

It is the belief of the Caswell County Public School District that access to the Internet and other computer resources should be available to all students, faculty, and staff. The Internet, a network of networks and other computer and information resources offer vast, diverse, and unique resources that can educate and inform. These resources have an important place as educational resources in our schools by facilitating information sharing, innovation, and communication.

The Internet connects computers all over the world and millions of individuals. The Internet offers access to:

1. Communication through electronic mail (e-mail);
2. Information and news from various research institutions and organizations, such as NASA, as well as the opportunity to correspond with personnel at these sites;
3. Discussion groups on an endless variety of topics;
4. Many library catalogs, including universities and the Library of Congress;
5. Opportunities for sharing of information and projects with peers in similar schools and situations;
6. Public domain software and shareware of all types.

The Internet is in a constant state of change and it is difficult to predict what will be available from day to day. With access to the Internet, the possibility increases that material may be accessible that may not be considered to be of educational value in the context of the school setting. Just as the purchase, availability and use of media materials does not indicate an endorsement of their contents by school officials, neither does making electronic information available to students imply endorsement of that content. The Caswell County Public School District has taken strong precautions to restrict access to controversial materials; however, on a global network, it is impossible to control all materials and information. It is the belief of the Caswell County Public Schools that the valuable information and interaction available on the Internet are worthwhile, even though the possibility exists for access to materials, which are not educationally appropriate.

Students, parents, and all school personnel must work together to ensure the efficient and appropriate use of the Internet and other computer network services. The effective and productive use of the network depends upon end users who practice etiquette, exhibit proper ethical and legal conduct, and adhere to strict guidelines. If a computer user violates any of these guidelines, consequences shall be imposed. These consequences include, but are not limited to, restriction or loss of network privileges. Each member of the school community shall be provided a copy of this policy. Receipt shall indicate a commitment by each individual to the terms set forth. If a parent/guardian of a student or employee does not wish to have access to the Internet, the individual shall send a letter to this effect to either the school principal on behalf of the student or, if an employee, to the Director of Technology.

**Acceptable Use:** Acceptable use of the Internet and computer network involves engaging in activities, which support education and research and are consistent with the educational purposes and objectives of Caswell County Schools (CCS). All use of any other organization's network or computing resources accessed through the Internet must comply with the rules established for that network. Transmission or any material in violation of any United States or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to copyrighted material, threatening, profane, or obscene material, and material protected by trade secret. Copying or uploading/downloading commercial software is in violation of copyright law and is prohibited. Any use of the network for commercial or for-profit purposes, for product advertisement, or political lobbying is prohibited. Personal use that generates an additional cost, or inhibits the function of the network, is prohibited. All private business is prohibited.

**Privileges:** The use of the Internet and other computer networks and resources is a privilege, not a right, offered to persons associated with the Caswell County Public School District. Misuse and/or violation of established policies may result in consequences, including but not limited to, suspension, restriction, or cancellation of user privileges. The administration, faculty, and staff of the Caswell County Public School District may request the Superintendent or designee to deny, revoke, or suspend specific user accounts, and the Superintendent or designee may close an account at any time, as warranted. Any decision to restrict or revoke access to the Internet may be appealed to the Superintendent or designee.

The Caswell County Public School District has a process in place for determining the appropriateness of information/materials.

**PRIVACY, DISCLOSURE AND MONITORING OF TECHNOLOGY RESOURCE USE AND DATA**

The Caswell County School System (CCS) will strive to fulfill its obligations to protect all legally confidential information. The CCS's technology resources, however, are not inherently secure or private and may be subject to unauthorized intrusion or hacking. In addition, the Caswell County School System reserves the right to disclose any user's electronic communications or data to Caswell County School System or non-Caswell County School System's personnel or agencies to the extent permitted or required by law, including disclosure to public safety and social service officials or other legitimate third parties.

Users should be aware that, because the primary function of such technology resources is to further the Caswell County School System's public educational mission, many records produced by these resources are subject to the state's public records laws. Thus, for example, the Internet sites viewed or the e-mails sent by CCS's staff may be public records subject to disclosure. Regardless of whether such uses generate public records, the Caswell County School System has the right to review and monitor ALL uses of its technology resources. Authorized officials may, at any time, reasonably review, restrict or otherwise regulate the use of these resources. Furthermore, CCS reserves the right to deny or restrict user access to technology resources by implementing monitoring and/or blocking devices and software.

**Network Etiquette:** All network users are expected to follow the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These rules include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Be polite. Do not get abusive in your messages to others.
- b. Use appropriate language. Do not swear, use vulgarities, or any other inappropriate language. .
- c. Hate mail, harassment, discriminatory remarks and other antisocial behaviors are prohibited.
- d. Do not reveal your personal information, addresses, or phone numbers, or those of other students or colleagues.
- e. Remember that your electronic mail may not be private. The system administrator CCS or designee operates the system and has access to all mail. Messages relating to, or in support of, illegal activities may be reported to authorities and may result in the loss of user privileges and/or termination of employment.
- f. Do not use the network in a way that may disrupt the use of the network for others. Compose e-mail and bulletins off-line in order to reduce unnecessary network traffic. Maintain your e-mail folders clean by deleting all unnecessary messages frequently. Do not subscribe to any personal or not work related listservs using your CCS e-mail account.
- g. Network users are not intentionally to seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, other data, or passwords belonging to other users on the network.
- h. Users should practice discretion regarding the handling of information and communications accessible through the network. Do not report personal communications without the author's prior consent. Do not post or distribute copyrighted materials.
- i. Illegal activities are prohibited.

