

## **Instruction**

### **Computers: Acceptable Use Policy for Responsible Computer, Network and Internet Use**

#### **Overview**

The Plymouth Board of Education (Board) provides its students and staff access to a multitude of technology resources. Access to information and communication technologies (ICT) is considered a privilege and not a right. ICT resources consist of any technology and/or devices that access or convey information, software applications, Internet resources and Internet environments.

These resources provide opportunities to enhance learning and improve communication within our community and with the global community beyond the local campus. The advantages of having access to these resources are viewed by the Board as far greater than any potential downside. However, with the privilege of access is the responsibility of students, teachers, staff and the public to exercise appropriate personal responsibility in their use of these resources. The policies of the Board are intended to promote the most effective, safe, productive, and instructionally sound uses of networked information and communication tools. The District also makes a good faith effort to protect its students from exposure to Internet materials that are harmful or explicit. The District maintains a system of Internet content filtering devices and software controls that meet federal standards established in the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

#### **Digital Citizen**

The District uses information and technology in safe, legal, and responsible ways. It is incumbent upon all members of the school community to use technology ethically, constructively, and with respect for the work of others. Independent and appropriate use of information and communication technologies is predicated upon responsible and ethical conduct. Therefore, a responsible digital citizen, whether staff, student or volunteer, is one who:

- **Respects One's Self.** Users will select online names that are appropriate and honest about one's identity, and will consider the information and images that are posted online. Users will communicate and interact with others in respectful ways.
- **Respects Others.** Users will refrain from using technologies to bully, tease or harass other people. Users will not access or use hate-based or sexually explicit materials nor will they disparage others.
- **Protects One's Self and Others.** Users will protect themselves and others by reporting abuse and not forwarding inappropriate materials or communications. Users will adhere to age requirements and guidelines of all websites. Users will protect personal information and respect the privacy of others' information.

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#### **Digital Citizen** (continued)

- **Respects Intellectual Property.** Users will suitably cite any and all use of websites, books, media, etc.
- **Protects Intellectual Property.** Users will request to use the software and media others produce. Respect will be shown for intellect and creativity by asking permission, giving credit and observing the law.
- **Respects Classroom Guidelines.** Users will follow all guidelines set by teachers regarding the use of electronic devices. Users will respect teachers by keeping all communication school related.

#### **Expectations**

Responsible use of the technology resources provided by the Board is expected to be ethical, respectful, academically honest, and supportive of the school's mission. Each computer user has the responsibility to respect every other person in our community and on the Internet. Digital storage and electronic devices used for school purposes will be treated as extensions of the physical school space. Administrators, or their designees, may review files and communications (including electronic mail) to insure that users are using the system in accordance with Board policy. Users should not expect that files stored on servers or disks will be private.

Some activities are expressly prohibited by law. Users are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. The following guidelines are intended to clarify expectations for conduct, but they should not be construed as all-inclusive. Given the nature of emerging technologies, it is impossible to anticipate or prevent all problems that may occur.

- Use of electronic devices should be consistent with the Board's educational objectives, mission and curriculum.
- Transmission of any material in violation of any local, federal and state laws is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to copyrighted material, licensed material and threatening or obscene material.
- Intentional or unintentional use of computing resources to access or process, proxy sites, pornographic material, explicit text or files, or files dangerous to the integrity of the network is strictly prohibited.
- Software and/or services may not be installed or downloaded on school devices without prior approval of the Superintendent or designee.

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#### **Expectations** (continued)

- Use of computing resources for commercial activities, product advertisement or religious or political lobbying is prohibited.
- Users may be held personally and financially responsible for malicious or intentional damage done to network software, data, user accounts, hardware and/or unauthorized costs incurred.
- Files stored on district-managed networks are the property of the school district and, as such, may be inspected at any time and should not be considered private.
- Materials published for electronic publication must be for educational purposes. School administrators, teachers and staff may monitor these materials to ensure compliance with content standards.

Communications via ICT resources are often public in nature and general school rules and communication apply. It is expected that users will at all times comply with District standards and will act in a responsible and legal manner in accordance with District standards as well as with federal and state laws.

It is important that all users and parents understand that the District, as owner of the ICT resources, reserves the right to monitor and review the use of ICT resources. Such monitoring or review will be limited and done, as needed to ensure that the systems are being used for District-related educational purposes. Therefore, all users must be aware that they should not have any expectation of personal privacy in the use of these ICT resources.

