of the user's privileges. The administration and/or town, county, state, or federal authorities may take further disciplinary action. Disciplinary actions will be tailored to meet specific concerns related to the violation, which may include termination of employment or student suspension or expulsion.
- 4.3. Any questions, suspicions, or allegations concerning adherence to the Digital Technology Acceptable Use Policy should be brought to the attention of the Technology Department, building principal, or the Superintendent of Schools.

**5. Search and Seizure**

- 5.1. The network and all devices (except those purchased by the user) attached to it are the property of the Westport Community Schools; the storage systems of these devices and files contained therein are therefore subject to inspection by the administration at any time. District-owned computers, whether attached to the network or not, are subject to inspection by the administration at any time.
- 5.2. System users should expect limited privacy regarding the contents of their files stored on the network. The district will cooperate with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to the misuse of the district's network and digital devices.
- 5.3. An individual search will be conducted if there is suspicion that a user has violated the DTAUP or the law. The nature of the investigation will be in relation to the context of the nature of the alleged violation.

**6. Acceptable Use of Westport's Digital Technology**

- 6.1. All students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to explore any and all digital technology offered by the Westport Community Schools, whether through installed hardware and software or through approved network connections.
- 6.2. All students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to share the digital media that they create (along with production techniques) with all other members of the Westport community. Please, contact the Technology Department for methods of dissemination.
- 6.3. In the digitally-connected world, social networking—the sharing of ideas, opinions, and media across networks—brings us all closer. Anyone who discovers interesting websites of educational value is encouraged to contact his or her teacher, school principal or the Technology Department for posting these sites in the appropriate places.

**7. Unacceptable Use of Digital Technology**

- 7.1. When faculty, staff, students or guests of the Westport Community Schools use the network they become an extension of the Westport Community Schools and are expected to follow the guidelines of this policy.
- 7.2. The user will not:
  - use obscene, mean-spirited, pornographic, profane, inflammatory, racist, threatening, or disrespectful language;
  - engage in prejudicial or discriminatory attacks, sexual harassment, or other forms of online bullying;
  - post false or defamatory information about a person or organization, or post information that could cause damage, panic, or disruption; this includes, but is not limited to, the posting of broadcast messages or any other actions that cause congestion of the network or interfere with the work of others;
  - install unauthorized software or download unauthorized software from a remote location or copy software that belongs to the Westport Community Schools without expressed permission of the Technology Department;
  - attempt to go beyond his or her authorized access (hack), make deliberate attempts to disrupt system performance, destroy data (by spreading computer viruses or by any other means), or engage in other illegal activities;
  - access blocked or prohibited websites non-educational gaming sites through proxy servers that remove identifying information about the user for the purpose of anonymity;
  - use the network to access material that is profane or pornographic or that advocates illegal acts, violence, or discrimination towards other people (e.g., hate literature);
  - use the network for political lobbying, advertising or for passing on information of a purely personal interest;

- disseminate passwords, codes, access telephone numbers, or account numbers to unauthorized persons;
  - change the configuration of a computer or network without administrative permission;
  - damage or vandalize district computers, computer systems, or networks either through physical alteration or through the introduction of malicious digital agents, such as viruses;
  - trespass in another person's folders, work or files, or use another's password; or
  - engage in cyberbullying, which is the repeated use by one or more students of an electronic expression (including the transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications, creation of web pages or blogs in which the creator assumes the identity of another person, the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, or the distribution of communications to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons), alone or in combination with any written or verbal expressions or physical acts or gestures, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of the school. See Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71. Section 370.
- 7.3. No member of the faculty, the staff, or the student body will engage in any illegal activities or use district technology for purposes other than as intended in an educational setting.

## **8. Social Networking**

- 8.1 Improper fraternization between staff members and students through social networking sites created by Westport Community Schools (e.g., Edmodo, Moodle, Blogger, Twitter et cetera) is prohibited.
- 8.2 All postings to Westport Community Schools social networking sites (e.g., Edmodo, Moodle, Blogger, Twitter et cetera) will display appropriate conduct, good judgement, and proper writing skills. Posts shall not contain sexual content, advocacy of violence, or promotion of drug or alcohol use.

