

## **Internet Filtering**

### **PURPOSE:**

In accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the New Shoreham School Department (NSSD) is required to have in place a filtering device on all computers with Internet access. The filter should protect minors from access to visual depictions that are obscene or constitute child pornography, or that are harmful to minors, as defined in CIPA below:

Harmful to minors, means any picture, image, graphic image file, or other visual depiction that--

- (A) taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion;
- (B) depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and
- (C) taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors.

### **POLICY STATEMENT:**

#### **1. Technology Committee**

The NSSD shall appoint a Technology Committee, which shall include designated members from the IT staff, administrators, educators and students. Deciding what categories of content to filter shall be made by the Technology Committee and approved by the School Committee.

- (A) Principles of academic freedom shall be considered in deciding what categories to filter.
- (B) The Technology Committee shall prepare a document with the list of filtered categories that have been chosen and a brief explanation of the educational or legal basis for the decision to filter each category.
- (C) The Technology Committee shall review the filtered categories annually and make recommendations to the Director of Technology for any proposed adjustments.

#### **2. Requests to Unblock Website**

- (A) Websites may be unblocked in certain circumstances for anyone who meets the following criteria:
  - 1. Educational purposes – there is educational material being blocked by the filtering system. Where access to a specific site consistent with the purpose of education is blocked, the site shall be unblocked.
  - 2. Staff related purposes – a staff member needs a website unblocked related to their job (such as purchasing, law enforcement, bona fide research).

(B) Any person requesting to have a site unblocked should submit a formal request to the Director of Technology through the online ticketing system. The requested submission will include:

- Date of the request
- Website address to be unblocked
- Explanation of purpose for unblocking the site (refer to criteria above)
- Name and title of the requester
- Electronic signature based on login credentials

(C) If deemed appropriate to the criteria mentioned above and if there is no threat to the network or resources, the site will immediately be unblocked and access granted.

### **3. Denied Requests**

If a request to unblock a website is denied, the Director of Technology, through the online ticketing system, will provide the specific reasons as to why the request was denied as well as the individual's right to appeal the decision.

Further appeals may be made in writing to the Superintendent of Schools, or his/her designee, requesting that the denial be overturned.

### **4. Reporting**

(A) The NSSD will maintain a public record of any requests made to unblock a website and all copies of responses provided.

(B) The NSSD will submit annual reports to the School Committee regarding the number of requests granted and denied to unblock a site. The results of the report shall be used to review the filtering categories in place and consider modifications to them or to the administrative procedures in place.

(C) The report shall also be used to determine whether improvements and modifications should be made to the filter itself or a different filtering software vendor should be used.

First Reading: March 16, 2020