

Instruction

Internet Acceptable Use: Filtering

The Region 14 Public Schools is fortunate to have access to the Internet at all schools. This access provides increased opportunities for students and staff to conduct research and to communicate locally, nationally, and internationally.

This wonderful resource also provides access to material unsuitable for students and which has no educational value. It is the responsibility of all District staff to ensure that the Internet, as used in District Schools, is appropriately guided and monitored. Moreover, staff also has the responsibility to conduct themselves in an appropriate private manner when using the Internet.

In order to ensure that the District's Internet connection is used in the appropriate manner and that all users are protected from any inappropriate information published on the Internet, the District has and is continuing to implement the following:

1. Professional development opportunities to help teachers integrate the use of the Internet into classroom teaching.
2. Use of the computers, computer systems, software electronic access privileges and networks shall be restricted to those users who have signed the District's "Acceptable Use Policy." In the case of minors, the "Acceptable Use Policy" must also be signed by the student's parent or guardian.
3. Implementation of a system developed to filter out Internet sites with content/material considered inappropriate or harmful and unacceptable for student viewing. Such content includes that which is considered obscene, child pornography or harmful to minors. A committee of teachers, parents, and administrators shall be used to receive appeals from users who indicate that they have a specific need for using a filtered site.
4. All Internet access must be filtered, whether minors (under 18) or adults are using the computer system and regardless of the number of computers with Internet access provided by the school or library.

The Internet changes rapidly making it impossible to filter all objectionable sites. Therefore, the staff role in supervising and monitoring student access to the Internet is critical. In addition, each individual has the responsibility to monitor their own navigation on the Internet to avoid undesirable sites.

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(cf. 6141.321 - Acceptable Use of the Internet)

(cf. 6141.322 - Web Sites/Pages)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
1-19(b)(11) Access to public records. Exempt records.
10-15b Access of parent or guardians to student's records.
10-209 Records not to be public.
11-8a Retention, destruction and transfer of documents
11-8b Transfer or disposal of public records. State Library Board to adopt regulations.
46b-56 (e) Access to Records of Minors.
Connecticut Public Records Administration Schedule V - Disposition of Education Records (Revised 1983).
Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (section 438 of the General Education Provisions Act, as amended, added by section 513 of PL 93-568, codified at 20 U.S.C. 1232g.).
Dept. of Education. 34 CFR. Part 99 (May 9, 1980 45 FR 30802) regs. implementing FERPA enacted as part of 438 of General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g)-parent and student privacy and other rights with respect to educational records, as amended 11/21/96.
Public Law 106-554 Fiscal 2001 Appropriations Law containing the "Children's Internet Protection Act"
Public Law 94-553, The Copyright Act of 1976, 17 U.S.C. 101 et. seq.
Public Law 110-385 Broadband Data Improvement Act/Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act
Reno v. ACLU, 521 U.S. 844 (1997)
Ginsberg v. New York, 390 U.S. 629, at 642, n.10 (1968)
Board of Education v. Pico, 457 U.S. 868 (1988)
Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier, 484 U.S. 620, 267 (1988)

Policy adopted: February 26, 2024

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 14
Bethlehem and Woodbury, Connecticut

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Preface

When minors are using the Internet, access to visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography or harmful to minors must be blocked or filtered. When adults are using the Internet, only material which is obscene or child pornography must be filtered or blocked.

Definitions

1. **Obscene** is to be determined by the following test:
 - Whether the average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest;
 - Whether the work depicts sexual conduct in a patently offensive way; and
 - Whether the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.

1. **Child Pornography**, as defined in 18 U.S.C. 2256 means any visual depiction, including any photograph, film, video, picture, computer or computer-generated image or picture, whether made or produced by electronic, mechanical, or other means, of sexually explicit conduct, where:
 - the production of such visual depiction involves the use of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct;
 - such visual depiction is, or appears to be, of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct;
 - such visual depiction has been created, adapted, or modified to appear that an identifiable minor is engaging in sexually explicit conduct; or
 - such visual depiction is advertised, promoted, presented, described, or distributed in such a manner that conveys the impression that the material is or contains a visual depiction of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct.

1. Material **“Harmful to Minors”** is any picture, graphic image file or other visual depiction that:
 - taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex or excretion;
 - depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable to minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual conduct, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and
 - taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value to minors.

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Criteria for Filtering of Objectionable Sites

Anything that falls under at least one of the categories below shall be blocked/filtered. This list will be updated/modified as required.

Nudity/Pornography

- Prevailing U.S. standards for nudity (e.g., genitalia, female breasts)
- Provocative semi-nudity (e.g., lingerie models)
- Sites which contain pornography or links to pornographic sites
- **Exceptions:** Classical nudity (e.g., Michelangelo), swimsuit models

Sexuality

- Sites which contain material of a mature level (elementary/middle school levels)
- Images or descriptions of sexual aids
- Descriptions of sexual acts or techniques
- Sites which contain inappropriate personal ads

Violence

- Sites which promote violence
- Images or a description of graphically violent acts (rape, dismemberment, torture, etc.)
- Graphic autopsy or crime-scene images

Crime

- Information of performing criminal acts (e.g., drug or bomb making, computer “hacking”)
- Illegal file archives (e.g., software piracy)

Drug Use

- Sites which promote the use of illegal drugs
- Material advocating the use of illegal drugs (e.g., marijuana, LSD) or abuse of any drug (e.g., drinking-game rules)
- **Exceptions:** Material with valid educational use (e.g., drug-use statistics)

Tastelessness

- Images or descriptions of excretory acts (e.g., vomiting, urinating)
- Graphic medical images outside of a medical context
- **Exception:** Graphic medical images within a medical context

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Criteria for Filtering of Objectionable Sites (continued)

Language/Profanity

- Passages/Words too coarse to be softened by the word filter
- Profanity within images/sounds/multimedia files
- Adult humor (e.g., sexually or racially tinged)

NOTE: The focus is on American English, but profanity in other languages or dialects is blocked if brought to our attention.

Discrimination/Intolerance

- Material advocating discrimination (e.g., racial or religious intolerance)
- Sites which promote intolerance, hate, or discrimination

Interactive Mail/Chat

- Sites which contain or allow inappropriate e-mail correspondence
- Sites which contain or allow inappropriate chat areas

Inappropriate Banner Acts

- Advertisements containing inappropriate images

Gambling

- Sites which allow or promote online gambling

Weapons

- Sites which promote illegal weapons
- Sites which promote the use of illegal weapons

Other Inappropriate Material

- * Body modification: tattooing, branding, cutting, etc.

Judgment Calls

- Whether a page is likely to have more questionable material in the future (e.g., sites under construction whose names indicate questionable material)

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Procedures For Suggesting Site Be Blocked or Unblocked

If District staff members observe a site which they believe to contain inappropriate material according to the criteria provided here, they may request that the site (URL) be blocked. Education Technology staff will review the site for inappropriateness. If the site meets the criteria for filtering, steps will be taken to block the site.

Disabling Blocking/Filtering Devices

The technology protection measures used to block or filter a site may/may not be disabled during use by an adult to enable access to bona fide research or other lawful purpose. (*NOTE: CIPA does not require schools or libraries to afford adults unfiltered Internet access.*)

There are no exceptions to the requirement that Internet access be blocked/filtered at all times for minors. If material has been wrongly blocked, it must be unblocked by the company providing the software, after a request has been made by the school or library.