

Access to Electronic Media

PURPOSE

This policy outlines both the privileges and responsibilities associated with the use of Middlesboro Independent Schools' computers and network resources. It addresses ethical and educational uses of electronic media, including, but not limited to, the Internet, email, and other technological resources.

The Middlesboro Independent Board of Education recognizes that telecommunications and the Internet are in a constant state of change (e.g. Web 2.0); and that use of these resources can enhance the educational environment, and provide access to information that can maximize teaching and learning. As these and other new technologies impact the ways that information may be accessed, communicated and transferred by members of society, those changes may also alter the techniques of instruction and student learning. The Board supports reasonable access by students, staff, and the community to these rich information resources. Along with this privilege is the expectation that these resources will be used in a responsible manner by all users as required by this policy and related procedures, which apply to all parties who use District technology.

Electronic information research and application skills are now fundamental to the preparation of citizens and future employees in the Age of Information. The Board expects that the staff will blend thoughtful use of such information throughout the curriculum and that the staff will provide guidance and instruction to students for the development of the appropriate skills to evaluate and utilize such resources.

The Middlesboro Independent Schools' electronic communications system has a purpose limited to educational usage to assist in preparing students for success in the 21st Century. For additional information, see school board policies for students, and certified and classified employees, regarding use of school property, disrupting the educational process, as well as the student code of conduct.

SAFETY PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

The Superintendent shall develop and implement appropriate procedures to provide guidance for access to electronic media. Guidelines shall address teacher supervision of student computer use, ethical use of electronic media (including, but not limited to, the Internet, e-mail, and other District technological resources), and issues of privacy versus administrative review of electronic files and communications. In addition, guidelines shall prohibit utilization of networks for prohibited or illegal activities, the intentional spreading of embedded messages, or the use of other programs with the potential of damaging or destroying programs or data.

Students shall be provided instruction about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking sites and in chat rooms and cyberbullying awareness and response.

Internet safety measures, which shall apply to all District-owned devices with Internet access or personal devices that are permitted to access the District's network, shall be implemented that effectively address the following:

- Controlling access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet and World Wide Web;
- Safety and security of minors when they are using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications, or Web 2.0 collaborative tools;

Access to Electronic Media

(Acceptable Use Policy)

SAFETY PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES (CONTINUED)

- Preventing unauthorized access, including “hacking” and other unlawful activities by minors online;
- Unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal information regarding minors; and
- Restricting minors’ access to materials harmful to them.

A technology protection measure may be disabled by the Board’s designee during use by an adult to enable access for bona fide research or other lawful purpose.

The District shall provide reasonable public notice of, and at least one (1) public hearing or meeting to address and communicate, its initial Internet safety measures.

Specific expectations for appropriate Internet use shall be reflected in the District’s code of acceptable behavior and discipline including appropriate orientation for staff and students.

Users may not use the electronic systems for commercial purposes, defined as offering or providing goods or services or purchasing goods or services for personal use unless authorized by the Middlesboro Independent Board of Education. Use of public property for personal gain is a felony and is subject to prosecution.

Students are responsible for good behavior on school computer networks just as they are in a classroom or a school hallway. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply. The network is provided for students to conduct research and communicate with others. Access to network services will be provided to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner.

Student use of telecommunications and electronic information resources will be permitted upon submission of permission forms and agreement forms by parents of students.

The Middlesboro Independent Schools’ Acceptable Use Policy will govern all use of the Middlesboro Independent Electronic Communications Network. Student use of the system will also be governed by school disciplinary codes.

PERMISSION/AGREEMENT FORM

All employees of Middlesboro Independent Schools, requiring access to electronic resources, shall be required to sign the District Acceptable Use Policy. This policy will remain on file at the District office.

A written parental request shall be required prior to the student being granted independent access to electronic media involving District technological resources.

The required permission/agreement form, which shall specify acceptable uses, rules of on-line behavior, access privileges, and penalties for policy/procedural violations, must be signed by the parent or legal guardian of minor students (those under 18 years of age) and also by the student. This document shall be kept on file as a legal, binding document. In order to modify or rescind the agreement, the student’s parent/guardian (or the student who is at least 18 years old) must provide the Superintendent with a written request. This document will remain in effect until the student moves to another school building, or until policy changes require a new form.

Access to Electronic Media

(Acceptable Use Policy)

EMPLOYEE USE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees shall not use a code, access a file, or retrieve any stored communication unless they have been given authorization to do so. (Authorization is not required each time the electronic media is accessed in performance of one's duties.) Each employee is responsible for the security of his/her own password.

