

## **INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

It is the policy of the Richmond County Board of Education that employees and students should be furnished educational opportunities and resources to have access to Internet based instructional programs and administrative services. The primary purpose and mission of the Richmond County Board of Education is to educate students to become lifelong learners and productive citizens in the 21st Century. Technology plays a role in this mission by providing quality programs, information and learning activities along with support and services to improve student learning and enhance instructional and administrative effectiveness. The instructional use of interactive computer and web-based technology will prepare students for the future. Technology includes computer hardware, software, local and wide area networks and access to the Internet. Due to the complex nature of these systems and the magnitude of information available via the Internet, the Richmond County Board of Education has adopted guidelines regarding acceptable use to ensure that the technology users share in the technology resources in an effective, efficient, ethical and lawful manner.

It is the policy of the Richmond County Schools to: (a) prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications; (b) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; (c) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (d) comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC254 (h)]. Each school principal or site administrator in conjunction with the media/technology committee shall be responsible for communication and monitoring of the Richmond County Acceptable Use Policy.

### **Guidelines:**

This Acceptable Use Policy applies to all students, faculty, staff, employees and visitors (both adults and minors). All users of the district wide area network and/or other electronic informational services must maintain strict compliance with all applicable ethical and legal rules and regulations regarding access. The school system reserves the right to monitor, access, and disclose the contents of any user's files, activities, or communications.

### **Availability of Access:**

The Internet will be available to users for instructional and administrative purposes. The electronic information available to users does not imply endorsement by the Richmond County Board of Education. The use of the network is a privilege, not a right, and misuse will result in disciplinary actions, including cancellation of those privileges.

### **Security:**

It shall be the policy of the Richmond County Board of Education that users maintain appropriate passwords to obtain access to the network. Login information, user names, and passwords are confidential and it is the responsibility of the user to safeguard that information. Passwords should be at least 8 characters and should contain a number and a capital letter. At no time should any user login with another user's information.

While the Internet is an extremely valuable tool for educational research, information is accessible that may not be appropriate according to community, school, or family standards. The Richmond County Board of Education provides an Internet filtering system which blocks access to a large percentage of inappropriate sites. Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, visual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography, or any material deemed to be harmful to minors will be blocked by the web filtering system. Even though most objectionable sites are blocked, various entities create new inappropriate sites daily. If a questionable site or information is encountered, the same should be reported to the school's Media Specialist or to the Media and Instructional Technology Department. Staff members in Media and Instructional Technology will make every effort to block the site as quickly as possible.

### **Internet Safety:**

It shall be the responsibility of all educators of the Richmond County Schools, including administrators, instructional supervisors, principals, teachers, media specialists, technology specialists, guidance counselors, instructional paraprofessionals and any other personnel having access to the online computer network for instructional purposes, to supervise and monitor usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy and the Children's Internet Protection Act.

A series of Internet Safety courses will be taught to all students in the Richmond County School System to provide education on appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms, safety and privacy, as well as cyberbullying awareness and response. School personnel have the discretion to provide such other training or to implement such other curricula, provided that such training or curricula meet the requirements of CIPA, as may be amended from time to time. Any suggested topics or proposed curricula are intended as a guideline and in no way replace or diminish the professional judgment and discretion of the administrators or school personnel implementing this policy.

### **CIPA DEFINITION OF TERMS:**

**Technology Protection Measure** The term "technology protection measure" means a specific technology that blocks or filters Internet access to visual depictions that are:

1. OBSCENE, as that term is defined in section 1460 of title 18, United States Code;
2. CHILD PORNOGRAPHY, as that term is defined in section 2256 of title 18, United States Code;

or

3. HARMFUL TO MINORS. The term "harmful to minors" means any picture, image, graphic image file, or other visual depiction that:
  - a. Taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion;
  - b. Depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and
  - c. Taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors.

**Minor:** Under Federal law, the term "minor" is defined as "an individual who has not attained the age of 17 years" (pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 254(h)) and "any person under the age of eighteen years" (pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 2256). For purposes of this policy, however, the term

"minor" shall apply to any student properly attending a school within the Richmond County School System.

