

***THIS 2023 PROCEDURE SUPERSEDES ANY PREVIOUS INTERNET PROCEDURE USED BY
HWRSD***

Acceptable Internet Usage Procedures (AUP)

Introduction:

It is the policy of the Hamilton Wenham Regional School District (HWRSD) to maintain a school environment free of harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law. Employees and students shall observe this policy in the use of the Network and employ digital etiquette by using appropriate, non-abusive language. Employees and students will refrain from making defamatory remarks or racial slurs, bullying and using obscene or profane language.

Purpose:

HWRSD is pleased to offer its students and staff access to the District-wide school network (“The Network”), which also serves as the District’s gateway to the Internet. The Network is used to enhance productivity through increased communication within the District, and assist its employees in upgrading their skills through greater exchange of information with their peers. The Network also assists the District in communicating with parents, social service agencies, government agencies and businesses.

The Network is not a public forum and HWRSD reserves the right to place reasonable limits on materials posted or accessed through this network.

The Network may not be used for personal or commercial purposes, such as, but not limited to, offering, providing, or purchasing goods and/or services for personal use.

The principal purpose of the District’s Network/equipment/access is for the education of students and professional use by its staff. It is the vision of the Hamilton Wenham Regional School District to provide equitable, effective, and efficient technology that expands instructional capacity and enables all students to engage in rigorous learning. To that end, we incorporate technologies utilizing the principles of universal design learning and assistive technology* throughout our system in order to:

- Maximize access to curricula
- Provide authentic and relevant global resources
- Foster learning, collaboration, exploration, and discovery
- Develop critical, creative, and analytical thinking skills
- Collect, assess, and share knowledge
- Synthesize information and demonstrate conceptual understanding
- Streamline organizational tasks

* The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that state, local, educational and public websites be made accessible. In general - The term ‘assistive technology’ means any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability.

Definitions:

“HWRSD Network” is defined as the technology devices, digital resources and network infrastructure.

“Network infrastructure” is defined as the Internet, Google Apps for Education, email, hardware, software, printers, peripheral devices, individual computer devices and web enabled devices.

“Information technology” is defined as the use of hardware and software services to store, retrieve, transmit and manipulate data including; Internet access, blogging, podcasting, email, published and non-published documents, and various forms of multimedia technology.

“Educational use” is defined as a use that supports curriculum activities, career and professional development activities, communication, research, learning and other district related activities of an educational nature.

“Devices” refer to district owned/leased devices; staff owned devices, and student owned devices.

Privilege:

For all users, Internet access through HWRSD and the use of district owned or managed computers, services and networks is a privilege; therefore, inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of this privilege. Based on the acceptable use guidelines outlined in this document, the system administrator may revoke, deny or suspend privileges. All activities on the HWRSD network are NOT private. This means someone can read what you write and see the web pages you visit.

Children’s Online and Privacy Protection Act

Congress enacted the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act, 15 U.S.C. §6501, et seq. (COPPA) in 1998. COPPA required the Federal Trade Commission to issue and enforce regulations concerning children’s online privacy. The Commission’s original COPPA Rule became effective on April 21, 2000. The Commission issued an amended Rule on December 19, 2012 that became effective on July 1, 2013.

HWRSD works diligently to comply with COPPA requirements. HWRSD does not collect student personal information or transmit such information directly to online entities.

Children’s Internet Protection Act (Federal Communications Commission Guide Enclosed):

The District will comply with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA), enacted by Congress in 2000, which requires schools to block or filter Internet access to content that is: (a) obscene, (b) child pornography or, (c) harmful to minors (for computers that are accessed by minors). However, it is recognized that any filter alone is no guarantee that users will be prevented from accessing Internet resources that are profane, offensive, obscene, or otherwise objectionable. All users accessing the internet do so at their own risk. Students should report accidental or inappropriate sites to a teacher or administrator for blocking. An administrator, supervisor or other appointed person may temporarily disable the filtering technology or other content protection measure, during use by an adult, only to enable access for bona fide educational uses and other lawful purposes. Internet usage is logged and monitored for use consistent with the educational mission of HWRSD.

Recording:

In addition, HWRSD complies with the unauthorized recording laws. Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 272, § 99 prohibits unauthorized recording. HWRSD requires that all parties must be notified prior to being recorded, preferably in written form. This includes other students and/or staff members.

