

HEREFORD ISD ACCEPTABLE USE OF COMPUTERS AND NETWORKS

Hereford Independent School District's (HISD) computer network provides access to the Internet. The availability of computers, access to the Internet and other technologies will increase the learning opportunities for students. To have access to the HISD Wide Area Network (WAN) and the Internet, users (staff, students, and parents) must first read and sign an agreement called the "Acceptable Use of Computers and Networks Agreement".

Definition of Internet

The Internet is an electronic information and communication "highway" connecting millions of computers all over the world and millions of individual people. Students, parents, community members, and staff with HISD accounts have access to some or all of the following:

1. Electronic mail (e-mail) communication with people all over the world (currently only HISD staff are permitted e-mail access);
2. Information and news from a variety of sources and research institutions;
3. discussion groups on a variety of topics; and
4. Access to many university libraries, the Library of Congress, and more!

While access to e-mail and the Internet will enable students to explore a wealth of resources throughout the world, warning should be issued that some material accessible on the Internet may contain items that are inappropriate or inaccurate. Our intent is to provide Internet access to help further educational goals and objectives. However, in this process, students may find ways to access other materials as well. Safeguards are in place to help filter out inappropriate materials, but they are not foolproof. We strongly believe that the benefits to students of access to the Internet, in the form of resources and opportunities for collaboration, exceed any disadvantages. Access to network services can only be given to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Parental permission is required. Access is a privilege – not a right. Access entails responsibility. Within reason, freedom of speech and access to information will be honored. During school, teachers of younger students will guide them toward appropriate materials. Outside of school, families bear the same responsibility for such guidance as they exercise with information sources such as television, telephones, movies, radio, and other potentially offensive media. Because there is not an absolute way to prevent access to information that is clearly inappropriate for students, it has been necessary to develop policies, which establish the responsibilities that come with this technology.

Worldwide Web Publishing

An integral part of the educational experiences gained from use of the electronic network is the creation of a site to which the worldwide Internet community can publish information for access.

- Pictures may be posted on web sites that allow the person to be identified individually by name.
- Student's work will be published only under the direction of the supervising teacher.
- Prior to publication of any material to an electronic page, the appropriate administrator must review the activity.

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Netiquette

All users of the Hereford Independent School District's computers and networks are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette called "Netiquette". There are informal rules of behavior for the use of and communication on the Internet. Failure to follow these rules can result in criticism by others on the Internet or even restricted access to some resources on the Internet. Some tips for "Netiquette" include the following:

- Be polite and courteous. Messages should be positive in nature. Make sure that your communications are clear and easily understood or hurt feelings or confusion may occur. Humor and sarcasm may be misunderstood. Use "emoticons" to help express emotion. For example: smiley face :-) or sad face :-(Transmitting obscene messages or pictures is prohibited.
- Use appropriate language. Do not swear or use vulgar language. Avoid harsh or insulting messages.
- Maintain your privacy. Do not reveal your personal address or telephone numbers. Do not share passwords, addresses, or full names. This is personal information and is not safe to share with others over the Internet.
- Be responsible online. Avoid using the computer to harm other people (spreading rumors or infecting computers with viruses) or for illegal activities.
- Cite references that you use. To avoid plagiarism, cite references for any information that you directly quote or paraphrase. Assume that all communications and information that is accessible via the network is private property.
- Keep paragraphs and messages short and to the point. Make sure that you check your grammar and spelling. Use a font and text style that is easy to read.

Acceptable Uses of Technology

All of the policies and procedures for acceptable use of computers and networks are intended to make the computers and networks more reliable for the users. The users are responsible for their actions and decisions regarding the appropriate use of technology and information gained through this technology. Users are expected to follow the "Netiquette" and copyright guidelines that are outlined above. In addition, users will be expected to follow the acceptable use guidelines below:

- Users are responsible for their individual accounts and should take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from being able to access or use their account. This includes logging out. Under no circumstances should you provide your password to another person.
- Users shall immediately notify the system administrator if they believe they have identified a possible security problem. Do not go looking for security problems because this may be construed as an illegal attempt to gain access.
- Students shall identify to an adult immediately, if by accident, they have encountered materials which violate appropriate use.
- Users shall not erase, change, rename, or make unusable anyone else's computer files, programs, or disks.
- Users shall not let other persons use his/her name, log on, password, or files for any reason.
- Users shall not use or try to discover another user's password or in any way access another person's e-mail or other files.

