

School Board Policy: EGA - ACCEPTABLE COMPUTER, NETWORK, E-MAIL, AND INTERNET USE

BACKGROUND – The Epping School Board recognizes that telecommunications and other new technologies have changed the ways that information may be accessed, communicated, transferred and exchanged by members of society. Those changes will also affect student instruction and learning. The Board is committed to the effective use of technology as a tool to advance the District’s educational program and curriculum and to enhance the quality of student and staff learning, as well as to promote the efficiency of District operations.

The District’s electronic communications system (“Network”) will provide unprecedented opportunities for students and staff to communicate, learn, access, exchange and publish information. The resources available through this Network, and the electronic communication and information research skills that students will develop using it, are of significant and growing importance in the learning process and preparation of students for success in the future.

This Network includes the Internet, which is global information and communication network that provides tremendous opportunity to bring previously unimaginable education and information opportunities to our students. The Internet is, however, a public space. As is true with all public spaces, there is a potential that students may come in contact with potentially harmful or inappropriate material or people. Therefore use of the Internet by students necessarily raises concerns about safety and security. The District will provide guidance to help students learn to use the Internet in a safe and responsible manner.

The Board believes that the advantages to students and staff from access to the valuable information and interaction available on the Network outweigh the risk that users may misuse the Network for purposes that are inconsistent with the curriculum and educational goals of the District. The Board further believes that these risks can be reduced through the adoption of this policy and related procedures.

DEFINITIONS – The term “Network” shall be interpreted to include any and all District owned computers, servers, any hardware or software, the District’s local area network (LAN), municipal area network (MAN), all wireless access points, the Internet, the District Intranet, self-contained electronic mail systems, and any other elements of the District’s computer, telecommunications or electronic communication/information systems.

OBJECTIVE – To provide for and establish a reasonable and equitable policy for the use of the District’s Network by students and staff and for development of applicable rules and regulations regarding the acceptable use of the Network as a tool to support and advance the District’s educational program, curriculum and internal operations and to promote a policy of Internet safety.

ACCEPTABLE NETWORK USE – The Network may be used only as a tool to support and advance the functions of the District and curriculum and educational program. Access to the District’s Network is a privilege and not a right. Users of the Network are responsible for their behavior and communications over the Network and access to Network services will be provided only to those staff and students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner and in accordance with the District’s rules and regulations as may be adopted and amended from time to time. All staff and students (and/or the students' parents depending upon the age of the student) who wish to use the Network must sign one or more Network agreements whenever requested by the District. Computer access will be denied to any user that has not submitted either a signed agreement, or a signed receipt or acknowledgment of agreement in a parent/student or employee handbook.

Students may use the Network only in support of education and research consistent with the educational objectives of the District. Faculty and staff may use the Network primarily in support of education and research consistent with the educational objectives of the District. Faculty and staff may access the Network for limited personal use, but not for any commercial or business use, however such personal use may not violate any applicable rules and regulations or applicable administrative procedures or interfere with job performance. Use of the Network must be in compliance with applicable laws, including the copyright law, and all materials on the Network should be presumed to be copyrighted.

Staff or students who claim that this policy is denying them access to material that is not within the prohibitions of this policy shall direct their claim, in writing, to the District’s Director of Technology or his/her designee, who shall review the matter and respond promptly. If overriding the technology protection measure that blocks and/or filters Internet access is warranted to enable a student (minor) to access a site for bona fide research or other lawful purposes, the student will be monitored directly by an authorized staff member.

INAPPROPRIATE USE AND ACTIVITIES – The District reserves the absolute right to define inappropriate behavior or improper use of the Network, adopt rules and regulations applicable to Network use, determine whether an activity constitutes inappropriate use of the Network, and determine the consequence of such inappropriate use. Network use shall not involve obscene, pornographic or offensive matter; vulgarity, harassment, intimidation, insult or ridicule of another; damage or waste of property; use of another's password or misrepresenting one's identity; use for commercial purposes or illegal purposes; instant messaging or chatting in chat rooms; on-line gaming; promoting political causes, religious causes, commercial products or services; soliciting for non-job related activities; linking to non-educational sites; use of chain or other type messages; intentional use of viruses, hacking or other such detrimental activities; use of unauthorized, confidential student or employee information; plagiarism; or any other use deemed inappropriate by the District, or in violation of any other District policy, administrative procedure, or code of conduct.

Inappropriate use of the Network may result in suspension or cancellation of Network privileges. In addition to suspension or cancellation of privileges, inappropriate use of the Network may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion from school, in the case of a student, or suspension or termination of employment in the case of an employee. Where circumstances warrant, inappropriate use of the Network may be referred to law enforcement authorities and the Department of Education. Users who intentionally violate the District's policy and who intentionally damage the Network shall assume legal and financial liability for such damage.

ELECTRONIC MAIL GUIDELINES – The content of electronic mail is not secure. Users must not disclose confidential information in electronic mail messages. Time sensitive information should not be communicated by electronic mail since there is no guarantee that an addressee will receive, read, and/or respond to a message in a timely manner. When sending electronic mail it should be assumed that the information provided is a matter of school record as with official school letters on school letterhead. It must also be warned that electronic mail messages may be forwarded to others without the originator's permission.

