

**COMPUTER, NETWORK, INTERNET AND E-MAIL AND
OTHER FORMS OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION
ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY
FOR STUDENTS OF THE ABINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

The Internet is a vast, global network linking computers at universities, schools, science labs, and other sites. Through the Internet, one can communicate with people all over the world through a number of discussion forums, as well as through electronic mail. In addition, many files of educational value are available for downloading. Because of its enormous size, the Internet's potential is without boundaries. It is possible to speak with prominent scientists, world leaders, and close friends. With such great potential for education also comes the potential for abuse. It is the purpose of the guidelines to make sure that all who use the Abington Public Schools' Computer Network, which includes Internet access and electronic mail capability, use this resource in an appropriate manner.

The Abington Public Schools' Technology Network, which includes Internet access, electronic mail capability, voice mail, telephones, fax machines, etc., exists solely for educational purposes, which are defined as classroom activities, career and professional development and high quality self-discovery activities of an educational nature. Although limited personal use of these systems is authorized, provided it does not interfere with any students' work or the business of the Abington Public Schools, the user acknowledges that they have no expectation of privacy in connection with the use of these systems or with the transmission, receipt, or storage of information on these systems. The Abington Public Schools' computer network is not to be considered a resource intended for use as a public forum or for any purpose that is not directly related to the delivery of educational services.

Members of the Abington Public Schools' community are responsible for good behavior on school computer networks just as they are in a classroom or school hallway. Communications on the network may reach larger audiences than face-to-face conversations or telephone discussions. General school rules for behavior, as stated in student handbooks, and communications apply. Access to network services will be provided to those who act in a considerate and responsible manner. Discipline will be imposed pursuant to the student disciplinary code as set forth in the school's student handbook.

The Abington Public Schools believes that the benefits to students from access to information resources and opportunity for collaboration available through the Internet exceed the potential disadvantages. However, the parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources. Parents or guardians should be aware that their child's level of access to the Internet will depend on that child's grade level. The following is a description of the manner in which the Abington Public Schools intends to incorporate network use and Internet access in the schools:

- a. Grades kindergarten through two. During school time, teachers of students in grades kindergarten through two will guide them toward appropriate materials. Internet access at these grade levels will be limited to teacher-directed and teacher-demonstrated use.
- b. Grades three through eight. Students at these grade levels may have the opportunity to conduct research via the Internet in the classroom, only during directly supervised instruction.
- c. Grades nine through twelve. Students in grades nine through twelve may be given individual access passwords and may have the opportunity to access the Internet and conduct independent research on the Internet, both during classroom instruction and outside of classroom instruction.

The Abington Public Schools will make every reasonable effort to minimize the risk that users will encounter objectionable material on the Internet. However, there is no absolute guarantee that this will not happen. Through the use of suitable technological safeguards, education, supervision, and responsible use, the Abington Public Schools believes that the Internet can be used safely and effectively.

In order for a member of the Abington Public Schools' community to use the computer network, s/he must read the following rules and sign the version of the User Contract appropriate to the user's grade level. Students in grades kindergarten through two are not required to sign the User Contract because they will not be accessing the Internet or using e-mail individually. For users under the age of 18, the User Contract must be signed by a parent or guardian.

The Abington Public Schools use a filter to restrict minors' access to materials that might be harmful to them. The employment of this filter and this Acceptable Use Policy ensure that the Abington Public Schools meet the requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act.

Rules:

1. **NETWORK ACCESS IS A PRIVILEGE, NOT A RIGHT.** The use of the network must be consistent with, and directly related to, the educational objectives of the Abington Public Schools. A violation of the terms of this Acceptable Use Policy may result in suspension or termination of network access privileges (other than directly supervised access during classroom instruction) and may also result in other disciplinary action consistent with the disciplinary policies of the Abington Public Schools and could also result in criminal prosecution where applicable. The Abington Public Schools will cooperate fully with law enforcement officials in any investigation relating to misuse of the Abington Public Schools' computer network.

