



BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY

**ACCEPTABLE USE OF INTERNET AND ELECTRONIC
AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS DEVICES**

The forms of electronic and digital communications change rapidly. This policy addresses common existing forms of electronic and digital communication (email, texting, blogging, tweeting, posting, etc.) but is intended to cover any new form of electronic or digital communication which utilizes a computer, phone or other digital or electronic device.

As a part of the resources available to students and employees, the technology center provides Internet access at each site and at its administrative offices. The technology center intends for this resource to be used for educational purposes and not to be used for conduct which is harmful. This policy outlines the technology center's expectations regarding Internet access. The ability to access the Internet while on school property is a privilege and not a right. Access cannot be granted until an individual has agreed to comply with this acceptable use policy, and access may be revoked at any time.

In addition to Internet access, the technology center also provides selected employees with a notebook computer or other digital device. This equipment is loaned to the employee for the convenience of the district and must be returned to IT Services at the conclusion of the employee's employment, or upon request of the superintendent or IT Services director. The equipment must be returned in the same condition as it was issued, minus normal wear and tear. In the event the equipment is damaged, lost or stolen, the employee must notify his/her supervisor immediately and may be required to reimburse the technology center for the damages.

Any individual using technology center resources to engage in electronic or digital communications has no expectation of privacy. Further, employees and students must be cognizant of the fact that electronic or digital communications which occur on private equipment often are permanently available and may be available to school administrators.

Employees and students are expected to use good judgment in all their electronic or digital communications - whether such activities occur on or off campus or whether the activity uses personal or school technology. Any electronic or digital communication which can be considered inappropriate, harassing, intimidating, threatening or bullying to an employee or student of the technology center - regardless of whether the activity uses technology center equipment or occurs during school/work hours - is strictly forbidden. Employees and students face the possibility of penalties, including student suspension or dismissal and employee termination, for failing to abide by technology center policies when accessing and using electronic or digital communications.

The Internet provides users the ability to quickly access information on any topic – even topics which are considered harmful to minors. The technology center's IT department has attempted to filter this access in order to protect students from harmful content. In the event inappropriate material is inadvertently accessed, students should promptly report the site to their instructor so that other students can be protected. No individual is permitted to circumvent the technology center's privacy settings by accessing blocked content through alternate methods. In the event an employee needs access to blocked content, he/she should make arrangements through the campus or IT Services director.

Although the technology center's IT Services Department has taken appropriate steps to block offensive material, users may unwittingly encounter offensive material. All users of the technology center's electronic resources are required to exercise personal responsibility for the material they access, send or display, and must not engage in electronic conduct which is prohibited by law or policy. If a student inadvertently accesses or receives offensive material, he/she should report the communication to the assigned instructor. If an employee accesses or receives offensive material, he/she should report the communication to the campus or IT director. No individual is permitted to access, view or distribute materials which are inappropriate or create a hostile environment.

Internet Access - Terms and Conditions.

Acceptable Use - Students. Students agree to access material in furtherance of educational goals or for personal leisure and recreational use which does not otherwise violate this policy. No student may make an electronic or digital communication which disrupts the education environment - even if that communication is made outside of school or on personal equipment. Types of electronic or digital communications which can disrupt the education environment include, but are not limited to:

- Sexting
- Harassing, intimidating, threatening or bullying posts, tweets, blogs, images, texts, etc.
- Distributing pictures, recordings or information which is harmful or embarrassing

Students who engage in electronic or digital communications which disrupt the education environment are subject to disciplinary action, including suspension from school. Depending on the nature of the electronic or digital communication, students may also be subject to civil and criminal penalties.

Acceptable Use - Employees. Employees agree to access material in furtherance of educational goals, including research and professional development. Employees are also permitted to judiciously use the technology center's electronic resources for limited personal use, provided that the use is of no cost to the technology center, does not preempt business activity, impede productivity, or otherwise interfere with work responsibilities. Electronic or digital communications made using technology center owned equipment must be professional in nature and cannot be used for the exercise of the employee's free speech rights.

Any electronic or digital communication in which the employee can be identified as an employee of the technology center – regardless of whether the communication is made with

technology center owned equipment or during work hours - must be a professional communication. Accordingly, if the individual is identifiable as a technology center employee, electronic or digital communications must not contain sexual, harassing, discriminatory or immoral content. Further, the communication cannot promote the use of tobacco, drugs, alcohol or be otherwise inconsistent with the technology center's objectives.

Employees are required to maintain appropriate electronic boundaries with students. Such boundaries require that employees refrain from engaging in electronic or digital communications which show an undue interest in select student(s), are of a personal nature, model inappropriate conduct, or are otherwise inconsistent with the technology center's mission and goals. In order to maintain appropriate boundaries, the technology center encourages employees to send group texts or emails rather than personal communications, and to use separate personal and school electronic accounts. Employees must obtain written parental permission prior to posting pictures of minors and must respect personal privacy, including privacy rights granted by FERPA.

Employees are expressly forbidden from using electronic or digital communication in a manner inconsistent with their position as a role model for students. Any employee who engages in inappropriate electronic or digital communication with students is acting outside the scope of his/her employment with the technology center.

