

**WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION  
ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (AUP) FOR TELECOMMUNICATION**

**Purpose**

The Board of Education of Washington County is providing employees and students with access to the Washington County Public School System's ("School System") electronic communication network and technological resources, which includes Internet access.

The school system's voice, video, and data network is established for the administrative and educational purpose of preparing students for success in life and work by providing electronic access to a wide range of information and the opportunity to communicate with people throughout the world. Additionally, the network may be utilized to increase intra-communication, enhance productivity, and to assist school system employees in upgrading professional skills through a greater exchange of information with peers. The network will also assist in the sharing of information with the local community, including parents, service agencies, government agencies, and businesses.

The term "educational purpose" includes use of the network for classroom activities and projects, actions relevant to the application of learner outcomes and curriculum, instructional methodologies, research, communications, professional or career development, and self-directed educational activities.

The term "network" refers to the entire school system technological infrastructure that handles voice, video, and data traffic that either begins or ends within school system buildings or surrounding grounds.

The term "user" or "users" refer to school system employees, students, parents, organizations, or guests accessing and/or utilizing school system computers and telecommunication services.

**A. General Guidelines**

1. The Board of Education's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) as set forth herein shall govern the use of all technology equipment, software, and related materials, communications, and network systems. Violation of the AUP may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination (employee) or expulsion from school (student).
2. Users shall not use the network for commercial purposes, defined as offering or providing goods or services or purchasing goods or services for personal use. School system acquisition policies will be followed when purchasing goods or services.
3. Users may not employ the network for lobbying or other personal political activities. School system employees and students may use the network to communicate with their elected representatives for educational purposes.
4. Users may be granted access to the Internet through the school system's networked computers.
5. Users, including school related organizations (PTA, athletic support groups, booster organizations, etc.) may be granted email accounts upon the request of the appropriate central office or school building administrator to the Technology Department. Such access is granted for instructional, educational, or school related purposes only. A signed agreement will be required. All email accounts belong to the school system and can be reviewed at any time without the consent of the user.
6. A copy of this AUP shall be included in the school system's handbook.

**B. Due Process**

1. The school system shall cooperate fully with local, state, federal or other authorized officials in any investigation concerning or relating to any illegal activity conducted through the network.

2. The school system will comply with due process policy and procedures when students violate the student discipline policy.
3. User violations of the school system's AUP will be addressed in accordance with Board of Education policy.
4. A school system Administrator may request the termination of the account of a user by providing the necessary documentation to the Technology Department. Accounts that remain inactive for more than 60 days may be removed without notice to the user.

#### **C. Privacy Issues**

1. Users shall have no expectation of privacy in the contents of their personal files on the network. Users shall comply with laws, regulations, and policies covered by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) in handling student educational records.
2. All computer files on school system-owned computers belong to the school district. Therefore, accessing these computer files is not considered surveillance and privacy laws do not apply.
3. Routine maintenance and monitoring of the network or audits may lead to the discovery that a user has or is violating the law or the Board of Education's Acceptable Use Policy. If this occurs, an investigation into the violations will be conducted.
4. An individual search of computer files will be conducted if there is reasonable suspicion that a user has violated the law or Board of Education's Acceptable Use Policy. The nature of the investigation will be reasonable and in the context of the nature of the alleged violation.
5. Users should be aware that their personal computer files may be available under State public records laws and are discoverable in litigation. Information written or transmitted on the network may be read or viewed by any properly authorized individual, organization, or agency.

#### **D. Selection of Material Used in Schools**

1. School system employees will preview and select Internet materials that are appropriate to grade level, course content, age, and developmental level. The material accessed at a web site must be relevant to the course objectives and consistent with the curricula adopted by the school system.
2. Teachers will provide guidelines and lists of resources to assist the students in directing research activities in an effective and appropriate manner. Teachers will assist students to learn and apply the skills necessary to determine the truthfulness of information, distinguish fact from opinion, and engage in discussions about controversial issues while demonstrating tolerance and respect for those who hold divergent views.
3. Users must respect the copyright, trademarks, and patent laws concerning the work products or intellectual property of others. Such products include but are not limited to ideas, concepts, and written, audio, or visual media. The Board of Education policies, procedures and regulations governing compliance with copyright laws apply to all written or electronic communications and media produced and published on the school system's network.
4. The school system strictly forbids any unlicensed or unauthorized software to be installed.
5. The purchase and installation of educational software, or any software that will be made available to students, must meet Federal, State, and Local regulations and guidelines on accessibility (i.e.: 508 compliant). The Software Review Committee must approve the purchase of this software.
6. The Microsoft Office suite is the standard set of software applications to be used for administrative and productivity functions within the school system's network.

