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Internet Safety and Acceptable Use Policy

The Worcester Public Schools recognize the value of computer and other electronic resources to improve student learning and enhance the administration and operation of its schools. Worcester Public Schools encourages the responsible use of computers; computer networks, including the internet; and other electronic resources in support of the mission and goals of our district.

It is the policy of the Worcester Public Schools to: (a) prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications; (b) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; (c) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (d) comply with the Children’s Internet Protection Act [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)]. The Worcester Public School system certifies that its schools have adopted and are enforcing Internet safety policies as part of Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act. Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) as amended in the Broadband Data Improvement Act S. 1492 to include educating minors about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyber bullying awareness and response.

« **December 2014** »

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Terms of Agreement

In order to use networked and Internet resources, all students and parents/guardians must sign and return the signature page as contained on the back cover of the Policies Handbook, and those under age 18 must obtain parental permission.

Internet Safety

The Worcester Public Schools is in compliance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). The Worcester Public Schools will comply with any additional state and federal regulations that pertain to technology use within the district and through use of the Worcester Public Schools District network infrastructure and servers that is forthcoming from the local, state and federal regulatory agencies. A third party filtering system is in place that prevents accessing web pages that are 1) obscene, 2) pornographic, or 3) deemed harmful to minors. The district will monitor the online activities of users. The staff and students are advised never to access, keep or send anything that they would not want made public. While some pages are blocked by human intervention, other sites are blocked based on an algorithm that attempts to discern inappropriate sites. Best efforts are made to make the filtering as accurate as possible given the vast number of websites on the Internet. Subject to staff supervision, technology protection measures may be disabled or, in the case of minors, minimized only for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

Inappropriate Network Usage

Staff and students should be aware that some material accessible via the

Internet might contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate or potentially offensive. The Internet is to be used for constructive educational purposes only. Drives and files may be reviewed by network administrators occasionally to maintain system integrity. To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of the Worcester Public Schools online computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications. Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes: a) unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking," and other unlawful activities; and b) unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

Unacceptable Uses

The activities listed below are not permitted. The list of activities described below is not meant to be comprehensive. The Worcester Public Schools reserve the right to make judgments both as to what constitutes inappropriate behavior and the consequences that apply.

- Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
- Using obscene language
- Giving personal information, such as complete name, phone number, address or identifiable photo without permission from teacher and parent or guardian
- Harassing, insulting or attacking others (cyber-bullying)
- Damaging or modifying computers, computer systems or network resources, whether physically or through use of software means such as deletion, formatting, viruses, hacking, phishing, cracking
- Violating copyright laws
- Using others' passwords
- Trespassing in others' folders, work or files
- Intentionally wasting limited resources
- Installing any software, shareware or freeware without Principal approval and installation by on-site contact person
- Employing the network for commercial purposes, financial gain or fraud
- The network, wired and wireless, is for educational uses only. Any non Worcester Public Schools device on the Worcester Public Schools network shall be used for educational purposes only. Non educational use is prohibited.

Penalties

Violation of any terms set forth in this policy may result in the loss of Worcester Public Schools computer network privileges, disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action.

Electronic Messaging Guidelines

Note: Worcester Public Schools' teaching staff is not contractually obligated to check email or other electronic messaging systems. Please contact your child's teacher personally to confirm whether they utilize these systems. When using email, please follow these important guidelines: Email is not confidential. Teachers will not respond via email to discuss contentious, emotional, or highly confidential issues. These issues are to be handled by phone or personal contact. Emails should be used for general information that is non-vital. For example, do not use email to inform a teacher that your child is not to go home on the bus. A teacher may not read the message in time. A phone call should be made to make sure your message is clearly received. More information is available at the district website in the [Email Etiquette Guide](#).

Adoption

The School Committee of the Worcester Public Schools adopted this Internet Safety and Acceptable Use Policy at a public meeting following normal public notice on May 21, 2009.



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