Prohibited Use. Users specifically agree that they will not use the Internet to access material which is: threatening, indecent, lewd, obscene, or protected by trade secret. Users further agree that they will not use the technology center's electronic resources for commercial activity, charitable endeavors (without prior administrative approval), product advertisement or political lobbying.

Parental Consent. Parents of minors must review this policy with their student and sign the consent form prior to a minor student being granted Internet access.

Privilege of Use. The technology center's electronic resources, including Internet access, is a privilege which can be revoked at any time for misuse. Prior to receiving Internet access, all users will be required to successfully complete an Internet training program administered by the technology center. This program will be age appropriate and be based on the individual's status as an employee or student.

Internet Etiquette. All users are required to comply with generally accepted standards for electronic or digital communications, including:

- A. **Appropriate Language.** Users must refrain from the use of abusive, discriminatory, vulgar, lewd or profane language in their electronic or digital communications.
- B. **Content.** Users must refrain from the use of hostile, threatening, discriminatory, intimidating, or bullying content in their electronic or digital communications.
- C. **Safety.** Minor students must not include personal contact information (name, address, phone number, address, banking numbers, etc.) in their electronic or digital

communications unless directed to do so by their instructor for educational purposes. Minor students must never agree to meet with someone they met online and must report any electronic or digital communication which makes them uncomfortable to their instructor. Adult students are also encouraged to follow these safety precautions.

- D. Privacy. Users understand that the technology center has access to and can read all electronic or digital communications created and received with technology center resources. Users agree that they will not use technology center resources to create or receive any electronic or digital communications which they want to be private.
- E. System Resources. Users agree to use the technology center's electronic resources carefully so as not to damage them or impede others' use of the technology center's resources. Users will not:
- install any hardware, software, program or app without approval from the IT Services department
 - download large files during peak use hours
 - disable security features
 - create or run a program known or intended to be malicious
 - stream music or video for personal entertainment
- F. Intellectual Property and Copyrights. Users will respect others' works by giving proper credit and not plagiarizing, even if using websites designed for educational and classroom purposes (*See www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html*). Users agree to ask an instructor for help citing sources as needed.

Limitation of Liability. The technology center makes no warranties of any kind, whether express or implied, for the services provided and is not responsible for any damages arising from use of the technology center's technology resources. The technology center is not responsible for the information obtained from the use of its electronic resources and is not responsible for any charges a user may incur while using its electronic resources.

Security. If a user notices a potential security problem, he/she must notify his/her instructor or the IT Services department immediately but should not demonstrate the problem to others or attempt to identify potential security problems. Users are responsible for their individual accounts and must not allow others to use their accounts. Users must not share their access codes or passwords with others. If a user believes his/her account has been compromised, he/she must notify the instructor or IT Services director immediately. Any attempt to log on to the technology center's electronic resources as another user or administrator, or to access restricted material, may result in the loss of access for the remainder of the school year or other disciplinary measures.

Vandalism. No user may harm or attempt to harm any of the technology center's electronic resources. This includes, but is not limited to, uploading or creating a virus or taking any action to disrupt, crash, disable, damage, or destroy any part of the technology center's electronic resources. Further, no user may use the technology center's electronic resources to hack or vandalize another computer or system.

Inappropriate Material. Access to information shall not be restricted or denied solely because of the political, religious or philosophical content of the material. Access will be denied for material which is:

- A. Obscene to minors, meaning (i) material which, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value for minors and, (ii) when an average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find that the material, taken as a whole, appeals to an obsessive interest in sex by minors.
- B. Libelous, meaning a false and unprivileged statement about a specific individual which tends to harm the individual's reputation.
- C. Vulgar, lewd or indecent, meaning material which, taken as a whole, an average person would deem improper for access by or distribution to minors because of sexual connotations or profane language.
- D. Display or promotion of unlawful products or services, meaning material which advertises or advocates the use of products or services prohibited by law from being sold or provided to minors.
- E. Group defamation or hate literature, meaning material which disparages a group or a member of a group on the basis of race, color, sex, pregnancy, gender, gender expression or identity, national origin, religion, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, age, or genetic information or advocates illegal conduct or violence or discrimination toward any particular group of people. This includes racial and religious epithets, "slurs", insults and abuse.
- F. Disruptive to school operations, meaning material which, on the basis of past experience or based upon specific instances of actual or threatened disruptions relating to the information or material in question, is likely to cause a material and substantial disruption of the proper and orderly operation of school activities or school discipline.

Application and Enforceability. The terms and conditions set forth in this policy shall be deemed to be incorporated in their entirety in the Internet Access Agreement executed by each user. By executing the Internet Access Agreement, the user agrees to abide by the terms and conditions contained in this policy. The user acknowledges that any violation of this policy may result in access privileges being revoked and disciplinary action being taken. For students, this means any action permitted by the technology center's policy on student behavior. For employees, this means any action permitted by law, including termination of employment.

Education of Students Regarding Appropriate On-Line Behavior. In compliance with the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act, Section 254(h)(5), the technology center provides education to minors about the appropriate use of the technology center's electronic resources, including interacting with others on social networking and chat sites, and cyber bullying. As a part of that education, guidelines on cyber bullying and internet safety for students are made available to students.