Employees are encouraged to use electronic mail and other District technology resources to promote student learning and communication with the home and education-related entities. If those resources are used, they shall be used for purposes directly related to work activities.

Certified staff will employ electronic mail on a daily basis at work as a primary tool for communications. The District may rely upon this medium to communicate information and all staff will be responsible for checking and reading messages daily.

The network is provided for staff and students to conduct research and communicate with others. Communications over the network are often public in nature; therefore, general rules and standards for professional behavior and communications will apply.

Electronic mail and telecommunications are not to be utilized by employees to share confidential information about students or other employees because messages are not entirely secure. Only e-mail accounts approved by KETS and the Middlesboro Independent School System are acceptable for use.

Network administrators may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and to ensure that staff members are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect that files stored on District servers or workstations will be private.

Faculty and other staff should demonstrate an involved approach to the classroom management and supervision of students using electronic resources.

Technology-based materials, activities and communication tools shall be appropriate for and within the range of the knowledge, understanding, age and maturity of students with whom they are used.

District employees and activity sponsors may set up blogs and other social networking accounts using District resources and following District guidelines to promote communications with students, parents, and the community concerning school-related activities and for the purpose of supplementing classroom instruction.

Networking, communication and other options offering instructional benefits may be used for the purpose of supplementing classroom instruction and to promote communications with students and parents concerning school-related activities.

In order for District employees and activity sponsors to utilize a social networking site for instructional, administrative or other work-related communication purposes, they shall comply with the following:

1. They shall request prior permission from the Superintendent/designee.
2. If permission is granted, staff members will set up the site following any District guidelines developed by the Superintendent's designee.

Access to Electronic Media

(Acceptable Use Policy)

EMPLOYEE USE AND RESPONSIBILITIES (CONTINUED)

3. Guidelines may specify whether access to the site must be given to school/District technology staff.
4. If written parental consent is not otherwise granted through AUP forms provided by the District, staff shall notify parents of the site and obtain written permission for students to become “friends” prior to the students being granted access. This permission shall be kept on file at the school as determined by the Principal.
5. Once the site has been created, the sponsoring staff member is responsible for the following:
 - a. Monitoring and managing the site to promote safe and acceptable use; and
 - b. Observing confidentiality restrictions concerning release of student information under state and federal law.

Staff members are discouraged from creating personal social networking sites to which they invite students to be friends. Employees taking such action do so at their own risk.

All employees shall be subject to disciplinary action if their conduct relating to use of technology or online resources violates this policy or other applicable policy, statutory or regulatory provisions governing employee conduct. The Professional Code of Ethics for Kentucky School Certified Personnel requires certified staff to protect the health, safety, and emotional well-being of students and confidentiality of student information. Conduct in violation of this Code, including, but not limited to, such conduct relating to the use of technology or online resources, must be reported to Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) as required by law and may form the basis for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

STUDENT ACCESS TO NETWORKED INFORMATION RESOURCES

In order to match electronic resources as closely as possible to the approved District curriculum, District personnel will review and evaluate resources. Staff will provide developmentally appropriate guidance to students as they make use of telecommunications and electronic information resources to conduct research and other studies related to the District curriculum. All students will be informed by staff of their rights and responsibilities as users of the District network prior to gaining access to that network, either as an individual user or as a member of a class or group.

Students shall be provided instruction about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking sites and in chat rooms and cyberbullying awareness and response.

Access to Electronic Media

(Acceptable Use Policy)

STUDENT ACCESS TO NETWORKED INFORMATION RESOURCES

Access to the District information resources will be designed in ways that point students to those, which have been reviewed and evaluated prior to use. Students shall be provided with guidelines and lists of resources particularly suited to the learning objectives.

Students may pursue electronic research and access electronic mail only if they have been granted parental permission and have submitted all required forms. Permission is not transferable and may not be shared. Student e-mail accounts will only be activated at each school after training is conducted with staff on appropriate usage and procedures.

COMMUNITY USE

On recommendation of the Superintendent/designee, the Board shall determine when and which computer equipment, software, and information access systems will be available to the community.

Upon request to the Principal/designee, community members may have access to the Internet and other electronic information sources and programs available through the District's technology system, provided they attend any required training and abide by the rules of usage established by the Superintendent/designee

ALL NETWORKED INFORMATION RESOURCE USERS

The following behaviors are not permitted on District networks or machines:

1. Violating State and Federal legal requirements addressing student and employee rights to privacy, including unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal information by sharing confidential information about students or employees.
2. Hotmail and other e-mail access, not provided by the state, shall not be accessed from the Middlesboro Independent network.
3. Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures, including those that involve:
 - Profanity or obscenity; or
 - Harassing or intimidating communications.
4. Assisting a campaign for election of any person to any office or for the promotion of or opposition to any ballot proposition.
5. Engaging in practices that threaten the network (e.g., loading files that may introduce a virus).
6. Violating copyright laws or placing copyrighted material on the network.
7. Using others' passwords, "hacking" or gaining unauthorized access to computers or computer systems, or attempting to gain such unauthorized access.
8. Trespassing in others' folders, documents, or files or destroying their data.
9. Intentionally wasting limited resources and bandwidth including downloading of freeware or shareware programs.

Access to Electronic Media

(Acceptable Use Policy)

ALL NETWORKED INFORMATION RESOURCE USERS (CONTINUED)

10. Employing the network for commercial, political, or personal gain, except as specifically agreed to with the District.
11. Using technology resources to bully, threaten or attack a staff member or student or to access and/or set up unauthorized blogs and online journals, including, but not limited to MySpace.com, Facebook.com or Xanga.com.
12. Sending “Pass it On” letters, chain letters, jokes, etc.
13. Vandalizing or destroying network resources.
14. Playing games with no educational purpose.
15. Posting of personal contact information by students about themselves or others.
16. Students agreeing to meet with someone they met online without their parent’s approval and participation.
17. Engaging in any illegal act while using the network.

GENERAL STUDENT RULES AND GUIDELINES

Students are responsible for good behavior on school computer networks just as they are in a classroom or a school hallway. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply.

The network is provided for students to conduct research and communicate with others. Parent permission is required for minors. Access is a privilege, not a right. Access entails responsibility.

Individual users of the District computer networks are responsible for their behavior and communications over those networks. It is presumed that users will comply with District standards and will honor the agreements they have signed.

Network storage areas may be treated like school lockers. Network administrators may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and insure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect that files stored on District servers or workstations will always be private.

The Principal of each school will serve as the building-level coordinator for the Middlesboro Independent School System. As such, they will:

- Establish a system to ensure adequate supervision of students using the network
- Maintain executed user agreements
- Interpret the Middlesboro Independent Board of Education’s Acceptable Use Policy

Primary (K-P5) will be granted e-mail access only through a classroom account. Parental permission will only be required for individual accounts for students in grades 4-12. Individual student e-mail accounts will be activated for instructional purposes at the discretion of the Principals and District network administrators, and after staff and student training has been conducted.

Access to Electronic Media

(Acceptable Use Policy)

DISREGARD OF RULES

Individuals who refuse to sign required acceptable use documents or who violate District rules governing the use of District technology shall be subject to loss or restriction of the privilege of using equipment, software, information access systems, or other computing and telecommunications technologies.

Employees and students shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination (employees) and expulsion (students) for violating this policy and acceptable use rules and regulations established by the school or District. System administrators will deem what is appropriate use and the decisions they make will be final.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR DAMAGES

Individuals shall reimburse the Board for repair or replacement of District property lost, stolen, damaged, or vandalized while under their care. Students or staff members who deface a District web site or otherwise make unauthorized changes to a web site shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion and termination, as appropriate.

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

School officials shall apply the same criterion of educational suitability used to review other educational resources when questions arise concerning access to specific databases or other electronic media.

AUDIT OF USE

Users with network access shall not utilize District resources to establish electronic mail accounts through third-party providers or any other nonstandard electronic mail system.

The Superintendent/designee shall establish a process to determine whether the District's education technology is being used for purposes prohibited by law or for accessing sexually explicit materials. The process shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Utilizing technology that meets requirements of Kentucky Administrative Regulations and that blocks or filters internet access for both minors and adults to certain visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, or, with respect to computers with Internet access by minors, harmful to minors;
2. Maintaining and securing a usage log; and
3. Monitoring online activities of minors.

RETENTION OF RECORDS FOR E-RATE PARTICIPANTS

Following initial adoption, this policy and documentation of implementation shall be retained for at least five (5) years after the last day of service in a particular funding year.

Access to Electronic Media

(Acceptable Use Policy)

REFERENCES:

[KRS 156.675](#); [701 KAR 005:120](#)

[16 KAR 1:020](#) [KAR 001:020](#) ([Code of Ethics](#))

47 U.S.C. 254/Children's Internet Protection Act; 45 C.F.R. 54.520

Kentucky Education Technology System (KETS)

RELATED POLICIES:

03.1325/03.2325; 03.17/03.27

08.1353; 08.2322 AP.1; AP.21

09.14; 09.421; 09.422; 09.425; 09.426

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