

DISTRICT ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION SYSTEM USE

A. Purpose

1. The Township of Franklin Public School District is providing employees and students with access to the district's electronic communication system (DECS), which includes Internet access.
2. The purpose of the DECS is to assist in preparing for success in life and work in the 21st century by providing them with electronic access to a wide range of information and the ability to communicate with people from throughout the world. Additionally, the DECS will be used to increase district intracommunication, enhance productivity, and assist employees in upgrading their skills through greater exchange of information with their peers. The DECS will also assist in sharing information with the local community, including parents, social service agencies, government agencies, and businesses.
3. Users of the DECS may not use it for commercial purposes, defined as offering or providing goods or services or purchasing goods or services through the district system.
4. Users may not use the DECS for political lobbying. District employees and students may, however, use the system to communicate with their elected representatives and to express their opinions on political issues.
5. The term "educational purpose" includes use of the system for classroom activities, professional or career development, and limited high-quality self-discovery activities. Students will limit their use of the system for self-discovery purposes.

B. District Responsibilities

1. The Superintendent or designee will oversee the DECS and the implementation of this policy.
2. The building principal will serve as the building-level coordinator for the DECS, will approve building-level activities, ensure that teachers receive proper training in the use of the system and the requirements of this policy, establish a system to ensure adequate supervision of students using the system, maintain the file or user agreements, and will be responsible for interpreting the Internet Acceptable Use Policy at the site level.
3. The Supervisor of Special Programs/Technology will establish a process for setting-up individual and class accounts, set quotas for disk usage on the system, establish a retention schedule and establish a district virus protection process.

C. Technical Services Provided through DECS

1. **World Wide Web.** The Web provides access to a wide range of information in the form of text, graphics, photographs, video, and sound from throughout the world. The Web is a valuable research tool for students and staff members.
2. **E-mail.** E-mail will allow employees to communicate with people from throughout the world. Users will also be able to subscribe to mail lists and engage in group discussions related to educational subjects.

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C. Technical Services Provided through DECS (continued)

3. **Telnet.** Telnet allows the user to log in to remote computers.
4. **File Transfer Protocol (FTP).** FTP allows users to download large files and computer software.
5. **Newsgroups.** Newsgroups are discussion groups that are similar to mail lists. With the oversight of the Supervisor of Special Programs/Technology, the district will provide access to selected newsgroups that relate to subjects that are appropriate to the educational purpose of the system.
6. **Internet Relay Chat (IRC).** IRC provides the capability of engaging in "real-time" discussions. With the oversight of the Supervisor of Special Programs/Technology, the district will provide access to IRC only for specifically defined educational activities.

D. Access to the System

1. The Internet Acceptable Use Policy is intended to govern all use of the district system. Student misuse of the district system will also be governed by the Student Discipline Code.
2. World Wide Web. All District employees and students will be access to the Web through the district's networked computers. An agreement will be required for all students, which must be signed by the student and the student's parent or guardian.
3. Individual E-mail Accounts for District Employees. District employees may be provided with an individual account.

E. Parental Notification and Responsibility

1. The district will notify the parents about the DECS Use Policy. Parents must sign an agreement to allow their child access to the system. Parents may request alternative activities for their child(ren) that do not require Internet access.
2. The DECS Use Policy contains restrictions on accessing inappropriate material. There is a wide range of material available on the Internet, some of which may not be fitting with the particular values of the families of the students. It is not practically possible for the district to monitor and enforce a wide range of social values in student use of the Internet. Further, the district recognizes that parents bear primary responsibility for transmitting their particular set of family values to their children. The district will encourage parents to specify to their child(ren) what material is and is not acceptable for the child(ren) to access through the system.

F. District Limitation of Liability

1. The district makes no warranties of any kind, either expressed or implied, that the functions or the services provided by or through the DECS will be error-free or without defect. The district will not be responsible for any damage users may suffer, including but not limited to loss of data or interruptions of service. The district is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through or stored on the system. The district will not be responsible for financial obligations arising through the use of the DECS.

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G. Due Process

1. The district will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning to or relating to any illegal activities conducted through the DECS.
2. In the event that there is an allegation that a student has violated the DECS Use Policy, the student will be provided with a written notice of the alleged violation and an opportunity to present an explanation before the appropriate school administrator.
3. Disciplinary actions will be tailored to meet specific concerns related to the violation and to assist the student in gaining the self-discipline necessary to behave appropriately on an electronic network. If the alleged violation also involves a violation of other provisions of the Student Discipline Code, the violation will be handled in accordance with the applicable provision of the district discipline policies and procedures.
4. Employee violations of the DECS Use Policy will be handled in accordance with district policy.

H. Search and Seizure

1. System users have a limited privacy expectation in the contents of their personal files on the DECS.
2. Routine maintenance and monitoring of the system may lead to discovery that the user has or is violating the DECS Use Policy, the Student Discipline Code or the law.
3. An individual search will be conducted if there is reasonable suspicion that a user has violated the law or the Student Discipline Code. The nature of the investigation will be reasonable and in the context of the nature of the alleged violation.
4. District employees should be aware that their personal files may be discoverable under state public records laws.

