ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY – TECHNOLOGY

I. PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY

The Ludlow Public Schools (a/k/a the District) shall provide access for staff and students to utilize existing and emerging technologies and resources, including access to the Internet, for educational purposes. The purpose of Information Communication Technology (ICT) is to assist in preparing students for success in life and work by providing access to a wide range of information and the ability to communicate with others. ICT skills will be used to increase communication (staff, parent/guardian, and student), enhance productivity and life-long learning, and assist staff and students in developing a true learning community through a broader exchange of information.

The Internet, telecommunications, and other new technologies shift the ways that information may be accessed, communicated, and shared by all people. These changes will alter instruction and student learning. Online electronic resources provide an exceptional opportunity for the promotion of intellectual inquiry, comprehensive information gathering, and awareness of global diversity through worldwide communication and exploration.

Telecommunications, electronic information sources and ICT tools and services significantly alter the information landscape for schools by opening classrooms to a broader array of resources. In the past, educators applying reasonable selection criteria could usually select appropriate instructional materials prior to using them. School Committee policy requires that all such materials be consistent with District-adopted guidelines, supporting and enriching the curriculum while taking into account the varied instructional needs, learning styles, abilities and developmental levels of the students. Telecommunications, because they may lead to any publicly available source in the world, will open classrooms to electronic information resources that have not been selected by educators for use by students of various ages. Educators will take every reasonable precaution to guide their students in the selection of appropriate resources. The District does provide CIPA compliant web content filtering.

Electronic information research and critical thinking skills are now fundamental to preparation of 21st Century citizens and employees. The School Committee expects that staff will blend thoughtful use of such information throughout the curriculum and that the staff will provide guidance and instruction to students in the appropriate use of such resources. Staff will consult the guidelines for instructional materials contained in School Committee policy and will honor the goals for selection of instructional materials contained therein.

Access to ICT tools and services will enable students to explore web-based content, communicate and collaborate with people throughout the world. Making the Internet available to students carries with it the potential that some students might encounter information that others have identified as controversial or potentially harmful. Because the Internet is globally accessible and changes daily, it is not always possible to predict what students may encounter in some areas of the Internet. Some students may locate information that they or others consider inappropriate. The District does not condone the use of inappropriate materials nor does it encourage students to seek out inappropriate material. Concern about Internet information will be handled in the same manner as concerns about other educational materials are handled. The School Committee believes that the benefits to students from access in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration exceed the disadvantages. But ultimately, parent/guardians and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources.

II. AVAILABILITY

Access to ICT tools and resources, including the Internet, shall be made available to employees and students for instructional and administrative purposes and in accordance with administrative

regulations and procedures.

Access to ICT tools and resources is a privilege, not a right. All users shall be required to acknowledge receipt and understanding of all administrative regulations and procedures governing use of the system and shall agree in writing to comply with such regulations and procedures. The Ludlow Public Schools administration reserves the right to change these rules at any time without notice. Noncompliance with applicable regulations and procedures may result in suspension or termination of user privileges and other disciplinary actions up to and including termination of employees, consistent with the policies of the Ludlow Public Schools. Violations of law may result in criminal prosecution as well as disciplinary action by the Ludlow Public Schools up to and including termination of employees.

Access to ICT tools and resources is granted to all students and staff of the Ludlow Public Schools.

A. Staff Access to ICT Resources

With the spread of ICT tools and services throughout the modern work place, the School Committee recognizes that employees will shift the ways they share ideas, transmit information, and contact others. As staff members are connected to the global community, their use of new tools and systems brings new responsibilities as well as opportunities.

In general, employees are expected to communicate in a professional manner consistent with state laws governing the behavior of school employees and with federal laws governing copyrights. Email is not to be utilized to share confidential information about students or other employees or for personal or non-educational or non-business use. Attachments may be used, but identifying data (i.e.use initials not names) may not be contained within the message itself.

B. Student Access to ICT Resources

In order to match electronic resources as closely as possible to the approved District curriculum, District personnel are strongly encouraged to review and evaluate resources in order to offer menus of materials that comply with School Committee guidelines listed in School Committee policy governing the selection of instructional materials. In this manner, staff can provide developmentally appropriate guidance to students as they make use of telecommunications and electronic information resources to conduct research and other studies related to the District curriculum.

As much as possible, access to District information resources should be designed in ways that point students to those that have been reviewed and evaluated prior to use. While students may be able to move beyond those resources to others that have not been evaluated by staff, they should be provided with guidelines and lists of resources particularly suited to the learning objectives. Permission is not transferable and may not be shared.

III. MONITORED USE

Communication over school networks should not be considered private. The District system cannot ensure the privacy of users' personal files.

As the system is routinely maintained and monitored, discoveries may arise that the user has violated or is violating the District Acceptable Use Policy, School Committee or building policies, or the law.
Use of the District's ICT resources is considered consent to this policy and the District's right to engage in monitoring activities.

Email will be archived. Please be aware that pressing the "delete" button from within an individual user account will not delete the archived message from any archiving solution.

Electronic communication and other use of digital resources by students and employees shall not be considered confidential or private and may be monitored at any time by designated staff to ensure appropriate use for instructional and administrative purposes as well as to ensure the safety and security of minors when using existing and emerging electronic communication and other use of digital resources.