**Warranties/Issues of Liability:** The Caswell County Public School District makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it provides, nor will the District be responsible for any damages a user suffers. This includes damage or loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries or service interruptions caused by the Caswell County Public Schools' negligence or by the user's negligence, errors omissions, or by technical or other difficulties. Use of any information obtained through the Internet is at the user's own risk. The Caswell County Public School District specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services. All users need to consider the source of any information they retrieve and consider how valid that information may be.

**Safety and Security:** To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of the **Caswell County Schools** online computer network when using any form of direct electronic communications, specifically as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and the Protecting Children in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act. Strategies shall be implemented to educate minors about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyberbullying awareness and response. Prevention of inappropriate network usage includes: (a) unauthorized access, including so-called 'hacking', and other unlawful activities; and (b) unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

Security on any computer system or network is a high priority. Toward that end, the Caswell County Public School District uses filtering software that denies access to material that is obscene, that is child pornography or any other types of pornography, and that is harmful to minors. Do not use another individual's account number, or password, without written permission from the individual. Each user must protect his/her password and account number to ensure system security and to maintain use privileges. Attempts to log on to the Internet as the system administrator or designee may result in consequences, which include but may not be limited to, revocation of privileges, suspension, employment termination, and notification of authorities.

It shall be the responsibility of all members of the **Caswell County Schools** staff to supervise and monitor students' usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy and the Children's Internet protection Act.

Any user identified as a security risk, or possessing a history of problems with other computer systems, may be denied access to the Internet. Network users have a duty to report to the building principal, the system administrator or designee, knowledge of any safety or security problems, or security breach, on the Internet and other computer networks. Do not demonstrate the problem to other users. The Caswell County Public School District reserves the right to temporarily or permanently remove a user account on the network.

All information technology security to be implemented shall be in accordance with security standards adopted under State Legislation. The CCS IT Department shall conduct assessments of network vulnerability, including network penetration or any similar procedure. The IT Department may use State Funded agencies or contract with another party or parties to perform the assessments.

**Vandalism and Harassment:** Vandalism and harassment will result in cancellation of privileges.

- a. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm, disrupt, degrade or destroy equipment, software or system performance. This includes system files or data of another user, the system or school computer systems, Internet, or any of the agencies, or other networks, that are connected to the Internet backbone. No use of the network shall serve to disrupt the use of the network by others. Hardware or software shall not be destroyed, modified, or abused in any way.
- b. Harassment is defined as the persistent annoyance of another user, or the interference of another user's work. Harassment includes, but is not limited to, sending unwanted mail. Users may not use technology resources to engage in conduct involving harassment, intimidation, bullying (or cyber bullying), discrimination, or similarly offensive or harmful communications. This includes conduct that:
  - I. A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of harming or humiliating a student or damaging the student's property or of placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to his person or damage to his property; or

- II. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students in such a way as to cause substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school

Hate mail, discriminatory remarks, or language that offends or degrades others is not permitted and must be reported to the building principal, system administrator or designee.

- c. Malicious use of the network to develop programs that harass other users or infiltrate a computer or computing system and/or damage the software components of a computer or computing system is prohibited. This includes, but it not limited to, uploading or creating computer viruses.

**Controversial Material:** Users may encounter material which others may consider inappropriate or offensive. On a global network, it is impossible to control completely the content of data, and an industrious user may discover controversial material. Any use which would involve accessing, producing, posting, sending, or displaying pornographic, obscene, discriminatory, profane, lewd, vulgar, threatening, or sexually suggestive material, language or images, including images of exposed private body parts, is prohibited. Anything an employee views, sends, generates, or accesses must be appropriate for viewing, sending, receiving, generating, or accessing by school children. Use of the network to access or process pornographic material, inappropriate text files, or files dangerous to the integrity of the local area network is prohibited. Any decision by the Caswell County Public School District to restrict access to Internet material shall not be deemed to impose any duty on the District to regulate the content of material on the Internet.

In the event that an employee violates this policy, the following consequences may result. Any of these consequences may be enforced alone or in conjunction with one another by the school system against the violating employee. The severity of the punishment will be dependent upon the severity of the misuse. Possible options follow:

1. Revocation or limitation of access privileges.
2. Letter in personnel file detailing misuse and action taken.
3. Disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
4. Personal liability for damage to school system computer resources caused by intentional misuse.
5. Any other sanctions or remedies provided by law.

Employees who violate this policy will not be defended at Board expense pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. 115C-43.

Any employee who publishes or duplicates copyrighted material shall be held personally liable for any of his or her actions that violate copyright laws.