

Washington County Schools Safe and Acceptable Use Policy for Network Services

A. Purpose

- The Washington County School Board is providing employees and students with Internet access through a Wide Area Network (WAN) provided by MILLRY COMMUNICATIONS & ALABAMA SUPERCOMPUTER AUTHORITY.
- The Internet is provided solely for educational purposes. It will be used to prepare students for success in life and work in the 21st century. It will provide them with electronic access to a wide range of information. It will also afford students and staff the ability to communicate with people throughout the world. The Internet will additionally be used to share information with the local community, including parents, social service agencies, and businesses.
- Users may not employ the Internet for commercial purposes, defined as offering or providing goods or services for personal use. District acquisition policies will be followed for purchases of goods or services through the Internet.
- Users may not engage the Internet for political lobbying. School system employees and students may however use the Internet to communicate with their elected representatives and to express their opinions on political issues.
- The term “educational purposes” includes the Internet for classroom activities, professional or career development, and limited high-quality, self-directed activities.

B. School District Responsibilities

- The district’s technology coordinator will serve as the director of technological efforts through all schools and will work with the Alabama State Department of Education as necessary.
- The Washington County Board of Education each year shall be responsible for ensuring that comprehensive filtering software is applied to the Internet that protects students from materials of an inappropriate manner. The filtering package will be selected at the beginning of each school year and shall be announced to the public through the regular board meeting.
- The local school technology leaders (appointed by the technology coordinator and superintendent) will serve as the building-level coordinator for the Local Area Network (LAN) at each school. He/she will approve all building-level activities, ensure teachers receive proper training in the use of network resources, establish a system to ensure adequate supervision of students using the network, and be responsible for interpreting the Acceptable Use Policy at the building level.
- The district technology coordinator will establish a process for setting-up individual and class accounts, setting quotas for disk usage on the network and establishing a virus protection process.

C. Additional Network Services

“All Students will participate in instructional activities that include, but are not limited to the appropriate use of the Internet including, chat rooms and the prevention and response to cyber bullying.”

The Washington County Public Schools’ network provides the following:

- Email – Email will allow employees and students a means to communicate with people around the world. Users will also be able to subscribe to mail list to engage in group discussions related to educational subjects. Students will be provided personal email accounts through Gaggles, Inc.
- Filtering Software – Washington County Public Schools utilizes Alabama Supercomputer Authority’s filtering software to block access to certain

sites deemed inappropriate for the school setting. This software works in accordance with the requirements established by the E-rate Discount Program for Schools. All teachers should continue, however, to closely monitor students when they are engaged in network use.

D. Access to Network Resources

- This Acceptable Use Policy will govern all uses of the district's network resources, including employee use.
- Parents may specifically request their children be excluded from access to the Internet and email by notifying the local school in writing.
- Every effort is made to secure/protect all network services, including desktop computers. Many are password protected. The Superintendent of

Education shall be notified immediately if any employee or student knowingly compromises this security through the theft and subsequent use of district protected passwords. Resulting consequences are at the discretion of the Superintendent. • Users other than students or school employees must be approved by local school officials and must adhere to the same policies governing use

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resources.

- Each local school will be responsible for developing a plan for user accountability.

E. Parent Notification and Responsibility

- Parents will be notified about the district's policies governing network resources through the annual student handbook.
- Parents have the right and responsibility to ask for alternative activities that do not require Internet access.
- This policy contains restrictions on accessing inappropriate material. There is a wide range of material available on the Internet, some of which may not be fitting with the particular values of the families of students. While every effort is made to protect students through the use of content filtering software, it is not possible for the schools to monitor and enforce a wide range of social values in student use of the Internet. Further, the District recognizes that parents bear primary responsibility for transmitting their particular set of family values to their children. The District encourages parents to specify to their children what material is and is not acceptable for their children to access through the Internet.

F. School District Limitation of Liability

- The District makes no warranties of any kind; either expressed or implied that the functions of the services provided through the network will be error free or without defect. The District will not be responsible for any damages users may suffer, including but not limited to, loss of data or interruptions of services. The District is also not responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through the Internet.
- The District will not be responsible for financial obligations arising through unauthorized use of network resources.

G. Due Process

- The District will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning to or relating to any illegal activities conducted through the network resources.
- In the event there is an allegation that a student has violated this policy, the student is subject to the school's discipline policies.
- Disciplinary actions will be tailored to meet specific concerns related to the violation and to assist the student in gaining the self-discipline necessary to behave appropriately on an electronic network.
- Employee violations of this policy will be handled in accordance with the employees' policies of the Washington County Board of Education and are at the discretion of the Superintendent. Resulting consequences may include notification about the infractions to the District's Board Members.

H. Search and Seizure

- Users have limited privacy and network activity is subject to random monitoring.
- Routine maintenance and monitoring of the network may lead to the discovery that the user has or is violating the District's policies, or the law.
- An individual search will be conducted if there is reasonable suspicion that a user has violated the law. The nature of the investigation will be reasonable and in the context of the nature of the alleged violation.