

**COMPUTER NETWORK AND INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR  
EMPLOYEES**

The Gloucester Public Schools Technology Network, which includes access to the World Wide Web and electronic mail capability, exists solely for educational purposes, which are defined as classroom activities, career and professional development and high quality self-discovery activities of an educational nature. The Gloucester Public Schools intends to utilize this computer network, along with all of its other educational resources, to fulfill its ultimate goal of preparing students for success in life and work. To this end, the computer network will be used to facilitate communication between and among students, staff and parents, enhance productivity, assist staff members in upgrading and acquiring skills through a broader exchange of information, and to provide information to the community including parents, government agencies and businesses.

The computer network is not to be considered a resource intended for use as a public forum or for any purpose that is not directly related to the delivery of educational services.

The following rules apply to the use of the Gloucester Public Schools computer network.

Rules:

1. Network access is a privilege, not a right. The use of the network must be consistent with, and directly related to, the educational objectives of the Gloucester Public Schools.
2. Violations of this Acceptable Use Policy include, but are not limited to, the following conduct:
  - a. Placing unlawful and/or inappropriate information on a system.
  - b. Cyber bullying, using profane, vulgar, threatening, defamatory, abusive, discriminatory, harassing or otherwise objectionable or criminal language in a public or private message.
  - c. Sending messages or posting information that would likely result in the loss of a recipient's work or system (e.g., viruses, malicious scripts).
  - d. Sending "chain letters" or "broadcast" messages to lists or individuals, subscribing to "listserves" or "newsgroups" without prior permission or educational merit, or using the Internet access for any other personal use, without prior permission.
  - e. Participating in other types of use which would cause congestion of the network or interfere with the work of others.

- f. Using the network in a manner that would violate any U.S. or state law. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening material and spreading of computer viruses.
- g. Accessing or transmitting materials that are obscene, sexually explicit, and accessing any prohibited sites on the Internet.
- h. Revealing one's password to anyone else, using anyone else's password, or pretending to be someone else when sending information over the computer network.
- i. Attempting to gain unauthorized access to system programs or computer equipment, including attempts to override, or to encourage others to override, any firewalls established on the network.
- j. Attempting to harm, modify or destroy data of another user.
- k. Exhibiting any other action whatsoever which would in any way subject the user or the Gloucester Public Schools to any civil or criminal action.
- l. Discussing highly sensitive or confidential school department information in e-mail communications. Confidential information about a student must never be transmitted via email. Such information should be communicated with a telephone call or during parent-teacher conference. Parent-teacher communication via email is not secure and, as any other email, can become a public record.
- m. Criticism or negative concerns about staff or others in an all-staff or group email format.
- n. Using the Gloucester Public Schools technology network to buy, sell or advertise anything.
- o. Accessing social networking sites, discussion groups or "chat rooms," or engaging in any other form of online conversation or communication whose purpose is not primarily educational.
- p. Using the Gloucester Public Schools technology network for gambling.
- q. Using the Gloucester Public Schools technology network for political campaigning purposes, including attempts to influence ballot questions or to promote or oppose a candidate for public office.

- r. Failing to log off the computer network at the conclusion of a work session or at the request of system administrators.
  - s. Usernames and passwords should not be written and left in plain site. Browsers or other network software should never be set to automatically remember passwords.
  - t. Using the computer network for recreational purposes or activities relating to personal hobbies.
  - u. Installing software, data or hardware on the computer network without first having authorization and the information scanned by the computer technology staff for viruses or other incompatibility.
3. Except as otherwise provided in the applicable collective bargaining agreement, the Gloucester Public Schools assumes no responsibility for:
- a. any unauthorized charges or fees, including telephone charges, long distance charges, per minute surcharges and/or equipment or line costs.
  - b. any financial obligations arising out of unauthorized use of the system for the purchase of products or services.
  - c. any cost, liability or damages caused by a user's violation of these guidelines.
  - d. any information or materials that are transferred through the network.
  - e. any other inappropriate use of electronic resources of the Gloucester Public Schools.
4. The Gloucester Public Schools makes no guarantee, implied or otherwise, regarding the reliability of the data connection. The Gloucester Public Schools shall not be liable for any loss or corruption of data resulting while using the network.
5. All messages and information created, sent or retrieved on the network are the property of Gloucester Public Schools. Electronic mail messages and other use of electronic resources by students and staff, including accessing web pages, should not be considered confidential. Copies of all information created, sent or retrieved are stored on the computer network's back-up files. While the Gloucester Public Schools does not plan to review cache files or back-up files on a regular basis, it reserves the right to access and monitor all messages and files on the computer system, including web pages accessed, as it deems necessary and appropriate in the ordinary course of its business for purposes including, but not limited to, ensuring proper use of resources and conducting routine network maintenance. By participating in the school district's computer network, users are indicating their consent to such monitoring and access. Where appropriate, communications including text and images may be disclosed to law enforcement in response to proper requests, or to other third parties in the context of proper requests in the course of litigation without prior consent of the sender or receiver.

6. Any users caught illegally obtaining software or transferring such software through the network, and any whose accounts are found to contain such illegal files, shall immediately have their accounts permanently revoked. In addition, all users should be aware that software piracy is a federal offense and is punishable by a fine or imprisonment.
7. The Gloucester Public Schools reserves its right to seek restitution from any user for costs incurred by the district, including legal fees, due to such user's inappropriate use of electronic resources.
8. Staff members who author classroom, school, and district web pages should reference and sign the Web Publishing Guidelines for Staff.

A violation of the terms of this Acceptable Use Policy may result in restrictions of network access privileges and may also result in other disciplinary action consistent with the disciplinary policies of the Gloucester Public Schools and the applicable provisions of any governing collective bargaining agreement. Users should also be aware that violation of these rules that constitutes a crime might also result in criminal prosecution.

*Approved by the School Committee on September 14, 2011*