

Instruction-Elementary and Secondary**ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR THE EXPLORATION AND UTILIZATION
OF THE INTERNET AS A TOOL FOR LEARNING****ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR THE INTERNET****Purpose of the rule**

The purpose of this rule is to establish a policy for the acceptable use of the Internet as a tool for learning in the School District of Miami-Dade County, Florida (hereinafter referred to as District). In summary, the rule affirms that neither employees nor students may use the Internet to do any action or receive and/or communicate any language that the employee or student could not do in person. Any act or word prohibited by federal, state, and/or local law or regulation, including Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) Rules, and/or collective bargaining agreement if done by a M-DCPS employee or student in person is similarly forbidden by this rule to be done by any employee or student by or through the Internet. Additionally, the rule reflects that there is no expectation of privacy in the use of e-mail or Internet communications when such communications occur over M-DCPS provided equipment by M-DCPS employees, students, or others.

Purpose of access to the Internet

The purpose of providing students and employees access to the Internet is to promote academic excellence in the District's educational objectives. This computer technology provides resource sharing, innovation and communication that will help launch today's schools into the information age.

I. Resources Available on the Internet

Students and employees of the District have access to the following resources:

- A. Electronic mail communication throughout the world;
- B. Local, national and world-wide information and news;
- C. Correspondence with scientists at research institutions;
- D. Access to public domain software of all types;
- E. Collaboration with peers on projects and problem solving strategies;
- F. Science Learning Network (SLN), Library of Congress, Educational Resource and Information Center (ERIC), Smithsonian Museums, and many university library catalogs.

II. Acceptable Use Policy

Utilization of the Internet by students and employees must be in support of and consistent with the educational objectives of the District. When utilizing the Internet all users must adhere to the provisions of this rule and the standards of conduct established in the M-DCPS *Code of Student Conduct* (both elementary and secondary), *Code of Conduct for Adult Students*, the *Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in the State of Florida*, and School Board Rule 6Gx13-4A-1.21, Responsibilities and Duties.

- A. Transmission of any material in violation of local, state, and federal law or regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to copyright material, threatening or obscene material or material protected by trade secret.
 - 1. Obscene material is that material which:
 - a. The average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest;
 - b. Depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct as defined in Section 847.001 (11) F.S. (1995); and
 - c. Taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.
- B. Procedures concerning the protest of instructional materials and educational media as they are accessed through the Internet are governed by School Board Rule 6Gx13-6A-1.26, Instructional Materials and Resources.
- C. School Board Rule 6Gx13-1C-1.06, Politics--Participation of Staff, governs the use of the Internet for political activities.
- D. Use of the Internet for product advertisement, commercial activities, political campaigning or solicitation is prohibited.

III. Privilege

Accessing the Internet through District equipment is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use, including violation of this rule may result in cancellation of the privilege.

- A. School, region, and District administrators are delegated the authority to determine appropriate and acceptable use as provided under this rule.
- B. Any user account may be closed, suspended or revoked at any time a school, region, or District administrator determines an account user or holder has used the Internet in an inappropriate or unacceptable manner in violation of this or any other applicable District rule.

- C. Inappropriate or unacceptable use is defined as use that violates the District's purpose in providing students and employees access to the Internet and use that violates the M-DCPS *Code of Student Conduct* (both elementary and secondary), *Code of Conduct for Adult Students*, the *Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in the State of Florida*, and School Board Rule 6Gx13-4A-1.21 or any local, state, or federal law or regulation.
- D. Access to the Internet in school as a tool for learning will be automatic. Parents will be advised in writing of their rights to indicate that they do not want their child to access the Internet in school.

IV. Monitoring

The District reserves the right to review any material on user accounts for purposes of maintaining adequate fileservers space. In reviewing and monitoring user accounts for the purpose of determining adequate fileservers space, the District shall respect the privacy rights of user accounts.

V. Network Etiquette

All users are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These rules include, but are not limited to the following:

- A. Be polite. Do not get abusive in your message to others.
- B. Use appropriate language. Do not swear, use profanity, use vulgarities or any other inappropriate language.
- C. Do not engage in activities which are prohibited under local, state or federal law.
- D. Do not engage in activities which violate the M-DCPS *Code of Student Conduct* (both elementary and secondary), *Code of Conduct for Adult Students*, the *Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in the State of Florida*, and School Board Rule 6Gx13-4A-1.21.
- E. Do not reveal your personal address and/or telephone number nor that of other students and employees.
- F. Note that electronic mail (e-mail) is not guaranteed to be private. People who operate the system do have access to all mail. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to the authorities and may result in the loss of user privileges.
- G. Do not use the network in such a way that would be disruptive to others.
- H. All communications and information accessible via the network should be assumed to be private property.

- I. Do not use the network to send or receive messages that discriminate based on gender, race, color, religion, ethnic or national origin, political beliefs, marital status, age, sexual orientation, social and family background, linguistic preference, disability or that are inflammatory.

VI. Services

Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at the user's own risk. The District will not be responsible for any damages a user may suffer. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by negligence, errors, or omissions.

The District denies responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services. All users need to consider the source of any information they obtain, and consider how valid that information may be.

VII. Security

Security on any computer network is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users.

- A. If a user can identify a security problem on the network, the user must notify a system administrator. The user must not demonstrate the problem to others.
- B. Users must not use another individual's account without written permission from that individual. Attempts to log into the system as any other user will result in cancellation of user privileges. Attempts to log in to the Internet as a system administrator may result in the cancellation of user privileges.
- C. Any user that has been determined by administrators to have violated this rule may be denied future access to the Internet through the District network.
- D. A student or employee with a history of utilizing other computer systems in an inappropriate or unacceptable manner may be denied access to the Internet through the District network.

VIII. Vandalism and Harassment

Vandalism and harassment when utilizing the Internet will result in cancellation of user privileges. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses and the attempt to destroy, harm or modify data of another user.

IX. Procedures for Use

Student users must always get permission from their teachers or facilitators before using the network or accessing any specific file or application. Student users must also follow written and oral classroom instructions.

- A. All users have the same right to use the equipment. Therefore, users shall not play games or use the computer resources for non-academic activities when other users require the system for academic purposes. In addition, users shall not waste nor take supplies, such as paper, printer ribbons, and diskettes, that are provided by the District.
- B. Teachers are responsible for teaching proper techniques and standards for participation, for guiding student access to appropriate sections of the Internet, and for assuring that students understand that if they misuse the network they will lose their privilege to access the Internet from the classroom environment.

X. Inappropriate Material

On a global network it is impossible to control effectively the content of data and an industrious user may discover inappropriate material. Inappropriate material is that material that is determined inconsistent with the goals, objectives and policies of the educational mission of the District.

Access and use of the Internet is for use as a regular instructional activity. It is the user's responsibility not to initiate access to materials that are inconsistent with the goals, objectives and policies of the educational mission of the District.

XI. Disciplinary Actions for Improper Use

The act of accessing the Internet through the District's network signifies that the user will abide by the provisions of this rule.

Any user violating this rule, or applicable local, state, or federal law or regulation is subject to loss of network access privileges and any other disciplinary actions, as reflected in the M-DCPS *Code of Student Conduct* (both elementary and secondary), *Code of Conduct for Adult Students*, the *Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in the State of Florida*, applicable collective bargaining agreements, and School Board Rule 6Gx13-4A-1.21.

Specific Authority: 230.22(2) F.S.

Law Implemented, Interpreted, or Made Specific: 229.8041; 230.23(6) and (7); 231.09 F.S.

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