

WILLIAMSPORT AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ACCEPTABLE USE OF COMPUTER COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

This policy sets forth the commitment of the Board of School Directors to quality educational programs in our schools. The Board acknowledges with appreciation the assistance provided by the Educational Technology Advisory Committee (ETAC) in developing this policy.

1. PURPOSE

Computers existing in, or networked within, a school building provide the capability for students and staff to access and share information within that school. By adding outside connections and communication software to a computer, the capability to access and share information expands globally. The most far-reaching means of sharing and accessing information is through the Internet, a world-wide telecommunications network connecting millions of computer systems.

The ability to access and share information via computer, whether across the hall or around the world, will be used by students and staff to further Williamsport Area School District's educational goals and objectives. Through computer communication technology, an unprecedented world-wide, diverse array of resources is available in schools and classrooms to support and enrich the curriculum. Knowing how to access this wealth of information and how to communicate electronically will be fundamental skills in the world in which our students will be citizens and employees.

By facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication, computer communication technology promotes educational excellence. Students are able to contribute to the collection, analysis, and dissemination of knowledge. Communicating and accessing information resources by computer motivates students and encourages independent and critical thinking.

The Board endorses the use of the Internet as an educational tool. Control of all online activities is impossible; therefore, all users who access the Internet through the Williamsport Area School District are required to adhere to strict ethical and legal guidelines.

Internet users are expected to act in a responsible, ethical, and legal manner in accordance with the Williamsport Area School District's educational goals, policies, and discipline procedures; with the mission and purposes of the other networks they may use on the Internet; and with the laws of individual states and the United States.

2. DEFINITION OF ACCEPTABLE USE

Access to the Internet from the Williamsport Area School District must be in support of education and research. Internet users shall agree to the following:

A. Internet users shall refrain from accessing any newsgroups, links, listserv's, or other areas of cyberspace that would be offensive to any student, teacher, or parent because of pornographic content; racial, ethnic, or minority disparagement; encouragement of violence; or illicit/illegal content.

B. Accordingly, Internet users shall be responsible for monitoring and appropriately rejecting materials, links, dialogue, and information accessed

/received by them.

C. Internet users shall keep copyrighted downloads from entering the school via the Internet. Therefore, Internet users shall refrain from downloading games, music, graphics, videos, or text materials that are copyrighted.

D. Plagiarism is unacceptable. Therefore, Internet users shall not distribute, or use material that was created by someone else without permission. Plagiarism is an infraction of the disciplinary code of the Williamsport Area School District. Source citation should be affixed to downloaded material.

E. Appropriate netiquette shall be practiced. Internet users shall be courteous and use appropriate language. Internet users shall not swear or use any forms of obscene, harassing, and abusive language. If Internet users are victims of such harassment, they shall report the abuse immediately to the system administrator, a teacher, or a counselor.

F. Internet users shall not reveal personal information about themselves or others, including but not limited to debit or credit card numbers, addresses, and telephone numbers.

- Students shall promptly disclose to a teacher or an administrator the receipt of any message that is in violation of this policy, is otherwise inappropriate, or makes the student feel uncomfortable.
- Staff shall promptly disclose to building administrator the receipt of any message that is in violation of this policy.

G. If personal accounts become available, Internet users shall not lend any account or password to others.

H. Electronic mail is not guaranteed to be private. System administrators have access to all mail. Messages relating to, or in support of, illegal activities shall be reported to the appropriate authorities.

I. Vandalism shall result in cancellation of Internet privileges. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy the data of another user, of any Internet server, or of any other network service provider. This includes the creation, downloading, or uploading of computer viruses onto the Internet or host site.

### 3. DISTRICT MONITORING AND PRIVACY

Students/Staff are hereby advised that the district reserves the right to make periodic or random inspections of all e-mail postings and internet postings with no prior notice to students/staff to the maximum extent permitted under Pennsylvania law at any given time. The District's network is the property of the District; therefore, District officials may examine the contents of all e-mail transmissions or internet postings at any time.