## **E. Security Regulations**

1. Users shall only access information, computer systems, and network devices to which they are authorized and need for educational and/or job related purposes.
2. Users are expressly prohibited from sharing information related to network accounts or passwords.
3. Users shall log off before leaving a computer workstation or allowing someone else access to it.
4. Users shall not disable or modify security settings or software such as anti-virus software or permission access rights.
5. Computers, software and related network components may not be removed from schools without the proper authorization from the school Principal or his or her designee.
6. Computers, software and related network components may not be removed from the Central Office, or other administrative or operational building without the proper authorization from the Director or his or her designee.
7. Users are responsible for ensuring the network is used for educational or administrative purposes only.
8. The school system is not responsible for, nor does it control, information and content found on outside networks including the Internet. The school system shall utilize filters to prevent or minimize access to inappropriate information and content.

## **F. Rules and Regulations**

1. Users shall operate the network only for legitimate, approved, and appropriate educational, administrative or professional development activities.
2. Users are responsible for the use of their individual account and shall take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from being able to access or use their account.
3. Users shall not post personal contact information about themselves or other persons on the network. Personal contact information includes, but is not limited to, home address, home telephone number, personal email addresses, parent names, and names and addresses of others. Online applications for other educational institutions may be completed under the direction of the Guidance Counselor.
4. Users shall promptly disclose to appropriate school personnel any communication or materials that are or may be inappropriate, or make them feel uncomfortable.
5. Users shall not alter, tamper with, interfere with, or disrupt computer systems, network infrastructure components (including, but not limited to, routers and switches), network accounts, services, or equipment of others by, but not limited to, the propagation of computer "worms," "viruses", or by changing permissions, access rights, or configurations.
6. Users shall not post or send via email, chain letters or other unsolicited messages, also know as sending spam. Spam is strictly prohibited. Broadcasted emails, or messages to a large number of individuals or groups, through the network must be administrative, educational, or instructional related. Solicitation emails for fundraisers or other non-educational events are considered spam.
7. Users shall comply with requests from appropriate school system employees to cease activities that threaten the operation or integrity of any component of the network.
8. Users shall not scan the network to examine or determine security or monitoring measures.

9. No person may install wiring, wireless connections, or any extension or retransmission of network services unless properly authorized by the Hardware Technology Department.
10. Users may not gain unauthorized access to the school system network or to any other computer network through the school system's. This includes attempting to log in through another person's account, accessing another person's files, or impersonating another user. These actions are strictly prohibited at all times.
11. Users shall not damage, destroy, or tamper with the integrity of electronic information or content.
12. Users must conform to guidelines as established by the Department of Technology concerning access, length of use, size of files downloaded, and the proper use of all telecommunication connections, networks, and applications.
13. Users shall not engage or participate in any illegal act, such as, arranging for the purchase of drugs, alcohol, or other controlled substances, engaging in criminal gang activity, threatening the safety of any person, or participating in any activity that may be improper, unethical, or inappropriate.
14. Users will not use the school system network to access, write, or publish material that is profane or obscene, that advocates illegal acts, or that advocates violence or discrimination towards other people.
15. Users shall not communicate using obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful language, pictures, or gestures.
16. Users shall not engage in personal attacks, including the writing and/or posting of any defamatory, prejudicial, or discriminatory media.
17. Users will not use the network to make statements that are libelous, slanderous, or that harass another person. In general, harassment is acting in a manner that distresses or annoys another person. For more detailed information regarding harassment, see the Board of Education policies on Harassment (Files: JFH-R and GBCC-R).
18. Users shall not copy or transfer copyrighted materials and software without proper authorization. (Reference Policy 11BCA – Reproduction of Copyrighted Materials)
19. Users are prohibited from using unauthorized e-mail, instant messaging, and chat rooms.
20. Anyone who becomes aware of suspicious or inappropriate use of network resources including abuse and possible breaches of security, should alert his or her immediate supervisor or the school principal.

**G. Additional Guidelines for PDAs, Cell Phones, and other Personal Communication Devices**

1. Users shall operate school system cell phones and PDAs for legitimate, approved, and appropriate educational, administrative, or operational activities.
2. Students are prohibited from using personal communication devices, such as cell phones, and MP3 players, during the instructional day, and, during the time periods that students are being provided transportation services by the school system.
3. Visitors', parents' and staff's electronic communication devices should be silenced during the normal instructional school day unless these devices are needed for student instruction.
4. PDA, Cell Phones, Video, and Audio recording devices are not allowed in testing facilities unless turned off and stored in a bag, purse, or pocket. Storage on "belt clips" is not acceptable.