IV. NO LIABILITY

The Ludlow Public Schools shall not be liable for users' inappropriate use of electronic resources or violations of copyright restrictions, users' mistakes or negligence, costs or financial liabilities incurred by users, or damages sustained by users, including but not limited to service interruptions or data loss. The Ludlow Public Schools shall not be responsible for ensuring the accuracy or usability of any information found on external networks.

V. TECHNOLOGY, NETWORK, AND INTERNET ACCESS

ICT tools and resources are the property of the Ludlow Public Schools and are intended exclusively for District business and educational use only.

Acceptable uses of ICT tools and resources support the educational principles and purposes consistent with the content hereof.

As access entails responsibility, access to ICT tools and resources will be provided to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Students are responsible for good behavior on school computers and networks as well as personally owned devices just as they are in a classroom or other school environment.

Since communications on the District network or on the Internet are often public in nature, general School Committee policies, codes, and school rules for behavior and communications apply.

Notification to an employee's immediate supervisor and to a student's teacher shall be made forthwith by any employee or student who observes a violation of this policy.

Unacceptable uses of technology and the system/network include, but are not necessarily limited to the following:

A. Personal Safety (Restrictions are for students only)

Users will not post personal contact information about themselves or other people without proper permission as contained herein. Personal contact information includes address, telephone (cell or otherwise), school address, work address, photographs, portraits, etc.

Users will not agree to meet with someone they have met online without their parent/guardian's approval and participation.

Users will promptly disclose to their teacher or other school employee any message they receive that is inappropriate or makes them feel uncomfortable.

B. Illegal Activities

Users will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to the District network or to any other computer network through the District network, 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".

Users will not make deliberate attempts to disrupt the computer network performance or destroy

data by spreading computer viruses or by any other means. These actions are illegal.

Users will not use District ICT tools and resources to engage in any other illegal act, including, but not limited to, arranging for sale or use of drugs, or the purchase of alcohol, engaging in criminal gang activity, threatening the safety of person, cyber-bullying etc.

Unauthorized users will not manipulate, attempt to manipulate, or distribute the District's or the Town of Ludlow's network, applications, or data.

C.   System Security

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 (staff or student) provide his/her password to another person. Users are not to save passwords within any browser. Users must ensure that they lock their desktop when they step away and log off when their work or assignment is done.

Users will immediately notify a supervisor or their teacher if they have identified a possible security problem. Users will not go looking for security problems, because this may be construed as an illegal attempt to gain access. The supervisor or teacher will immediately inform the network administrator.

Users will avoid the inadvertent spread of computer viruses by following the District virus protection procedures if they use storage media potentially capable of harboring viruses.

Users will not remove computer equipment (hardware, software, data, etc.) without authorization, nor will they damage computer hardware or software. This rule applies also to parts of computers, mice, keyboards, monitors, or any other ICT tool or resource which are also Town of Ludlow property.

Users will not copy or attempt to copy data or software without authorization.

Users will not delete or attempt to delete the work of others.

D.   Inappropriate Language. Graphics. Video. Audio

Restrictions against inappropriate language, graphics, video, audio apply to public messages, private messages, screen savers and wallpaper, material posted on web pages (or any web-based content), and any use of the District's ICT tools and resources.

Users will not use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful language, graphics, video, or audio.

Users will not post information that, if acted upon, could cause damage or a danger of disruption.

Users will not engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks.

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 him/her messages or harassing him/her, the user must stop.

Users will not knowingly or recklessly post false or defamatory information about a person or organization.

Users will not engage in any form of cyber-bullying (minors), or cyber-harrassment or cyber-stalking (adults).

E.   Respect for Privacy

Users will not repost a message that was sent to them privately without permission of the person who sent them the message.

Users will not post private information about another person.

F.   Respecting Resource Limits

Users will use the system only for educational and professional or career development activities.

Students will not download files, graphics, video, audio or music without the supervising staff person's permission.

Users will not engage in "spamming". Spamming is sending an annoying or unnecessary message to a large number of people.

Users will not install games or engage in unauthorized and time-consuming recreational activity.

Users will not use computer accounts for work not authorized for that account.

Users may not use technology tools or the network for personal advertisements, solicitations of products or services, or for commercial purposes or financial gain. Clubs and school organizations may submit advertisements or solicitations to the Building Principal for use on an Intranet or to be posted on the school's website on the Internet. Submission does not guarantee posting.

G.   Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement

Users will not plagiarize works that they find on the Internet. Plagiarism is taking the ideas or writings of others and presenting them as if they were original to the user

Users will respect the rights of copyright owners. While the District encourages its staff to enrich their learning programs by making proper use of supplementary materials, it is the responsibility of District staff to abide by the District's copying and web publishing procedures and obey the requirements of the law. The District cannot be responsible for any violations of the copyright law by its staff or other persons. 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 the user is unsure whether or not he/she can use a work, he/she should request permission from the copyright owner. Individuals who fail to adhere to copyright law and procedures may be held personally liable for copyright infringement.

H.   Inappropriate Access to Material

Users will not use District ICT tools and resources to access material that is profane or obscene (pornography), that advocates illegal acts, or that advocates violence or discrimination towards other people (hate literature). For students, special exceptions may be made for research if both the teacher and the parent/guardian approve the purpose of such access to conduct research. District employees may access the above material only in the context of legitimate research.

If a user inadvertently accesses such information, he/she should immediately disclose in writing the inadvertent access to his/her supervisor or teacher. The user should complete the Inappropriate Internet Access Report form that follows. This will protect users against an allegation that they have intentionally violated the Acceptable Use Policy.

Approved 12/13/11