## **9. Email**

- 9.1. All email created or received by an employee of a governmental unit is a public record. According to Massachusetts General Laws:

"public records" shall mean all...documentary materials or data, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by any officer or employee of any agency...to serve a public purpose (G.L. c. 4, § 7, cl. 26).
- 9.1.1. Email is, therefore, a public record and it is subject to the requirements of the Public Records Law, G.L. c. 66. Any member of the public may request copies of email. Please note that even deleted messages are subject to disclosure because they are required to be backed up in our archives.
- 9.1.2. Users should consider email messages to be equivalent to letters sent on official letterhead and therefore should be written in a professional and courteous tone. As the AUP of the Springside School in Pennsylvania states, "tone is difficult to discern in electronic communication. Electronic communication is best used as a medium for disseminating factual information and should not be regarded as a replacement for face-to-face communication."
- 9.2. The Technology Department monitors the network to ensure proper network operations. Principals, department heads, or supervisors may request detailed reports indicating email and internet usage.
- 9.3. Faculty, staff, or students must not subscribe to mass emails (e.g., chain letters, "jokes of the day," "horoscopes," "trivia," et cetera) which take up valuable network space that should be used for educational purposes. If a faculty member joins a professional (educational) listserv, it is requested that he or she subscribe in digest format. Please, contact the listserv administrator or the Technology Department for instructions on how to accomplish this.
- 9.4. All e-contracts by coaches and club advisors with students shall be sent to all team and club members, except for messages concerning medical or academic privacy matters, in which case the messages will be copied to the athletic director and school principal.
- 9.5. Students are not allowed to access non-school email accounts, including chat and instant messaging. In the event that students are given email accounts through the Westport Community Schools, all email rules stated in this DTAUP apply.
- 9.6. Email accounts issued by Westport Community Schools may not be used to bully, harass, or threaten any individual or organization; accounts will not be used to send chain letters, viruses, or hoaxes to other students, faculty, or individuals.
- 9.7. Student email accounts may be filtered for language and content; any email that contains inappropriate language or content may not be delivered.
- 9.8. Inappropriate contact with students via email is prohibited.

## **10. Research and Digital Publishing**

- 10.1. The Westport Community Schools websites are designed to provide a portal to enable communication among teachers, students, staff, administration, and the community. Material posted on the district's websites or web portal must reflect the high educational standards of the Westport Community Schools in purpose, content and presentation.
- 10.2. To help to protect the safety of our students and the accuracy and security of district information, the guidelines and procedures listed below must be followed:
  - 10.2.1. No student's personal information such as home address or telephone number may be posted on the Westport Community Schools' websites. The use of a student's name, picture, or demographic information on the website must be done in accordance with sections JRC and JRD of the Westport Community Schools Policy Manual.
  - 10.2.2. Material posted on school websites as well as links from a school's website to sites outside of the Westport Community Schools must have prior approval of the principal or his/her designee. At all times, a good faith effort must be made to verify the authenticity of material posted on the district's websites.
  - 10.2.3. Photographs and images must be used in accordance with district policy.
  - 10.2.4. Logos or trademarks used must have written permission from the person or organization that owns the logo or trademark. The Westport Community Schools' name or copyrighted logos must not be used on a personal web page without permission of the Superintendent.
  - 10.2.5. The creator of any district web page is responsible for ensuring that the information contained therein is of the highest editorial standards (spelling, punctuation, grammar, style, et cetera). The information should be factually accurate and current. If errors are observed, the Technology Department, principal, or designated school webmaster should be contacted to make the necessary corrections.
- 10.3. All teacher and staff professional websites must reflect the high educational standards of the Westport Community Schools. There may be no links from a teacher's or staff member's professional website to his or her personal website or to other websites of a non-educational nature except with permission from the building principal or the Superintendent of Schools.
- 10.4. Existing copyright law will govern the use of material accessed through the network. The user—any student, faculty member, administrator, staff member, or guest—will not infringe upon the copyright of works found on the Internet or within the network.
- 10.5. Westport Community Schools does not guarantee the quality of links to material published on its website nor to the quality of the material linked to on other sites. The end user must judge the quality of the material he or she derives from the Internet. Please, verify sources whenever and wherever possible.

**11. Personal Digital Technology**

- 11.1. Faculty, staff, and student personal digital technology may be configured for Westport Community Schools' network with approval from the Technology Department.
- 11.2. Personal digital technology is not the property of Westport Community Schools and will not be serviced by the Technology Department.
- 11.3. Personal digital technology must have up-to-date virus protection software when applicable in order to be placed on the district's network.



I have read and accepted the Westport Community Schools DTAUP Digital Technology Acceptable Use Policy.

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Print Name

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Position

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Signature

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Date