

INSTRUCTION

613.0

Use of the Internet by Students and Educators

A. Generally

The Internet is an electronic highway connecting thousands of computers all over the world and millions of individual subscribers. With connections to computers and people all over the world also comes the availability of material that may not be considered to be of appropriate educational value. On a global network, it is impossible to restrict access to controversial materials. It is the responsibility of the student, parent, teacher and administrator to ensure that access to telecommunication networks and computers provided by the school system is not abused. Access to the Internet provides students and educators with:

- Electronic mail communication
- Information and news service
- Discussion groups on a variety of subjects
- Connections to many libraries, companies, agencies, and businesses

B. Acceptable Use

The purpose of the Internet is to support educational programs by providing access to unique resources. The use of the Internet must be in support of education and consistent with the educational objectives of the West Virginia Board of Education and Mingo County Board of Education.

Transmission of any material, in violation of federal, state and/or county codes or regulations, is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material or material protected by trade secrets. The use for product advertisement or political lobbying is prohibited. Illegal activities are strictly prohibited.

To comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act, users shall be required to follow the rules set fourth in West Virginia State Policy 2460 and Mingo County Policy 613.00.

C. Network Etiquette

Users are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Do not write or send abusive messages to others
- Use appropriate language, which will restrict the use of swearing, use of vulgarities or any other inappropriate language
- Do not reveal the personal home address or phone numbers of students or colleagues
- Electronic mail (e-mail) is not guaranteed to be private. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to the authorities
- Do not use the Internet in such a way that would disrupt the use of the Internet by other users (e.g. downloading huge files during prime time; sending messages e-mail messages; annoying other users)

D. Security

Users who identify a security problem on the system must notify a system administrator. Users must not demonstrate the problem to their users. Users must not use another individual's account, nor give their password to others. Users should not attempt to log into the system as any other user or as a system administrator. Any user, identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with other computer systems, may be denied access.

E. Vandalism

Vandalism is any attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, or any connections that are part of the Internet. Violations include:

- sending either mail or a program which will replicate itself or do damage to another user's account
- tampering with or obstructing the operation of computer systems (attempting to "crash" the system)
- inspecting, modifying, distributing data or software without proper authorization or attempting to do so
- attempting to interfere with the performance of the system damaging computer hardware or software

F. Privacy

Investigating or reading another user's files is recognized as an abuse of privacy and is protected under the privacy act. Reading protected files, by whatever mechanism, is considered the same as "breaking and entering." Privacy violations include, but are not limited to:

- attempting to access another user's computer files without permission
- supplying or attempting to supply false or misleading information or identification in order to access another user's account
- deliberate, unauthorized attempts to access computer facilities, networks, systems, programs or data
- the unauthorized manipulation of computer systems, programs, or data

G. Theft

Theft is the stealing of any property of the Mingo County Board of Education, WVNET or State of West Virginia. Unauthorized use of user's funding allocation, or that of another user's, whether billable or not, is also considered to be theft.

Theft violations include, but are not limited to:

- using subterfuge or avoid being charged for the use of computer resources
- deliberate, unauthorized use of another user's account to avoid being billed for the computer usage
- abusing specific computer resources
- removing any computer equipment without authorization (hardware, software, data, etc.)
- copying, or attempting to copy, data or software, without proper authorization

H. Copyright Issues

The redistribution of any software from computing systems is strictly prohibited, except in the case of software, which is clearly marked as being in the public domain or shareware.

Copyright violations include, but are not limited to:

- copying, transmitting, or disclosing data, software or documentation without proper authorization or attempting to do so.

I. Harassment

Harassment of other users may be the sending of unwanted messages or files. Harassment violations include, but not limited to:

- interfering with the legitimate work or another user
- the sending of abusive or obscene messages via computers
- the use of computer resources to engage in abuse of computer personnel or other users

J. Miscellaneous

Unethical violations include but are not limited to, the following:

- unauthorized and time consuming recreational game playing
- using computer accounts for work not authorized for that account
- sending chain letters or unauthorized mass mailings
- using the computer for personal profit or other illegal purposes
- personal advertisements

K. Implementation

To ensure implementation of this policy in a method that promotes proper and positive use of the Internet, each school shall annually provide information to students, parents, and educators concerning the acceptable use of the Internet.

Students and their parents using the Internet shall be required to complete a User Permission Form. Educators using the Internet will be required to complete a User Agreement Form. Permission and User Agreement Forms will be maintained on file at each school.

L. Misuse of the Internet

The use of the Internet as part of an educational program is a privilege, not a right, and the disciplinary action is governed under the Discipline and Student Code of Conduct Policy (1102.01). Abuse or misuse of the Internet may not only be a violation of this policy, but may also violate the criminal code. Therefore, the Mingo County Board of Education administration will take appropriate action in response to any abuse or misuse. Action may include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- suspension or revocation of computing privileges
- reimbursement for any resources consumed
- other legal action including action to recover damages
- referral to law enforcement activities
- other disciplinary action as deemed appropriate in accordance with Mingo County Board of Education policies and the West Virginia Code

LEGAL REFERENCE: State Policy 2460, WV Network for Educational Telecommuting (WVNET) Telecommunications Policy and Computer Abuse Policy

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