I. Copyright and Plagiarism

1. Laws related to copyrights will govern the use of material accessed through the district system. Because the extent copyright protection of certain works found on the Internet is unclear, employees will make a standard practice of requesting permission from the holder of the work if their use of the material has the potential of being considered an infringement. Teachers will instruct students to respect copyright and to request permission when appropriate.
2. District practices pertaining to plagiarism will govern use of material accessed through the DECS. Teachers will instruct students in appropriate research and citation practices.

J. Academic Freedom, Selection of Material, Student Rights to Free Speech

1. Board policies on Academic Freedom and Free Speech will govern the use of the Internet.

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J. Academic Freedom, Selection of Material, Student Rights to Free Speech (continued)

2. When using the Internet for class activities, teachers will select material that is appropriate to the age of the students and relevant to the course objectives. Teachers will preview the materials and sites they require or recommend for students' access to determine the appropriateness of the material contained on or accessed through the site. Teachers will provide guidelines and lists of resources to assist their students in channeling their research activities effectively and properly. Teachers will assist their students in developing the skills to ascertain the truthfulness of information, distinguish fact from opinion, and engage in discussions about controversial issues while demonstrating tolerance and respect for those who hold divergent views.

K. District Web Site

1. District Web Site. The district may establish a Web site and Web pages that will present information about the district. The Supervisor of Special Programs/Technology will be designated the Webmaster, responsible for maintaining the district Web site.
2. School Web Pages. Schools may establish Web pages that present information about school activities. The Building principal or designee shall be responsible for managing the school Web site.

L. Internet Acceptable Use

The following uses of the DECS are considered unacceptable:

1. Personal Safety (Restrictions are for students only)
 - a. Users will not post personal contact information about themselves or other people. Personal contact information includes address, telephone, school address, work address, etc.
 - b. Users will not agree to meet with someone they have met online.
 - c. Users will promptly disclose to their teacher or immediate supervisor any message they receive that is inappropriate or makes them feel uncomfortable.
2. Illegal Activities
 - a. Users will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to the DECS or to any other computer system or go beyond their authorized access. This includes attempting to log in through another person's account or access another person's files. These actions are illegal, even if only for the purposes of "browsing".
 - b. Users will not make deliberate attempts to disrupt the computer system performance or destroy data by spreading computer viruses or by any other means. These actions are illegal.
 - c. Users will not use the DECS to engage in any other illegal act, such as arranging for a drug sale or the purchase of alcohol, engaging in criminal activity, threatening the safety of a person, etc.

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L. Internet Acceptable Use (continued)

3. Systems Security

- a. Users are responsible for the use of their individual account and should take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from being able to use their account. Under no conditions should a user provide their password to another person.
- b. Users will immediately notify the Supervisor of Special Programs/Technology if they have identified a possible security problem. They will not attempt to investigate possible security problems as this may be construed as an illegal attempt to gain unauthorized access.
- c. Users will avoid the inadvertent spread of computer viruses by following the established district virus protection procedures.

4. Inappropriate Language

- a. Restrictions against inappropriate language apply to public messages, private messages, and material posted on Web pages.
- b. Users will not use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful language.
- c. Users will not post information that, if acted upon, could cause damage or danger of disruption.
- d. Users will not harass another person. Harassment is persistently acting in a manner that distresses or annoys another person. If a user is told by a person to stop sending them messages they must stop.
- e. Users will not engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks.
- f. Users will not knowingly or recklessly post false or defamatory information about a person or organization.

5. Respect of Privacy

- a. Users will not repost a message that was sent to them privately without permission of the person who sent them the message.
- b. Users will not post private information about another person.

6. Respecting Resource Limits

- a. Users will use the DECS only for educational and professional or career development activities (no time limit), and limited, high-quality, self-discovery activities. For students, the limit is on self-discovery activities.
- b. Users will not download large files unless absolutely necessary. If necessary, users will download the file at a time when the system is not being heavily used and immediately remove the file from the system computer to their personal computer.

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6. Respecting Resource Limits (continued)
 - c. Users will not post chain letters or engage in "spamming". Spamming is sending an annoying or unnecessary message to a large number of people.
 - d. Users will check their e-mail frequently and delete unwanted messages promptly.
 - e. Users will subscribe only to high quality discussion group mail lists that are relevant to their education or professional/career development.
7. Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement
 - a. Users will not plagiarize works that they find on the Internet. Plagiarism is taking the ideas or writings of others and presenting them as they were original to the user.
 - b. Users will respect the rights of copyright owners. Copyright infringement occurs when an individual inappropriately reproduces a work that is protected by a copyright. If a work contains language that specifies acceptable use of that work, the user should follow the expressed requirements. If users are unsure whether or not they can use a work, they should request written permission from the copyright owner.
8. Inappropriate Access to Material
 - a. Users will not utilize the DECS to access material that is profane/obscene (pornography), or that advocates illegal acts, violence, or discrimination towards other people (hate literature). For students, a special exception may be made for hate literature if the purpose of such access is to conduct research. Access must be approved by both the teacher and the parent. District employees may access the above material only in the context of legitimate research.
 - b. If users inadvertently access such information, they should immediately disclose the inadvertent access in a manner specified by their school. This will protect users against an allegation that they have intentionally violated the DECS Policy.

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