STUDENT USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The Merrimack School District recognizes that information technology is a tool that, when responsibly applied, enhances the classroom experience and extends learning beyond the school walls. With information technology saturating nearly every aspect of our lives, it is incumbent upon the District to provide the members of the school community with an understanding of what the District considers to be appropriate use of information technology by students.

While this policy is intended to provide guidelines for responsible use of information technology, it cannot cover all possible uses. When using District-provided information technology, students must demonstrate the same level of responsibility and appropriate behavior as they would in using any other District resource. Students must also recognize that their personal online conduct, whether or not it utilizes District provided Information Technology, may have implications in school and school-affiliated activities.

DEFINITIONS

1. District Information Technology – District Information Technology includes all Merrimack School District computers, computing devices, software, servers, desk phones, cell phones, and network and internet connectivity.

2. District-Related Activities - District-Related Activities includes any matter pertaining to schools, students, instruction, school and student events, co-curricular activities and clubs, outings or trips, or any other matters involving District operations.

GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSIBLE USE OF DISTRICT INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The following Guidelines are intended to establish the parameters of Responsible Use of Information Technology in the District. In addition, students are expected to comply with all rules and policies of the school and the Merrimack School District, including the Code of Conduct, set forth below, in all school-related communication and online activity.

Students demonstrating Responsible Use of Technology will:

1. Comply with all applicable laws and regulations, such as copyright laws and "fair-use" guidelines.

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2. As available, use District-provided communication systems (eg; SchoolWorld, school e-mail) when communicating with staff and faculty regarding school work, activities or events, and limit such use to school-related matters.
3. Recognize that District Information Technology is intended to support the education mission of the District. Given the limited nature of some technology resources (student-use computers, bandwidth) priority will be given to school-related use.
    a. Staff reserve the right to adjust and assign technology resources accordingly.
    b. School-provided accounts may be used for instruction, registration on third party sites licensed or selected by District educators, and communication regarding District-related activities.
4. Conduct all school-related communication in a respectful, appropriate and responsible manner at all times. This extends to all communication, whether electronic or in print, and all representation of the school, regardless of venue or occasion.
5. Protect privacy of fellow students in all communications.
6. Request technical assistance and report misuse, abuse, or problems with District Information Technology, or related District equipment, to the appropriate technology staff immediately upon discovery.
7. Help maintain the integrity of District technology by not engaging in the following activities, or those of a similar nature, and by reporting any knowledge of such activity by others to a teacher, administrator or other responsible adult:
    a. using or attempting to use others' credentials, identities, passwords or logins
    b. hacking
    c. adding unauthorized software to district systems
    d. disabling or attempting to disable the District's filtering/blocking technology
    e. intentionally or maliciously damaging District computers or technology devices or causing disruption or interruption to District network internet systems
    f. using or misusing district resources, especially bandwidth, when directed not to

CAUTIONS TO USERS OF DISTRICT INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

1. District Information Technology is the property of the District and remains under the control, custody and supervision of the District. Information contained on or transmitted through the District server or network is not private and the District reserves the right to monitor and inspect all student use of District Information Technology, even if conducted after school hours and off of school premises.

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2. Any electronic communication pertaining to school-related matters is subject to this policy and may be considered a public record, regardless of the device or network used. Student use of personal devices on the district network is a privilege and not a right. By bringing and using personal devices on the district's network, students consent to a search of the device as a term and condition of using the network.
3. Use of personal computers and other technology devices are subject to the Student Use of Information Technology Policy, the District Policy on Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention – Bullying, and school-level behavior expectations and discipline codes. Violation of these policies and expectations MAY result in inspection of such devices.
4. The Merrimack School District is not responsible for any loss of data due to circumstances beyond its control or from users' errors or omissions. The District is not responsible for loss, damage or theft of personally owned electronic devices.
5. The use of Information Technology in the District is a right that comes with responsibility. Inappropriate use may result in the curtailment of that right. District administrators or their designees shall make all decisions regarding whether or not a user has violated these guidelines and may deny, revoke, or suspend access at any time.
6. Any student who fails to comply with the Guidelines for Responsible Use or violates the Code of Conduct set forth in this policy will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance to the District policy on Student Conduct, Discipline and Due Process - Safe School Zone and individual school discipline procedures, and depending on the nature of the violation, may also be referred to law enforcement.

STUDENT USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The Merrimack School District recognizes that social media, in all its forms and iterations (e.g. blogs, MS 365, Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, YouTube, etc.), can be an important tool of education and communication. As such, its availability as a resource is understood as just one component of the district's overall educational mission. Toward this end, students must:
- Use social media for school-related purposes in a manner consistent with the expectations set forth in this policy
- Use appropriate online behavior, including proper interactions with others on social networking web sites
- Strive to protect the privacy of fellow students
- Understand that what is posted online can be captured and stored
- Not post material that could be considered malicious, obscene, threatening, harassing or disparaging towards fellow students, district staff and volunteers, or parents.
- In addition to adhering to this policy, students are also required to follow the District Policy on Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention – Bullying. Students must recognize that any online incident, whether or not it occurs outside of school, that impacts the ability of the district to provide a "safe, secure and peaceful environment" for all students will be addressed according to school, district, and/or legal disciplinary procedures.

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- Remember that personal postings shared on the Internet, through text or other digital communication may be forwarded, shared, or published without the owner's knowledge, and could become viewable by unintended audiences such as students, educators, parents, employers, and college recruiters. Therefore, it is important to portray a respectable image at all times.

CODE OF CONDUCT/PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

All students using District Information Technology shall comply with the following rules of conduct and must understand that **just because you CAN access/do something doesn't mean you SHOULD.**

1. Do not use District Information Technology to find, view, or distribute threatening, harassing, discriminatory, defamatory, sexually explicit, obscene, pornographic, violent or otherwise inappropriate material.
2. Do not use District Information Technology for private financial or commercial purposes or as a forum for communicating the views of or for soliciting membership, support, or contributions in or to any non-school sponsored or non-school recognized group or organization.
3. Do not access or attempt to access files, folders, or devices of others either deliberately or accidentally (such as when a user does not logout of a computer or application), unless authorized to do so.

Legal References:

    RSA 194:3-d, School District Computer Networks
    RSA 91Section 91-A:4 Minutes and Records Available for Public Inspection.
    Pub. L. No. 106-554, Children's Internet Protection Act
    Federal Educational Record Protection Act

Resources

    District Policies:

    Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention – Bullying
    Employee Use of Information Technology
    Student Conduct, Discipline and Due Process - Safe School Zone

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