

We live in a remarkable time, technologically. Twenty-first century technology resources offer unprecedented benefits and opportunities in education, communication, and organization.

The Internet, in particular, has expanded these benefits and opportunities. The United States Supreme Court has noted that it is a virtual worldwide library, making millions of previously inaccessible resources available to all users. The United States Congress recognizes that:

“The rapidly developing array of internet and other interactive computer services . . . represent[s] an extraordinary advance in the availability of educational and informational resources to our citizens.” (47 U.S.C. § 230(a)(1))

Technology is a tool to accomplish important objectives: a means to important ends. Like any other tool, technology must be used wisely and effectively to enhance and improve student learning. If it is not used this way, it loses its value; it is simply, in the words of Henry David Thoreau, “an improved means to an unimproved end.” Prudent, resourceful, and safe use of this technology, now more than ever, requires a well-rounded education that equips students, not only with knowledge, but most importantly, with the ability to think clearly and thus help those students assess, value, and use technology effectively as citizens of the 21st Century.

A. SCOPE AND PURPOSES

The Alleghany County School System provides a wide array of technology resources to improve learning, communication, and organizational effectiveness. The term “Technology Resources” includes, but is not necessarily limited to Alleghany County School-owned, -leased, and -controlled computers, computer networks, computer files, software, electronic communications and research media such as Internet access, webpages, electronic mail (e-mail), personal digital assistants (PDAs), cellular phones, digital cameras, two-way radios, and related forms of electronic communication and electronic data files, storage, and manipulation. Recognizing that technology resources are evolving and expanding, this policy encompasses other technologies – present and future – that offer electronic means of communications and data storage and manipulation.

These policies shall govern the use of the Alleghany County School System’s technology resources and, to the extent allowed by law, the use of personal technology resources as they impact the Alleghany County Schools.

The superintendent shall ensure that the Alleghany County School System’s computers with Internet access comply with federal requirements regarding filtering software and Internet safety policies. The superintendent shall develop any regulations necessary to meet such requirements and shall submit any certifications necessary to meet the

requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act.

B. USER RISK

There are many risks – known and unknown – associated with technology use, particularly the use of the Internet, e-mail, and related electronic communications. Such risks include unauthorized access by others to one's personal information, computer hacking, fraud, defamation, exposure to harmful materials (e.g., those that are pornographic, obscene, threatening, violent, abusive, or otherwise improperly offensive), financial exploitation, and conveying inaccurate, provocative, or false information.

Officials of the Alleghany County School System will strive to take all reasonable measures to minimize these risks for users and will provide users with instruction and guidelines to assist them. For instance, the Alleghany County School System provides content filtering capabilities to comply with federal regulations pursuant to the Children's Internet Protection Act and E-Rate provisions. Because Internet filtering controls are imperfect, they cannot block all undesirable content or protect against all risks. Likewise, they may inadvertently block access to educationally appropriate and valuable information. Users, therefore, assume these risks for themselves when they use the Alleghany County School System's technology resources.

C. LIMITATIONS

The availability to users of the Alleghany County School System's technology resources, particularly of electronic communications tools like e-mail and the Internet, is intended primarily for furthering the Alleghany County School System's educational mission and not for any non-educational personal user benefit. Unless otherwise expressly intended, the Alleghany County School System's technology resources are not offered to create any public or limited public forum that expands users' rights of expression or other legal rights.

D. OWNERSHIP, MONITORING, AND CONTROL

All Alleghany County School System technology resources are owned or leased by the Alleghany County Schools. Use of the Alleghany County School System's technology resources is a privilege, not a right. Any files, documents, communications, etc., generated by using technology resources remain the property of the Alleghany County School System,

which reserves the right to direct, monitor, control, and limit or revoke the use of those

resources. The availability of these resources does not confer upon any user a legal expectation of privacy free from such monitoring or control. Authorized officials may, at any time, reasonably review, restrict or otherwise regulate the use of these resources. Furthermore, the Alleghany County School System reserves the right to deny or restrict user access to technology resources by implementing monitoring and/or blocking devices and software.