Monitoring access is for, but not limited to, the following reasons:

- Ensuring the safety and security of people and resources;
- Ensuring positive learning and work environments;
- Keeping schools safe from harassment, intimidation or threats;
- Ensuring ICT resources use relates to educational mission and goals;
- Preventing breaches of confidentiality;
- Prevention of copyright infringements;
- Ensuring appropriate Internet access;
- Ensuring appropriate communication messages, such as email, blogs, chats and discussion forums; and
- Ensuring appropriate file downloads and print requests.

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#### **Policy Violations**

The District reserves the right to refuse access to the Internet to anyone. Violating any portion of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including temporary or permanent ban on computer or Internet use, suspension or dismissal from school, and/or legal action. The District may cooperate with law enforcement officers in investigations related to illegal activities conducted through its network.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

53a-182b Harassment in the first degree: Class D felony. (as amended by PA 95-143)

20 U.S.C. 254 Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000

47 U.S.C. Children's Online Protection Act of 1998

Public Law 110-385 Broadband Data Improvement Act/Protecting Children in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act

**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR INTERNET AND OTHER  
COMPUTER NETWORK ACCESS**

The purpose of providing Internet and other computer network access in this district is to promote the exchange of information and ideas with the global community. The following represents a guide to the acceptable use of the technology provided by this district. All network use must be consistent with the policies and goals of this school district. Inappropriate use of district technology will result in the loss of technology use, disciplinary action, and/or referral to legal authorities.

All Internet and other computer network users will be expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Be polite. Messages should not be abusive to others.
2. Take pride in communications. Check spelling and grammar.
3. Use appropriate language. Do not swear or use vulgarities or any other inappropriate language, symbols, or pictures.
4. Protect password confidentiality. Passwords are not to be shared with others. Using another user's account or password or allowing such access by another may be permitted only with the approval of the supervising teacher or system administrator.
5. Do not reveal your personal address or telephone number or those of other persons. No student information protected by FERPA should be electronically transmitted or otherwise disseminated through the network.
6. Do not disguise the point of origin or transmission of electronic mail.
7. Do not send messages that contain false, malicious, or misleading information which may be injurious to a person or a person's property.
8. Illegal activities are strictly prohibited.
9. The district technology is not to be used for playing multi-user or other network intensive games, commercial ventures, Internet relay chat lines, or downloading excessively large files.
10. No charges for services, products, or information are to be incurred without appropriate permission.
11. Do not use the network in such a way that you would disrupt the use of the network by other users.
12. Users shall respect the privacy of others and not read the mail or files of others without their permission. Copyright and licensing laws will not be intentionally violated.

**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR INTERNET AND OTHER  
COMPUTER NETWORK ACCESS**

13. Vandalism will result in cancellation of privileges. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy hardware, data of another user, Internet, or any other agencies or other networks which may be accessed. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses.
14. Report security problems to the supervising teacher or system administrator.
15. Violators of this policy shall hold the district, including its employees and agents, harmless against any and all causes of action, damages, or other liability resulting from the willful or negligent violation of this policy.

**INTERNET ACCESS CONDUCT AGREEMENT**

*Every student, regardless of age, must read and sign below:*

I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the terms of the foregoing Acceptable Use Policy and Code of Conduct. Should I commit any violation or in any way misuse my access to the school district's computer network and the Internet, I understand and agree that my access privilege may be revoked and school disciplinary action may be taken against me.

User's Name (print clearly)\_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone:\_\_\_\_\_

User's Signature:\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Status: I am 18 or older\_\_\_\_\_ I am under 18 \_\_\_\_\_

If I am signing this policy when I am under 18, I understand that when I turn 18, this policy will continue to be in full force and effect and agree to abide by this policy.

**Parent or Guardian:** (If applicant is under 18 years of age, a parent or guardian must also read and sign this agreement.) As the parent or legal guardian of the above student, I have read, understand and agree that my child or ward shall comply with the terms of the school district's Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Policy for the student's access to the school district's computer network and the Internet. I understand that access is being provided to the students for educational purposes only. However, I also understand that it is impossible for the school to restrict access to all offensive and controversial materials and understand my child's or ward's responsibility for abiding by the policy. I am, therefore, signing this policy and agree to indemnify and hold harmless the school, the school district, and the Data Acquisition Site that provides the opportunity to the school district for computer network and Internet access against all claims, damages, losses, and costs, of whatever kind that may result from my child's or ward's use of his or her access to such networks or his or her violation of the foregoing policy. Further, I accept full responsibility for supervision of my child's or ward's use of his or her access account if and when such access is not in the school setting. I hereby give permission for my child or ward to use the building-approved account to access the school district's computer network and the Internet.

Parent or Guardian (please print): \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

This agreement is valid for the current school year only.