5. Picture or video recording of students, staff, facilities, or sensitive papers (e.g. tests) is prohibited unless approved by the Principal or other supervisory level school system employee.
6. Audio recording of students is prohibited unless approved by the Principal or other supervisory level school system employee.
7. While on school property, using a personal device to access the Internet is forbidden. Internet access is only allowed through Board of Education equipment.
8. Using a personal communication device in an unethical manner, including, but not limited to; harassing or bullying other individuals, and violating academic integrity and copyright infringement is forbidden.
9. **Using a personal communication device to violate confidentiality or privacy rights of another individual is forbidden.**
10. Violation of these personal communication device policies will result in disciplinary action.

#### **H. Disclaimer of Liability**

1. The school system cannot guarantee the availability of or access to the Internet and other telecommunication services. Further, the school system will not be responsible for any information or data that may be lost, damaged, or become unavailable due to technical, hardware, software, or power difficulties and failures.
2. The school system cannot guarantee the accuracy and quality of information acquired via any component of the network.
3. The school system provides no assurance or guarantee that information, email, or any other communications transmitted via the network is or will remain private and confidential.
4. Even though the network employs blocking and restriction devices, the school system cannot guarantee comprehensive control of, or censor, illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, obscene, or potentially offensive materials that may be transmitted via the Internet or through the network.

#### **I. Electronic Mail System – (Email)**

The school system provides employees with electronic tools for communication including an email system. This Acceptable Usage Regulation governs employees' use of the school system's email system and its equipment. This regulation applies to use of WCPS' email system or equipment at the school system's headquarters and schools, as well as at remote locations including, but not limited to, employees' homes, airports, hotels, client and supplier offices. The school system email rules and policies apply to full-time employees, part-time employees, independent contractors, interns, consultants, suppliers, clients, other third parties, and any other users. Any employee who violates the school system's email rules and policies is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Additionally, usage may be suspended or revoked at any time without any advanced notice for any user who violates the school system's email rules or policies.

##### **Email Exists for School Business Purposes**

The school system allows email access for school business purposes. Employees may use the school system's email system for limited personal use only in accordance with this regulation or as prescribed by WCPS.

### **Limited Authorized Personal Use of Email**

Employees may, on a limited basis only, use email to communicate with spouses, children, domestic partners, and other family members. Employees are to limit personal use of email to lunch breaks and scheduled work breaks only. Such usage shall not affect an employee's productivity. An employee's supervisor is authorized to determine whether such usage is affecting the employee's productivity. In such cases, besides disciplinary action, the employee's personal use may be suspended or revoked. Employees shall avoid using email during otherwise productive school business hours. Employees are specifically prohibited from using email to operate a business, conduct an external job search, solicit money for personal gain, campaign for political causes or candidates, or promote or solicit funds for a religious or other personal cause.

### **Privacy Notice**

The email system is the property of the Washington County Board of Education. The WCPS monitors the usage of its email system. Employees should have no expectation of privacy when using the WCPS email system for either business use or limited personal use.

## **J. Phone System**

### **Phones Exist Primarily for School Business Purposes**

The school system allows phone access for school business purposes. It is to be used to carry-out the business of the school system. Employees may use the school phone system for limited personal use only in accordance with this regulation.

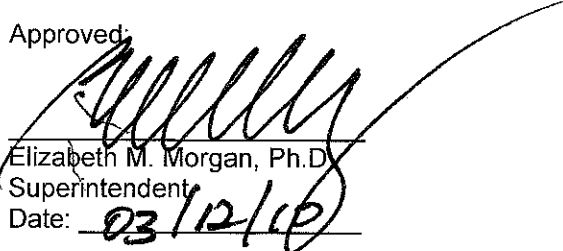
### **Authorized Personal Use of WCPS Phones**

Employees are encouraged to limit personal use of phones to lunch breaks and scheduled work breaks or emergency use only. Employees are prohibited from using phones to operate a business, conduct an external job search, solicit money for personal gain, campaign for political causes or candidates, or promote or solicit funds for a religious or other personal cause.

### **Long Distance Calls**

The use of the school system's phones for personal long distance calls is discouraged. In the event that a long distance call must be made, the employee is required to obtain an individual long distance code from the Technology Department. Employees shall be expected to pay for long distance costs incurred for personal use.

Approved:

  
Elizabeth M. Morgan, Ph.D.  
Superintendent

Date: 03/12/10

Regulation Adopted: June 20, 2000 Revised: March 15, 2005, Revised: July 16, 2009. Revised: March 8, 2010  
Washington County Public School System