Students-The District will also allow parents or guardians to have access to any e-mail transmissions of their children that are available to the district upon written approval from district officials.

### 4. DEFINITION OF SECURITY

Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system involves

many users. If a user is aware or suspicious of a security problem on the system, he/she shall notify a system administrator or another teacher. The problem shall not be demonstrated to other users. If personal accounts become available, they shall not be accessed by other individuals without written permission from the account holder, and the password shall not be given to any other individual. Attempts to log in to the system as another user may result in cancellation of user privileges. Attempts by persons who are not system administrators to log in to the Williamsport Area School District Network as a system administrator shall result in cancellation of user privileges. Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with other computer systems may be denied access to the Williamsport Area School District Network.

## 5. CONSEQUENCES OF UNACCEPTABLE USE

In addition to the matters stated in sections 4 and 5, above, Internet access may be revoked for misuse of electronic communication as illustrated below. Misuse may also subject the user to disciplinary action. Any illegal activities shall be reported to the appropriate agencies.

- A. E-mail and Internet postings may not contain inappropriate language. The following are examples on inappropriate language:
  - Language that is obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful.
  - Personal attacks, including those that are based on race, gender, national origin, religion, or sexual orientation.
  - Harassment, which involves repeated communication that is known or should be known to be distressing to the person receiving the communication, or any single communication that is offensive and serves no legitimate purpose.
  - False or defamatory information about a person or organization.
- B. E-mail and Internet postings should respect the privacy of others. The following are examples of transmissions that would violate this policy.
  - Reposting or retransmission of a message sent to a student without the sender's permission.
  - Posting of private or identifying information about another person.
  - Using another person's identification or passwords to gain access to the District's Network or for any other purpose.
- C. Electronic communication will be used for legitimate school and career development purposes.
  - Any attempt to use the District's Network for economic gain, including but not limited to the transmission or posting of "chain letters" or "pyramid schemes," and the use of the system for the sale of things or services.
  - Any attempt to compromise the security of the District's Network, or to gain access to information that is not intended to be valuable to Internet users, whether part of the District's Network or not. Internet users are expressly prohibited from attempting to "hack" into the District's Network or to use the district computer equipment to "hack" into the sites or information belonging to others.
  - Sending repeated transmissions to individuals or a group, or sending of unsolicited messages or transmissions that serve no legitimate purpose,

including the practice commonly known as "spamming."

D. Internet Users will otherwise use the District's Network in a way that will respect the District's computer resources. E-mail will be checked frequently and will be deleted promptly after it is determined that the message need not be stored electronically.

This policy is intended to be illustrative. All users of the system should recognize that no policy can anticipate all of the ways in which a system can be misused. The district may take such action as it determines, in its discretion, is necessary to prevent misuse or abuse of its Network, and may impose discipline for actions that are not specifically covered in this policy. Discipline imposed may include termination of the privilege to use the network, and, when determined to be appropriate, may also include suspension or expulsion from school and referral to criminal authorities.

#### 6. LIMITATION OF LIABILITY

The Williamsport Area School District makes no express or implied warranties for the Internet access it provides. The accuracy and quality of information obtained cannot be guaranteed. The Williamsport Area School District does not guarantee the availability of access to the Internet and shall not be responsible for any information that may be lost, damaged, or unavailable due to technical or other difficulties.

Access to computer communication technology shall be provided for school-related academic activities only. Information sent or received cannot be assured to be private. Staff members shall be held harmless for student use of the Internet when students are violating policies and guidelines that they have agreed to uphold.

The Williamsport Area School District shall be held harmless for employee use of the Internet when they are violating policies and guidelines that they have agreed to uphold.

The District will not be responsible for financial obligations arising through the unauthorized use of the Network.

All Internet users shall sign the "WASD Contract Regarding the Use of Internet" before initiating access to the Internet using the District's computer communication technology.

#### 7. DELEGATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

Oversight of the implementation of this policy shall be the responsibility of ETAC/ATAC, a subcommittee of the Curriculum Council.