Email and the Public Records Law:

Email messages concerning official school business are generally considered public record information that is subject to disclosure under the Massachusetts public records law. [G.L. c. 66 section 10; G.L. c. 4, s. 7 (26)]. Documents prepared in anticipation of litigation or to reply to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) should not be disclosed without prior approval from the Superintendent.

Monitoring:

There is NO expectation of privacy related to information stored and transmitted over

the HWRSD network. HWRSD staff routinely performs maintenance and monitoring of the system. The information on the network in general files and email is not private and is subject to review by the network manager at the request of the HWRSD administration to substantiate inappropriate activity and to comply with requests of law enforcement agencies as part of their investigations.

Data Confidentiality:

Some district employees, as part of their jobs, have access to confidential information such as personal data about identifiable individuals. Employees are expected to use appropriate judgment and caution in communications concerning students and staff to ensure that personally identifiable information remains confidential. Employees are strictly prohibited from acquiring access to and/or disseminating such confidential information unless access to and/or is authorized and required by their job.

Copyright:

Employees and students should assume that most materials available on the Internet are protected by copyright. Unauthorized copying of copyrighted material is prohibited. Additionally, any material obtained from the Internet and included in one's own work must be properly cited regardless of the copyright status. The HWRSD will cooperate with copyright protection agencies investigating copyright infringement by users of the computer systems and network of the HWRSD. Copying, selling or distributing copyrighted or proprietary material without the written permission of the author or publisher, or engaging in plagiarism is illegal.

Criminal Acts/Cyber Crimes:

These include, but are not limited to, gaining unauthorized access to other systems, arranging for the sale or purchase of drugs or alcohol, participating in gang activity, threatening others, transferring obscene material, cyber-stalking, cyber-bullying, vandalism, using another person's identity and/or identity fraud, or attempting to do any of the above. This also includes libel, defined as: publicly defaming people through publishing material on the Internet, email, etc.

Terms and Conditions

By signing this Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP), staff, students and guardians acknowledge the following rules and conditions: As an HWRSD member, I understand that access to the school Network is a privilege, and not a right. I understand that my school networks and accounts are owned by HWRSD and are not private. HWRSD has the right to access my information at any time. I understand that the system administrator will deem what conduct is inappropriate use, if such conduct is not specified in this agreement. I will use technology in a manner that complies with federal, state or local law or regulation, including copyright laws and School Committee policy. I understand that I am to notify an adult immediately if I encounter material that violates appropriate use. Staff will notify the system administrator immediately upon encountering a violation of this agreement.

I will respect and protect the privacy of others and myself.

- It is prohibited to use anyone else's account or share passwords.
- I will not distribute information about self or others.
- I will not impersonate or pretend to be someone else while online. This includes sending out email, creating accounts or posting messages in someone else's name.

I will respect and protect the property of others.

- I will not infringe copyrights (no making illegal copies of commercial software, music, games or movies).

I will respect the security of all electronic resources.

- I will not attempt to bypass security settings or Internet filters, or interfere with the operation of the network.
- I will not make any changes to the computer settings nor change or delete any files or directories stored on school computers or device that are not part of my user profile, my allocated file storage or my personal device settings.

I will be a responsible member of my school and my community when I am on the Internet.

- I will use the Internet for educational purposes or the business of the school district.
- I will use the Internet responsibly.
- I will always be polite and use appropriate language.
- I will not search, retrieve, circulate or display hate-based or offensive information, information about weapons, or sexually explicit material.
- I will not use the Internet for, or in support of, illegal purposes or activities.
- I will not buy, sell, advertise, or otherwise conduct business, on the Internet.
- I will not use the Internet for political purposes, except for using the Network to communicate with elected officials.

Due Process

The HWRSD reserves the rights to deny, revoke or suspend, without prior notification, specific user privileges and/or take other disciplinary action for violation of this policy. Additionally, all handbook regulations apply to the use of the Network. In the event that there is a claim that an employee or student has violated any of the guidelines of this policy, he or she will be provided with written notice of the suspected violation and an opportunity to be heard. HWRSD will also cooperate fully with local, state and/or federal officials in any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through the Network.

HWRSD Limitations of Liability

HWRSD assumes no responsibility for any loss or corruption of data resulting from the use of the District's information technology resources. Employees and students must take full responsibility for their own actions.

I have read, understand and acknowledge the HWRSD Acceptable Usage Policy

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____