

East Providence School Department

Acceptable Computer Use Policy

School districts throughout the country are moving into the Information Age by providing internet access for their students and employees. Providing students with access to vast amounts of unfiltered information and the ability to communicate with people throughout the world necessarily raises concerns that students will be exposed to ideas or material that may be unhealthy or at the very least non-educational.

The standard process by which districts seek to manage student and employee use of the Internet is through the development of an Acceptable Use Policy (AUF). Freedom of expression encompasses the right to freedom of speech and the corollary right to receive information. Such rights extend to minors as well as adults. Schools facilitate the exercise of these rights by providing access to information regardless of format or technology. In a free and democratic society, access to information is a fundamental right of citizenship.

In making decisions regarding student access to the Internet, the East Providence School Department considers its own Stated educational mission, goal!, and objectives. Electronic information research skills are now fundamental to preparation of citizens and future employees. Access to the Internet enables students to explore thousands of libraries, databases, bulletin boards, and other resources while exchanging messages with people around the world. The district expects that faculty will blend thoughtful use of the Internet throughout the curriculum and will provide guidance and instruction to students in its use. As much as possible, access from school to Internet resources should be structured in ways, which point students to those which have been evaluated prior to use. While students will be able to move beyond those resources to others that have riot been previewed by staff, they shall be provided with guidelines and lists of resources particularly suited to learning objectives.

Outside of school, families bear responsibility for the same guidelines of Internet use as they exercise with information sources such as television, telephones, radio, movies and other possibly offensive media.

Students utilizing District-provided Internet access must first have the permission of and must be supervised by the East Providence School Department professional staff. Students utilizing school-provided Internet access are responsible for good behavior on-line just as they are in a classroom or other area of the school. The same general rules for behavior and communications apply.

The purpose of District provided Internet access is to facilitate communications in support of research and education. To remain eligible as users, students' use must be in support of and consistent with the educational objectives of the East Providence School Department. **Access is a privilege, not a right.** Access entails responsibility.

Users should not expect that files stored on school-based computers would always be private. Electronic messages and files stored on school-based computers may be treated like school lockers. Administrators and faculty may review files and messages to maintain system integrity and insure that users are acting responsibly.

The following uses of school-provided Internet access are not permitted:

- a. **To access, upload, download or distribute pornographic, obscene, or sexually explicit material**
- b. **To transmit obscene, abusive, sexually explicit, or threatening language**
- c. **To violate any local, state or federal statute**
- d. **To vandalize, damage, or disable the property of another individual or organization**
- e. **To access another individual's password, materials, information, or files without permission; and**
- f. **To violate copyright or otherwise use the intellectual property of another individual or organization without permission**

Any violation of District policy and roles may result in loss of District-provided access to the Internet. Additional disciplinary action may be determined at the building level in keeping with existing procedures and practices regarding inappropriate language or behavior. When and where applicable, law enforcement agencies may be involved.

The East Providence School Department makes no warranties of any kind, either expressed or implied, for the Internet access it is providing. The East Providence School Department will not be responsible for any damages users suffer, including but not limited to loss of data resulting from delays or interruptions in service. The East Providence School Department will not be responsible for the accuracy, nature or quality of information gathered through District diskettes, hard drives or servers; nor for the accuracy, nature or quality of information gathered through District-provided Internet access. The East Providence School Department will not be responsible for personal property used to access District computers or networks or for District-provided Internet access. The East Providence School Department will not be responsible for unauthorized financial obligations resulting from District-provided access to the Internet.

Parents of students in the East Providence School Department shall be provided with the following information:

The East Providence School Department is pleased to offer its students access to the Internet. The Internet is an electronic highway connecting hundreds of thousands of computers and millions of individual users all over the world. This computer technology will help propel our schools through the communication age by allowing students and staff to access and use resources from distant computers, communicate and collaborate with other individuals and groups around the world and significantly expand their available information base. The Internet is a tool for life-long learning.

Families should be aware that some material accessible via the Internet might contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive to some people. In addition, it is possible to purchase certain goods and services via the Internet, which could result in unwanted financial obligations for which a student's parent or guardian would be liable.

While the District's intent is to make Internet access available in order to further educational goals and objectives, students may find ways to access other materials as well. Even should the District institute technical methods or systems to regulate students' Internet access, those methods could not guarantee compliance with the District's acceptable use policy. That notwithstanding, the District believes that the benefits to students of access to the Internet exceed any disadvantages. Ultimately, however, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources. Toward that end, the East Providence School Department makes the District's complete Internet policy and procedures available on request for review by all parents, guardians, and other members of the community; and provides parents and guardians the option of requesting for their minor children alternative activities not requiring Internet use.

- **Students will be instructed in school about the correct use of the internet before this policy is sent home**
- **Retain a copy of this policy for your use.**
- **Please read, sign and return the Acceptable Use Agreement form.**
- **The agreement signed by the student and parent will be kept on file in school.**

Student's Name _____

East Providence School Department Acceptable Use Policy Agreement Form

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School_____Grade_____
Student's _____
Student ID Number _____
Date _____

I have reviewed the East Providence School Department's Acceptable Use Policy and will follow all the roles governing the use of technologies in school. Failure to follow the rules may result in the loss of using the technologies.

Student's Signature

Parent's (or Legal Guardian) Signature

Acknowledgment or Receipt or EP School Department Acceptable Use Policy_____

**Students have been instructed in school about correct use of the Internet.
A copy of this form will be kept on file at school.**