



School Committee Policy:

#603

Computer Acceptable Use

Introduction

The Maynard Public School District's computer network environment is a valuable resource that allows us all to learn, work, explore, and play. It can be used to open doorways to other people, places, ideas, and experiences that would otherwise be unavailable to us. It can also expose unwary users to the following risks:

1. Risks to personal safety posed by unquestioning trust of others online,
2. Risks of viewing harmful material, either accidentally or intentionally,
3. Risks to personal privacy and the confidentiality of personal information,
4. Risks of potential criminal, civil, and/or disciplinary liabilities.

As a community it is our responsibility to mitigate these risks through the education and guidance of our users. As users it is our responsibility to treat this valuable resource with respect by using it appropriately and by taking proper care of it.

Software and services running within the computer network environment provide tools and opportunities for communicating and interacting with others. Like traditional forms of communication and interaction, behavior within the environment affects others and has consequences. Most of the time there is a clear parallel between online behavior and face to face behavior - what's acceptable in person is acceptable online, and what's not acceptable in person is not acceptable online. But online communication is limited and doesn't provide the same level of continuous feedback we get from personal interactions so we must be careful not to let the lack of physical presence and feedback from those we're interacting with lead to misinterpretations or inappropriate behavior. When in doubt, let common sense prevail and ask yourself "would I still be doing this if the person were standing right next to me?"

Besides communication, the environment allows us to manipulate various forms of digital media in ways that continue to evolve. Text, music, video, speech, graphics, animations, software, and more can all be duplicated, transported, modified, and accessed with ease. This ease does not change the users' responsibilities to the authors and creators of these songs, movies, photographs,

texts, etc. They are still subject to the same rules regarding plagiarism, copyright infringement, and theft that apply outside the environment.

We can also interact directly with the environment itself or use it to interact with other networks and environments world-wide, potentially transforming the environments through those interactions. As with all shared infrastructure, users should refrain from destroying, damaging, or disrupting the environment just as we refrain from destroying, damaging, or disrupting public roads, electricity supplies, and water supplies.

It takes an ongoing investment in computer and network equipment, software and data services, and technical and teaching personnel to maintain the utility and value of the environment. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that we do our best to protect our investment and maintain this resource by keeping it and its components in good working order and not engaging in behaviors that disrupt, damage, or degrade the environment or the activities and services that it supports.

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Cross Reference: #16, 325, 610, Student Handbooks
