

STUDENT COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE

York School Department provides computers, networks and Internet access to support the educational mission of the schools and to enhance the curriculum and learning opportunities for students and school staff. The School Committee believes that the resources available through the Internet are of significant value in the learning process and preparing students for future success. At the same time, the unregulated availability of information and communication on the Internet requires that schools establish reasonable controls for lawful, efficient and appropriate use of this technology.

Student use of school computers, networks and Internet services is a privilege not a right. Students are required to comply with this policy and the accompanying rules. Students who violate the policy and/or rules may have their computer privileges revoked and may also be subject to further disciplinary and/or legal action.

All York School Department computers remain under the control, custody and supervision of the school unit. The school unit reserves the right to monitor all computer and Internet activity by students. Students have no expectation of privacy in their use of school computers. Student Internet use will be subject to an electronic filtering system administered by the School Department.

While reasonable precautions will be taken to supervise student use of the Internet, York School Department cannot reasonably prevent all inappropriate uses, including access to objectionable materials and communication with persons outside of the school, in violation of Committee policies/procedures and school rules. The school unit is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of information that students obtain through the Internet.

Students and parents shall be informed of this policy/procedure on an annual basis through handbooks and/or other means selected by the Superintendent.

The Superintendent shall be responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy and the accompanying rules and for advising the Committee of the need for any future amendments or revisions to the policy/rules. The Superintendent may develop additional administrative procedures/rules governing the day-to-day management and operations of the school unit's computer system as long as they are consistent with the Committee's policy/rules. The Superintendent may delegate specific responsibilities to building principals and others as he/she deems appropriate.

STUDENT COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE - RULES

These rules implement Committee policy. The rules are intended to provide general guidelines and examples of prohibited uses but do not attempt to state all required or prohibited activities by students. Failure to comply with Committee policy and these rules may result in loss of computer and Internet access privileges, disciplinary action and/or legal action.

A. Computer Use is a Privilege, Not a Right

Student use of the school unit's computers, networks and Internet services is a privilege, not a right. Unacceptable use/activity may result in suspension or cancellation of privileges as well as additional disciplinary and/or legal action.

The building principal shall have final authority to decide whether a student's privileges will be denied or revoked.

B. Acceptable Use

Student access to the school unit's computers, networks and Internet services are provided for educational purposes and research consistent with the school unit's educational mission, curriculum and instructional goals.

The same rules and expectations govern student use of computers as apply to other student conduct and communications.

Students are further expected to comply with these rules and all specific instructions from the teacher or other supervising staff member/volunteer when accessing the school unit's computers, networks and Internet services.

C. Prohibited Use

The student is responsible for his/her actions and activities involving school unit computers, networks and Internet services and for his/her computer files, passwords and accounts. Examples of unacceptable uses that are expressly prohibited include but are not limited to the following:

1. Accessing Inappropriate Materials - Accessing, submitting, posting, publishing, forwarding, downloading, scanning or displaying materials that are defamatory, abusive, obscene, vulgar, sexually explicit, sexually suggestive, threatening, discriminatory, harassing and/or illegal;
2. Illegal Activities - Using the school unit's computers, networks and Internet services for any illegal activity or activity that violates other Committee policies, procedures and/or school rules;
3. Violating Copyrights - Copying or downloading copyrighted materials without the owner's permission;
4. Plagiarism - Representing as one's own work any materials obtained on the Internet (such as term papers, articles, etc.). When Internet sources are used in student work, the author, publisher and Web site must be identified;

5. Copying Software - Copying or downloading software without the express authorization of the District Technology Director or representative;
6. Non-School-Related Uses - Using the school unit's computers, networks and Internet services for non-school-related purposes such as private financial gain, commercial, advertising or solicitation purposes, or for any other personal use;
7. Misuse of Passwords/Unauthorized Access - Sharing passwords, using other students' or other users' passwords without permission and/or accessing other students' or users' accounts;
8. Malicious Use/Vandalism - Any malicious use, disruption or harm to the school unit's computers, networks and Internet services, including but not limited to hacking activities and creation/uploading of computer viruses; and
9. Unauthorized Access to Chat Rooms/News Groups – Accessing chat rooms or news groups without specific authorization from the supervising teacher.

D. No Expectation of Privacy

The school unit retains control, custody and supervision of all computers, networks and Internet services owned or leased by the school unit. The school unit reserves the right to monitor all computer and Internet activity by students. Students have no expectations of privacy in their use of school computers, including e-mail and stored files.

E. Compensation for Losses, Costs and/or Damages

The student and/or the student's parent/guardian shall be responsible for compensating the school unit for any losses, costs or damages incurred by the school unit related to violations of policy and/or these rules, including investigation of violations.

F. School Unit Assumes No Responsibility for Unauthorized Charges, Costs or Illegal Use

The school unit assumes no responsibility for any unauthorized charges made by students including but not limited to credit card charges, long distance telephone charges, equipment and line costs, or for any illegal use of its computers such as copyright violations.

G. Student Security

A student shall not reveal his/her full name, address or telephone number on the Internet. Students should inform their supervising teacher if they access information or messages that are dangerous, inappropriate or make them uncomfortable in any way.

H. System Security

The security of the school unit's computers, networks and Internet services is a high priority. Any student who identifies a security problem must notify a member of the technology staff. The student shall not demonstrate the problem to others. Any student who attempts or causes a breach of system security shall have his/her privileges revoked and may be subject to additional disciplinary and/or legal action.

I. Online Publishing

The York School Department videotapes, photographs and/or displays student work/activities on school web pages, newsletters, closed-circuit broadcasts and occasionally on the local cable access station. Whenever student work is displayed on our web site, only first names are used. Whenever a photograph is used, no names, first or last, are ever displayed.

Parents have the right to refuse to permit the online publication of said information by providing written notice, listing the type(s) of information to which you object to the principal of the school your child attends on or before September 22, or in the case of a new student, up to 21 days after enrollment in the York School Department.