



Truth or Consequences Municipal Schools Acceptable Use Policy

INTRODUCTION: Truth or Consequences Municipal School District provides resources for teaching and learning, communication services, and business data services through the acquisition of computer equipment and access to local, regional, national, and international sources of information. The School District permits the use of its computer system and information resources by students and staff, who must maintain respect for the public trust through which they have been provided, in accordance with policy and procedures established by the School District. These procedures do not attempt to articulate all required or prescribed behavior by its users. Successful operation of the computer system and network requires that all users conduct themselves in a responsible, ethical, and polite manner while using the network. The user is ultimately responsible for their actions in accessing network services.

GUIDELINES:

1. Access to the computer system, information networks, and the information technology environment within the School District's system is a privilege and must be treated as such by all users. Users must understand that their access is subject to compliance with the acceptable use policy.
2. The School District's system will be used exclusively for the purpose of research, education, and school-related business and operations. Users are expected to use the system responsibly, in alignment with its intended educational and administrative purposes.
3. Any system that requires password access or for which the School District requires an account, such as the Internet/Network, shall only be used by the authorized user. Account owners are ultimately responsible for all activity under their account and shall abide by this policy. Users are expected to maintain strong password security practices, including not sharing passwords with others and regularly updating their passwords.
4. The School District's technological resources are limited. All users must exercise prudence in the shared use of this resource. The School District reserves the right to limit the use of such resources if there are insufficient funds, accounts, storage, memory, or for other reasons deemed necessary by the system operators or if an individual user is determined to be acting in an irresponsible or unlawful manner.
5. All communications and information accessible and accessed via the School District's system are and shall remain the property of the School District. Users should have no expectation of privacy in their use of the system, and the School District reserves the right to monitor network activity as necessary to ensure compliance with the acceptable use policy.
6. Student use shall be supervised and monitored by system operators and authorized staff and shall be related to the School District curriculum. System operators and authorized staff will take reasonable steps to educate students on responsible and ethical use of the system.

7. Any defects or suspected abuse in system accounting, security, hardware, or software shall be promptly reported to the system operators. Users are encouraged to report any incidents or concerns regarding the system's integrity or security.
8. The district implements content filters for internet access to monitor and block most unacceptable material. However, users are responsible for the content they access and will be held accountable for intentionally seeking or obtaining unacceptable media. "Unacceptable material" refers to content that violates generally accepted social standards in the community for the use of a publicly owned and operated communication device. Users should report any encountered inappropriate material to the system operators.

UNACCEPTABLE USE: The Truth or Consequences Municipal School District has the right to take disciplinary action, remove computer and networking privileges, take legal action, or report to proper authorities any activity characterized as unethical, unacceptable, or unlawful. Unacceptable use activities constitute, but are not limited to, any activity through which any user:

1. Violates matters such as institutional or third-party copyright, license agreements, or other contracts. The unauthorized use of and/or copying of software is illegal.
2. Interferes with or disrupts other network users, services, or equipment. Disruptions include, but are not limited to, the distribution of unsolicited advertising, propagation of computer viruses or worms, distributing quantities of information that overwhelm the system (chain letters, network games, etc.), and using the network to make unauthorized entry into any other resource accessible via the network.
3. Seeks to gain or gains unauthorized access to information resources, obtains copies of or modifies files or other data, or gains and communicates passwords belonging to other users.
4. Uses or knowingly allows another to use any computer, computer network, computer system, program, or software to devise or execute a scheme to defraud or to obtain money, property, services, or other things of value by false pretenses, promises, or representations.
5. Destroys, alters, dismantles, disfigures, prevents rightful access to, or otherwise interferes with the integrity of computer-based information resources, whether on stand-alone or networked computers.
6. Invades the privacy of individuals or entities.
7. Uses the network for commercial or political activity or personal or private purposes without explicit authorization.
8. Installs unauthorized software on district computers.
9. Uses the network to access inappropriate materials or engage in activities that violate generally accepted social standards or applicable laws.
10. Compromises the integrity of the School District system, including the use of hacking software, accessing, modifying, obtaining copies of, or altering restricted or confidential records or files.
11. Submits, publishes, or displays any defamatory, inaccurate, racially offensive, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, or threatening materials or messages, whether public or private.

12. Uses the School District system for illegal, harassing, vandalizing, inappropriate, or obscene purposes, or in support of such activities is prohibited. Illegal activities shall be defined as a violation of local, state, and/or federal laws. Harassment is defined as slurs, comments, jokes, innuendos, unwelcome compliments, cartoons, pranks, and/or other verbal conduct relating to an individual which: (a) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment; (b) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or school performance; or (c) interferes with school operations. Vandalism is defined as any attempt to harm or destroy the operating system, application software, or data.

SCHOOL DISTRICT'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Monitor all activity on the School District's system to ensure compliance with the acceptable use policy and applicable laws.
2. Determine whether specific uses of the network are consistent with the acceptable use policy.
3. Remove a user's access to the network at any time it is determined that the user is engaged in unauthorized activity or violating this acceptable use policy.
4. Take prudent steps to develop, implement, and maintain security procedures to ensure the integrity of individual and district files. However, information on any computer system cannot be guaranteed to be inaccessible by other users.
5. Attempt to provide error-free and dependable access to technology resources associated with the School District system. However, the district cannot be held liable for any information that may be lost, damaged, or unavailable due to technical or other difficulties.
6. Ensure that all student and staff users complete and sign an agreement to abide by the district's acceptable use policy and administrative regulations. All such agreements will be maintained on file in the school office.

VIOLATIONS/CONSEQUENCES:

1. Students:
 - a. Students who violate this policy shall be subject to loss of district system access, up to and including permanent loss of privileges, and disciplinary actions up to and including expulsion.
 - b. Violations of law will be reported to law enforcement officials.
 - c. Disciplinary action may be appealed by parents and/or students in accordance with existing district procedures for suspension or loss of student privileges.
2. Staff:
 - a. Staff who violate this policy shall be subject to disciplinary actions, up to and including loss of district system access, suspension, termination, or discharge, in accordance with Board policy, negotiated agreements, and applicable law.
 - b. Violations of law will be reported to law enforcement officials.
 - c. This serves as official notification to all network/email account users that any violation of the above information will result in disciplinary action, which could include suspension and/or termination.