2. Violation of this Acceptable Use Policy include, but are not limited to, the following conduct:

- a. Communicating or generating material that causes a person to fear for their own safety, the safety of others or is designed to insult a person or will likely injure a person's reputation by exposing them to hatred, contempt or ridicule commonly referred to as cyber bullying.
- b. Intentionally placing unlawful or inappropriate information on a system
- c. Using profane, vulgar, threatening, defamatory, abusive, discriminatory, harassing or otherwise objectionable or criminal language in a public or private message.
- d. Sending messages or posting information that would likely result in the loss of a recipient's work or system.
- e. Sending "chain letters" or "broadcast" messages to lists or individuals, subscribing to "listserves" or "newsgroups" without prior permission, or using the Internet access for any other personal use, without prior permission.
- f. Participating in other types of use which could cause congestion of the network or interfere with the work of others.
- g. Using the network in a manner that would violate any U.S. or state law. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening material and spreading of computer viruses.
- h. Accessing or transmitting materials that are obscene, sexually explicit, or without redeeming educational value.
- i. Accessing any prohibited sites on the Internet.
- j. Revealing one's own personal address or telephone number without authorization.
- k. Revealing one's password to anyone else, using anyone else's password, or pretending to be someone else when sending information over the computer network.
- l. Attempting to gain unauthorized access to system programs or computer equipment, including attempts to override, or to encourage others to override, any firewalls established on the network.
- m. Attempting to harm, modify or destroy data of another user.
- n. Exhibiting any other action whatsoever which would in any way subject the user or the Abington Public Schools to any civil or criminal action.
- o. Discussing highly sensitive or confidential school department information in e-mail communications.
- p. Using the Abington Public Schools' technology network to buy, sell or advertise anything.
- q. Accessing unauthorized discussion groups or "chat rooms."
- r. Using the Abington Public Schools' technology for gambling.
- s. Using the Abington Public Schools' technology network for political campaigning purposes, including attempt to influence ballot questions or to promote or oppose a candidate for public office.
- t. Failing to log off the computer network at the conclusion of a work session or at the request of system administrator.

- u. Using the computer network for recreational purposes or activities relating to personal hobbies.
 - v. Behavior or use that is in violation with any other Abington Public Schools policies or handbooks.
3. The Abington Public Schools assumes no responsibility for:
- a. any unauthorized charges or fees, including telephone charges, long distance charges, per minute surcharges and/or equipment or line costs.
 - b. any financial obligations arising out of unauthorized use of the system for the purchase of products or services.
 - c. any cost, liability or damages caused by a user's violation of these guidelines.
 - d. any information or materials that are transferred through the network.
4. The Abington Public Schools makes no guarantee, implied or otherwise, regarding the reliability of the data connection. The Abington Public Schools shall not be liable for any loss or corruption of data resulting while using the network.
5. All messages and information created, sent or retrieved on the network are the property of the Abington Public Schools. Electronic mail messages and other use of electronic resources by students and staff are also the property of the Abington Public Schools and should not be considered confidential. While the Abington Public Schools does not plan to review cache files or back-up files on a regular basis, it reserves the right to access and monitor all messages and files on the computer system as it deems necessary and appropriate in the ordinary course of its business for purposes including, but not limited to, ensuring proper use of resources and conducting routine network maintenance. Where appropriate, communications including text and images may be disclosed to law enforcement or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or receiver. The user, also, understands that use of the Abington Public Schools technology will not use code, access a file, or retrieve any stored communications on any of the systems unless authorized by Abington Public Schools.
6. The Abington Public Schools strongly condemns the illegal distribution (otherwise known as pirating) of software. Any users caught transferring such files through the network, and any whose accounts are found to contain such illegal files, shall immediately have their accounts permanently revoked. In such event, the user's network access will be limited to directly supervised use during classroom instruction. In addition, all users should be aware that software piracy is a federal offense and is punishable by a fine or imprisonment.
7. Because of size, many kinds of materials eventually find their way to the network. If a user finds materials that are inappropriate while using the Abington Public Schools' Technology Network, s/he shall refrain from downloading this material and shall not

identify or share the material. It should be understood that the transfer of certain kinds of materials is illegal and punishable by fine or imprisonment.

8. Should a user, while using the Abington Public Schools' Technology Network, encounter any material that s/he feels may constitute a threat against the safety of fellow students, staff members or the property of the Abington Public Schools, that user is obligated to report his/her discovery of such material to a teacher or to his/her principal.
9. The Abington Public Schools' administration reserves the right to amend this policy at any time without prior notice. Users will be notified in writing of any amendments to this policy.

*Adopted Revised Computer, Network, Internet and E-mail
Acceptable Use Policy for Students of the Abington Public Schools
By the Abington School Committee on April 24, 2001*

*Amended by the Abington School Committee
on February 26, 2002*

*Amended by the Abington School Committee
on April 12, 2005*

*Amended by the Abington School Committee
on March 20, 2007*

*Amended by the Abington School Committee
on June 22, 2010*