**Sexual Act; Sexual Contact** The terms "sexual act" and "sexual contact" have the meanings given such terms in 18 U.S.C. § 2246.

**USER PROHIBITIONS: Users should NOT:**

- A. Post, publish, send or create materials or communications that are defamatory, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, racially offensive, or illegal, or engage in any other type of behavior which constitutes bullying or harassment of any kind, or is in violation of the Code of Ethics for Educators, the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline, State law or federal law. Use the network for financial gain, advertising or commercial activity
- B. Transmit any material in violation of any United States or State regulation
- C. Post anonymous or forge electronic mail messages or alter, delete or copy another user's email
- D. Use the school's computer hardware or network for any illegal activity such as copying or downloading copyrighted software, music or images, or violation of copyright laws
- E. Download, install, or play any unauthorized program or content (even that created at home) on any school's computer or network
- F. Purposely bring any hardware on the premises or load any software that is designed to damage, alter, destroy or provide access to unauthorized data
- G. Attempt to vandalize or disassemble any network or computer component including the attempt to alter network or computer configuration
- H. Gain access or attempt to access unauthorized or restricted network resources or the data and documents of another person
- I. Send spam through email
- J. Use the network while access privileges have been suspended
- K. Bypass or attempt to circumvent network security, virus protection, network filtering, or policies

**Employee Responsibilities:**

- Employees must use good judgment and keep all passwords protected. Do not post a list of user names and passwords where they may be seen by students or others. Never email user names and passwords to unknown sources. The Richmond County School System Information Technology Department will never ask for passwords by email.
- When leaving a computer, always log off so to prevent unauthorized access to files or email.
- Students should always be supervised while using the Internet, computers, handheld devices or electronic resources.
- Email accounts are provided for professional use only. Email should not be used for personal gain or business related activities. Broadcasting of unsolicited messages is prohibited. All employees must request permission from the building administrator before sending any messages to an entire building's staff.
- If an employee brings a personal computer or handheld device, he/she must fill out a form to put the device on the network. The computer or device must have updated antivirus software. The device must be virus free and must not contain any unauthorized or inappropriate files.

- Employees may not download any unauthorized software onto Richmond County School System computers.
- Employees will use system-supported technology, including, but not limited to, Web 2.0 or equivalent resources (wikis, blogs, online collaborative environments, etc.) for educational use only and will refrain from accessing inappropriate information.
- Employees must follow the Code of Ethics for Educators, as well as any other applicable laws or regulations.
- Employees shall act in good faith to enforce the operation of technology protection measures while school computers with Internet access are being used.

### **Student Responsibilities:**

- Students should not use the Internet for purposes other than instructional assignments related to the curriculum.
- Students will use system-supported technology, including, but not limited to, Web 2.0 or equivalent resources (wikis, biogs, online collaborative environments, etc.) for educational use only and will refrain from accessing inappropriate e information.
- Students must follow teacher directions for Internet related assignments.
- Students must heed prohibitions and Internet Safety rules.
- Students should participate in any and all training as instructed by school personnel.
- Students will follow all applicable rules related to Internet, computer or digital device use contained within the Student Code of Conduct and Discipline.
- Students should take precautions when using the network. Internet safety is a great concern of the Richmond County Board of Education.

### **For Internet Safety, Students Should:**

- Never provide last name, address, telephone number, or school name online.
- Never respond to and always report any messages that make the student feel uncomfortable or that are from an unknown origin.
- Never send a photo of themselves or anyone else.
- Never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they met online.
- Never open attachments or files from unknown senders.
- Always report any inappropriate sites observed.

### **Usage of Web-Enabled Devices and/or Personal Computers**

The use of web-enabled devices or personal computers on campus is a privilege that the school grants to students who are willing to assume the responsibilities outlined in the Richmond County Acceptable Use Policy and Procedures. This usage policy also applies to the web-enabled devices checked out by the school. All guidelines in the Richmond County Board of Education Acceptable Use Policy continue to apply when a student brings a personal laptop computer or other web-enabled device for use on campus.

Failure to follow the Acceptable Use Policy violates the requirements as set forth by the Official Code of Georgia and the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).