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- Users shall not use Hereford school computers or networks for any non-instructional or non-administrative purpose (e.g., games) or activities for personal profit.
- Users shall not use a computer for unlawful purpose, such as the illegal copying or installation of software.
- Users shall not copy, change, or transfer any software or documentation provided by Hereford schools, teachers, or another student without written permission from the creator of the document.
- Users shall not write, produce, copy, or attempt to introduce any computer code designed to self-replicate, damage, or otherwise hinder the performance of any computer's memory, file system, or software (e.g., bug, virus).
- Users shall not deliberately use the computer to annoy or harass others with language, images, innuendoes, or threats. The user shall not deliberately access or create any obscene or objectionable information, language, or images.
- Users shall not intentionally damage the system, damage information belonging to others, misuse system resources, or allow others to misuse system software.
- Use of personal computing equipment connecting to the HISD WAN is prohibited.
- Removal of HISD computing equipment (except designated laptop computers which have been assigned to approved users) from HISD premises is prohibited.
- Vandalism – users shall not tamper with computers, networks, printers, or other equipment. Vandalism will result in cancellation of privileges. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm, modify, or destroy computer hardware, data of another user, any computer peripheral or device, any computer accessory (such as mouse pads), the Internet, or any of the other networks that are connected to the HISD WAN.
- Illegal copying – users may not download or install any commercial software, shareware, or freeware onto any HISD computer, network drive or disk, nor copy other user's work or intrude into other user's files.
- Privacy – network storage may be treated like school lockers. Network administrators may review content of personal directories for prohibited files and may review communication to maintain system integrity and insure students are using the system responsibly.

Resource Limits

- Storage capacity – users are expected to remain within the allocated disk space and delete unneeded files and e-mail messages that take up excessive storage space.
- E-mail – students are not issued HISD e-mail accounts. In addition, students may not access personal e-mail accounts (such as Hotmail, MSN, Yahoo, etc.) from any HISD computer.
- File downloads – users shall only download files that are necessary for the educational instruction for HISD (e.g., word documents, pictures, etc.). No user shall download any program or executable file.
- Printing resources – HISD laser and color printing resources shall be used for single copy printing. Printing of nonacademic work is prohibited.

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- Bandwidth – due to the limited amount of bandwidth available to the District, users may not access online streaming audio and video websites unless the site is being used in an educational setting. Streaming audio is an Internet resource that is most often associated with programs such as “Real Player” or “Winamp”, which allow individuals to play a radio station over the Internet on their computer. This is a resource in which we can see great educational value when used for learning, but can also be an enormous burden on network resources if overly used for entertainment purposes.
- The user of the Internet and technology must be a user in good standing (no outstanding detention time, no overdue materials/equipment, or outstanding fines).
- Be prepared to be held accountable for your actions and for the loss of privileges, if the Acceptable Use of Computers Policy is violated

Consequences

Use of the computers for programs, software, e-mail and to access telecommunications resources is a privilege and not a right. Violation of the HISD Acceptable Use of Computers Policy concerning the use of computers and networks will result in disciplinary action.

Level 1: Warning

User will lose computer privileges/Internet access until a parent conference is held. Any additional loss of privileges as determined by the administration will be discussed at this conference.

Level 2: Removal

Removal of computer/Internet privileges. Pattern of abuse or flagrant violations: any student who, after a Level 1 warning, continues to engage in serious or persistent misbehavior by violating the District’s previously communicated written standards of conduct, may be removed from class and recommended for suspension (in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension).

Level 3: Expellable Offense or Legal Action

A student could be expelled from school if he or she engages in conduct on the Internet that contains the elements of the offense of criminal mischief, as defined by State and Federal law. Expulsion may be considered in flagrant violations that blatantly corrupt the educational value of computers or the Internet, or instances when students have used HISD Internet access to violate the law or to compromise another computer network. For continued offenses, school disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action will be taken. Access privileges will be revoked.

Students will not be allowed to participate in any technology activities without the parent and student signature forms on file.

STUDENT AGREEMENT

I understand and will abide by the District guidelines and conditions for the use of the facilities of Hereford Independent School District and access to the Internet. I further understand that any violation of the District guidelines or copyright policies is unethical and may constitute a criminal offense. Should I commit any violation, my access privileges will be revoked. School disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action may be taken.

I agree not to hold Hereford Independent School District, any of its employees, or any of the institutions for networks providing access to Hereford Independent School District responsible for the performance of the system. I also agree to hold none of the latter responsible for the content of any material accessed through the network or damage to personal equipment caused by computer networking through the District.

PARENT PERMISSION

I have read the Hereford Independent School District's Acceptable Use of Computers Policy. I understand that this access is designed for educational purposes. I also recognize that it is impossible for the District to restrict access to controversial materials, and I will not hold the District responsible for supervision when my child's use is not in a school setting. I understand that my child must abide by the Hereford Independent School District's Acceptable Use of Computers Policy and District copyright guidelines. Should he or she commit any violation, access privileges may be revoked and disciplinary and/or appropriate legal action may be taken. I hereby authorize Internet access for my child.

WORLDWIDE WEB PUBLISHING – PARENT PERMISSION

I agree and understand the policy regarding World Wide Web publishing and allow my child to be included in the Hereford Independent School District's home page.

Signature page on file