PUBLISHING GUIDELINES – Students and staff will be allowed to produce materials for electronic publication on the school servers for educational purposes. The school administration, teachers, and staff will monitor these materials to ensure compliance with content standards and Board policy. The content of such materials is constrained by the following restrictions:

1. No personal information about a student will be allowed. This includes telephone numbers and addresses.
2. Individuals in pictures, movies, sound recordings, or student work may be identified only by their first name.
3. Parents/guardians must sign a release before a picture, movie, or sound recording student work will be published on the school's website.
4. No text, image, movie, sound recording, or student work that contains pornography, profanity, obscenity, or language that offends or degrades others will be allowed.

CONFIDENTIALITY – The confidentiality of any message or data should not be assumed. Even when a message is erased, it is still possible to retrieve and read that message. Users should also understand that Internet activity and electronic mail in log files may be available to the public under RSA 91-A, Access to Public Records and Meetings. The use of passwords for security does not guarantee confidentiality, or that the District will not retrieve it. All passwords must also be disclosed to the computer administrator.

PROTECTION AND FILTERING – The District shall employ appropriate technology protection measures during use of computers with Internet access by students. Such technology shall be designed to block or filter access to visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic or harmful to minors. In addition, the Network may not be used to

access, use, disclose or disseminate personal identification information regarding students or staff. The District may also use blocking or filtering technology to screen out inappropriate text. The District will endeavor to keep the blocking and filtering technology up-to-date, but it is not possible to guarantee that all inappropriate content will be successfully blocked or filtered.

The District shall employ appropriate technology protection for student and employee records. Such technology shall be designed to block access from non-authorized users. Security measures for student and employee records shall be on a need to know basis only. Any system which requires password access or for which the District requires an account, such as the Internet, will only be used by the authorized user. Account owners are ultimately responsible for all activity under their accounts.

In order to protect the Network, users may not connect non-District computers, personal laptop computers, or other personal computing devices or peripherals to the Network. In addition, users may not use personal software programs on the Network or transfer files, programs, shareware or software from information services, third-party Networks or websites, or any other external source without permission of the Network supervisor. Data discs, memory sticks, and other temporary file storage devices may be used with District computers for the sole purpose of transferring user data files, for appropriate school-related work, but not for personal use.

OWNERSHIP AND RETENTION – Any and all material or information placed in any file on the District’s Network becomes District property. The District reserves the right to access any such material or information on the Network, including personal and electronic mail files, and to dispose of any material or information contained therein without prior notice. The District further reserves the right to monitor online activities and review, record or log Network use. The District also reserves the right to limit content of District websites to District-approved information related to District curriculum and program. Users should also understand that Internet activity and electronic mail in log files may be available to the public under RSA 91-A, Access to Public Records and Meetings.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY – It shall be the responsibility of the Administration to develop and publish written administrative procedures and/or administrative guidelines for the implementation of this policy, including developing rules and regulations for appropriate Network use, website access and website links, a Network agreement form, security measures including password procedures, measures designed to restrict access to harmful or inappropriate matter on the Internet, procedures for promoting the safety and security of students when using electronic mail and prevention of unauthorized access and any other matter deemed necessary or advisable to implement this policy. Rules for acceptable computer, network, e-mail, and Internet use shall be included in all student and employee handbooks.

ACCEPTABLE USE AND INTERNET SAFETY –

STUDENT USER – I understand and will abide by the procedures and Network/Internet Use Policy for independent access to the electronic resources of the Epping School District. I further understand that any violation of the regulations above is unethical and should I commit any violation, my access privileges may be revoked, school disciplinary and/or appropriate legal action may be taken. In consideration for the privilege of using the Epping School District electronic resources and in consideration for having access to the information contained on it, I hereby release and agree to hold harmless the Epping School District from any and all claims or damages of any nature arising from my access, use or inability to access or use the computers or Network system. Signing the receipt and acknowledgment of the school parent/student handbook will also serve as understanding and acceptance of the Network/Internet Use Policy.

Student Name (Please Print)

Student Signature

Date _____

PARENT OR GUARDIAN CONSENT FOR INDEPENDENT USE – As the parent or guardian of the student signing above, I have read the Network/Internet Use Policy and guidelines for independent use established by the Epping School District. I grant permission for my son or daughter to access networked computer services such as the Internet and the World Wide Web. I understand that some materials on the computers, or Internet may be objectionable, but I accept responsibility for guidance of computer or Internet and World Wide Web use setting and conveying standards for my son or daughter to follow when selecting, sharing or exploring information or media. Furthermore, I accept full responsibility for supervision if and when my child's use is not in a school setting. Signing the receipt and acknowledgment of the school parent/student handbook will also serve as understanding and acceptance of the Network/Internet Use Policy.

Parent or Guardian Name (Please Print)

Parent or Guardian Signature

Date _____

STAFF USER – I understand and will abide by the procedures and Network/Internet Use Policy for independent access to the electronic resources of the Epping School District. I further understand that any violation of the regulations above is unethical and should I commit any violation, my access privileges may be revoked, school disciplinary and/or appropriate legal action may be taken. In consideration for the privilege of using the Epping School District electronic resources and in consideration for having access to the information contained on it, I hereby release and agree to hold harmless the Epping School District from any and all claims or damages of any nature arising from my access, use or inability to access or use the computers or Network system. Signing the receipt and acknowledgment of the District employee handbook will also serve as understanding and acceptance of the Network/Internet Use Policy.

Staff Name (Please Print)

Staff Signature

Date _____

Statutory/Regulatory/Policy/Handbook Cross References

RSA 194:3-d (School District Computer Networks)

47 U.S.C. Section 254 (Children's Internet Protection Act)

Handbook (Referenced in Student/Parent and Personnel Handbooks)

APPROVED: August 17, 2006