E. PRIVACY AND DISCLOSURE OF TECHNOLOGY RESOURCE USE AND DATA

The Alleghany County School System will strive to fulfill its obligations to protect all legally confidential information. The Alleghany County School System's technology resources, however, are not inherently secure or private and may be subject to unauthorized intrusion or hacking. In addition, the Alleghany County School System reserves the right to disclose any user's electronic communications or data to Alleghany County School System or non-Alleghany County School System's personnel or agencies to the extent permitted or required by law, including disclosure to public safety and social service officials or other legitimate third parties.

Users should be aware that, because the primary function of such technology resources is to further the Alleghany County School System's public educational mission, many records produced by these resources are subject to the state's public records laws. Thus, for example, the Internet sites viewed or the e-mails sent by Alleghany County School System's staff may be public records subject to disclosure. Regardless of whether such uses generate public records, the Alleghany County School System has the right to review and monitor ALL uses of its technology resources.

F. DISCLAIMER AGAINST LOSS OR DAMAGE

The Alleghany County School System does not offer any warranty against defect or damage to users of its technology resources. The Alleghany County School System is not responsible for damages or losses suffered by users, including loss of data resulting from delays, disruptions, or other causes. Furthermore, the Alleghany County School System provides no assurance regarding the accuracy or quality of information obtained through such resources, particularly via e-mail or the Internet.

G. CIVIL AND CRIMINAL REMEDIES

In addition to administrative actions and sanctions, the Alleghany County School System reserves the right to pursue civil and criminal actions against individuals or entities that

threaten the safety and security, of the Alleghany County School System's operations or any member of its community. This includes, but is not limited to, the following claims or actions: illegal harassment; threatening, tampering with, or destroying school property and technology resources; cyberstalking, invasion of privacy; identity theft; defamation; copyright, patent and trademark infringement; communication or carrying out of threats of violence; tampering with Alleghany County School System's technology resources; transmitting pornographic, obscene, or other sexually prohibited communications; or conspiracy to engage in any illegal activity. (Appendix A of these Technology Resource Policies contains selected state criminal provisions of which users should be aware.) The Alleghany County School System also reserves the right, to the extent permitted by law, to collect all damages, attorney fees, and other costs incurred to pursue its rights.

H. PROCEDURES

1. Reporting Misuse or External Threats

Any member of the Alleghany County School System's community shall promptly report any violation or threat of violation under these policies to an appropriate Alleghany County School System's official. Specifically, students shall report to their teacher, their principal or his/her designee and employees shall report to their immediate or higher level supervisor the following types of abuses of or threats to the Alleghany County School System's property or members:

- a. Illegal use of the Alleghany County School System's technology resources and violations of the Alleghany County School System's policies or rules by any user;
- b. Receipt of or access to any electronic information made available from individuals or entities outside the Alleghany County School System if the communications of such information is illegal, threatening to the safety or security of persons or property of the Alleghany County School System community, or that contains any content that is otherwise prohibited by Alleghany County School System policies; or
- c. Use of technology resources that threatens the integrity or security of any Alleghany County School System technology resources or otherwise undermines the purpose for their use.

2. Sanctions and Procedures for Violations of this Policy

Misuse of technology resources may subject violators to discipline under the Alleghany County School System or an individual school disciplinary policies and procedures. Any violation may also result in the curtailment, suspension, or complete loss of technology privileges.

3. Exceptions and Appeals

If any user believes an exception to the Alleghany County School System's technology resources policies is necessary, the user may seek prior approval for such exception through the general grievance procedures available to students and staff.

I. NOTICE OF AND FAMILIARITY WITH TECHNOLOGY POLICIES

The Superintendent, principals, and other supervisory staff or their designees shall notify employees and students of all technology resource policies. All users shall be familiar and comply with the Technology Resources General Provisions (Policy 10000), General Use Policy for All Users (Policy 10100) and such other policies that govern technology resource use for their respective user group (e.g., Policy 10200 for student users, Policy 10300 for employee users, etc.)

Adopted: