

# Norwalk Public Schools

## Technology Acceptable Use Policy: Administrative Regulations

### ***Regulations for Student Use of Computers and Networks:***

Computers and networks provide access to resources as well as the ability to communicate with other users worldwide. Such open access is a privilege and requires that individual users act responsibly. Users must respect the rights of other users; respect the integrity of the system and related physical resources; and observe all relevant laws, regulations, and contractual obligations.

Use of computers by students and access by students to computer networks and to the Internet are services made available to further the educational mission of the Norwalk Public Schools. In order to be granted these access privileges and to retain them, students must abide by the guidelines set forth in these regulations.

All school computers systems, including equipment and operating systems are the sole property of the Norwalk Public Schools. Use of the Norwalk Public School's computer systems, including internet access and email, is not guaranteed to be private. As such, the user does not have an expectation of privacy in his/her use of such systems and the Norwalk Public Schools reserves the right to monitor the use of such systems to ensure compliance with school policies and use guidelines by, e.g., bypassing passwords where appropriate.

### ***Information Networks:***

The Norwalk Public Schools' network connects all of the schools and offices. This makes sharing information and communicating with all schools and offices possible. This network supports activities that have educational value for administration, instruction and learning by teachers and students.

The Internet is a collection of many worldwide networks that support the open exchange of information. The Internet provides immediate access to information anywhere in the world. Users can view or print articles, documents and pictures that can be used in the instructional-learning process.

### ***Student Behavior:***

Students are expected to use all computer equipment and network access to pursue intellectual activities, to seek resources, to access libraries and for other types of learning activities. Students must explore this new "space" to discover what is available there. They will learn new things and can share their newfound knowledge with classmates, teachers, parents and global learning partners. For the safety of all involved, caution must be exercised when communicating with people anywhere.

Because the Norwalk Public Schools' network is used as part of a school activity, the Code of Conduct for each student's school applies to network activity. Therefore, the Acceptable Use Policy is an extension of each school's behavior code. These rules apply to vandalism of computer equipment, unauthorized access to information, computer piracy, hacking, and tampering with hardware and software.

The network may not be used to annoy, harass, or otherwise offend other people. These rules also apply to other types of damage or information loss on the information networks that might be caused by destructive devices such as computer viruses. Any person responsible for a computer becoming infected with viruses, worms or any other type of destructive device will be liable. *Improper behavior may result in penalties, sanctions, and other consequences.*

## **Copying Software:**

With a few exceptions, software on the Norwalk Public Schools' computers and network are licensed for use on the Norwalk Public Schools' computers only. Copying software from a computer or network is prohibited unless specifically authorized in writing by an appropriate authority. *Illegal copying of software is subject to civil damages and criminal penalties, including fines and imprisonment.*

## **Moral and Ethical Issues:**

The Norwalk Public School District wants to provide a stimulating educational environment in which students, teachers and parents can grow as a learning community. While the Norwalk Public School District wants this valuable educational tool used, the use of inappropriate information on the Internet will not be condoned. Some materials exist which are inappropriate to the instructional setting, and reasonable measures will be taken to prevent them from being accessed. Users must clearly understand that access to such material in any form is strictly forbidden.

The network is designed to achieve and support instructional goals and is *not intended to be used for financial gain*. Any information that does not support classroom learning should be avoided. Although the actual percentage of unacceptable materials is small, it can cause concern for students and parents if a student accesses those materials while doing legitimate research. If you have a question or concern regarding any materials found, students should apprise the teacher or computer lab supervisor.

## **Electronic Libraries:**

Materials on the Internet can be considered part of a vast digital library. Electronic database and information search tools to access the Internet are becoming part of school media centers and libraries. Many public libraries also offer some type of Internet access as part of their services.

Guidelines for access to information have already been established in the *Library Bill of Rights* of 1980. These principles can be applied to the Internet as well. This document states that "attempts to restrict access to library materials violate the basic tenets of the *Library Bill of Rights*;" however, school librarians are required to devise collections that are "consistent with the philosophy, goals and objectives of the school district." This means that students have the right to information, but the school has the right to restrict any information that does not apply to the approved curriculum.

## **Using Resources:**

Information networks have limited capacities. The more users there are on the network, the more congested the network becomes, and access to information will take longer. The following guidelines will help ease congestion:

- Do not tie up the network with idle activities.
- Do not play games with others on the network or on Internet.
- Do not download huge files unless directed to do so by a teacher.
- Download only information that is needed.
- Use access time efficiently.

## **Virtual Field Trips:**

The information networks offer many opportunities for "virtual field trips" to distant locations. The Norwalk Public School District considers all connections to remote locations as "virtual field trips". Rules that apply to student conduct on field trips apply to "virtual electronic field trips" as well. It is important that students realize that they represent their school and their school district when they use information networks, and are expected to be on their best behavior.