

7.6 ACCEPTABLE COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE

The Davidson County School (DCS) system provides access to the Internet throughout the district via its wide area network. The Internet enables students and employees to explore thousands of databases, libraries, and bulletin boards while exchanging information with Internet users throughout the world. Valuable information can be gleaned from the Internet, but families are warned that some material may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive to some people. The schools use Internet resources to meet educational goals.

The district provides schools with filtering services to create a safer and more productive Internet for students. Teachers attempt to monitor and direct student activity; however, students may find ways to access other materials. Educators in DCS believe that the benefits of the Internet far exceed the disadvantages.

Parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources. Therefore, DCS supports and respects each family's right to decide whether or not to grant permission for access. A permission form for Internet use must be signed by the student and parent or guardian before access is permitted.

Teachers make every attempt to monitor and set guidelines for Internet access, but students are ultimately responsible for appropriate behavior on the school's computer network, just as they are responsible for appropriate behavior on the school campus.

The following actions are specifically not permitted on school system equipment on or off school premises:

- a. Accessing, producing, posting, sending, or displaying material that is deemed offensive in nature is prohibited. This includes obscene, discriminating, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, disrespectful, or suggestive language or images. Students and teachers may not bypass the district's filtering system to gain access to restricted sites.
- b. Engaging in any illegal, inappropriate or offensive activities or accessing material advocating illegal acts or violence is not allowed. This includes material related to pornography, hate literature, illegal gambling, illegal weapons, terrorist activities, or other illegal activities or activities or material that ridicules others on the basis of race, creed, religion, gender, disability, national origin, or sexual orientation.
- c. Using the Internet/email system to harass, insult, or attack others will not be permitted.
- d. Tampering with computers, computer systems, software, or computer networks is prohibited. Only district or school level media, technology personnel, or an individual designated by the Superintendent, should access computer network settings to include passwords, data, and IP addresses. Intentional propagation of viruses is prohibited.
- e. Plagiarizing or infringing copyrights of works found on the Internet is illegal.
- f. Intentionally wasting limited resources including disk space and printing supplies is not allowed.

- g. Using computers or the Internet/email system for commercial purposes or in support of “for profit” activities or other outside employment or business activity is prohibited.
- h. Using the system for political lobbying is prohibited.
- i. Posting personal or private information about oneself or other people on the Internet, such as name, address, and telephone number is not allowed.
- j. Attempting to gain unauthorized access to the school file servers and restricted network areas is prohibited.
- k. Downloading and installing software applications, shareware, and freeware without prior approval from Media and Technology staff is not permitted. Examples could include but are not limited to screen savers, multimedia applications, Yahoo toolbar, and Web Shots.
- l. Unauthorized use of real-time Internet services such as chat rooms, instant messaging, social networking, and blogging for non-instructional purposes is prohibited. Prior approval can be obtained from the district Media and Instructional Technology staff.
- m. Down-streaming music and/or video for non-instructional purposes is prohibited during school hours by all users. These activities can degrade the performance of the overall functionality of the wide area network.
- n. Using computers and/or Internet sites for non-instructional games is prohibited.
- o. Creating, copying, transmitting, or retransmitting chain letters or other unauthorized mass mailings regardless of subject matter is prohibited.
- p. Using outside email systems not approved for curriculum purposes is prohibited. Gaggles is the only approved email service for DCS Students. Student email accounts for special projects can be requested through the district Media and Instructional Technology Department.
- q. The installation of software on a school computer by anyone other than school or district technology or media personnel is prohibited.
- r. Access to the internet for non-instructional purposes during class time is prohibited.
- s. Use of personal technology equipment, to include laptops, wireless devices, personal digital assistants (PDA) and workstations within the school system is expressly prohibited without prior written consent of the Davidson County Schools Technology Department

Use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use of the Internet may result in disciplinary or legal action and Davidson County Schools reserves the right to monitor any student or employee’s use of the Internet.

Legal Reference: PL 106-554

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