

NORTH BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION

SERIES 1000: STUDENTS

P1370

Policy #P1370 - Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

A. Purpose

1. North Branford's Education Network (NBEN) provides employees and students access to the District's electronic communication system, which includes filtered Internet access. Only electronic devices owned or authorized by the North Branford Board of Education will have legal access to the NBEN.

2. The NBEN is intended for educational and professional purposes only. The purpose of the NBEN is to assist in preparing students for success in life and work in the 21st century by providing them with electronic access to a wide range of information. Additionally, the system will be used to increase District intracommunication, enhance productivity, and assist District employees in upgrading their skills through greater exchange of information with their peers. The NBEN will also assist the District in sharing information with the local community, including parents, social service agencies, government agencies, and businesses.

3. Users are responsible for appropriate use. All illegal or improper uses of the NBEN, including but not limited to pornography, obscenity, harassment, solicitation, gambling and violating copyright or intellectual property rights are prohibited. Users may not use the District system for commercial purposes (defined as offering or providing goods or services or purchasing goods or services for personal use). District acquisition policies will be followed for District purchases of goods/services using the District's procurement policies. The use of the NBEN by staff is for the sole purpose of job-related functions and not for any personal purpose. Communication over the NBEN should not be considered private.

B. District Responsibilities

1. The North Branford Board of Education makes every attempt to keep student access to the Internet safe. Access to the Internet is provided through the Connecticut Education Network (CEN) and is filtered. Filtered means that all content available to **all** those using the NBEN has been screened to eliminate content not deemed appropriate for a school environment. This filtering is accomplished with CEN as well as local filters. These filters are required by the Children's Internet Protection Act and are a "Best Effort" attempt to keep our children safe. The Board recognizes that given the scope of the Internet, the filters may not restrict access to all controversial or potentially inappropriate material. The possibility of accessing such material does not mean that the Board endorses such

content or consents to the accessing of such material. The Board is not responsible for Internet content which bypasses the filtering.

2. The District makes no warranties of any kind, express or implied, that the functions or the services provided by or through the NBEN will be error-free or without defect. The NBEN specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained via the Internet. Users access the Internet at their own risk and are responsible for checking the accuracy and quality of information. All provisions of this policy are subordinate to local, state, and federal statutes.

3. The building principal will serve as the building-level coordinator for the District system, and will approve building-level activities, ensure 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 executed user agreements, and be responsible for interpreting the District Acceptable Use Policy at the building level.

4. The Director of Technology will serve as the coordinator to oversee the NBEN and will work with the District Technology Committee as necessary. The Director of Technology will establish a process for setting-up individual and class accounts, set quotas for disk usage on the system, establish a District virus protection process, and other activities.

C. Access to the System

1. The District's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) will govern all use of the NBEN. Student use of the system will also be governed by the disciplinary code. Employee use will also be governed by District policy.

2. All District employees and students will have access to the Internet through the District's networked computers. Parents may specifically request that their child(ren) not be provided such access by indicating so on the district sign-off form.

3. District employees will be provided with individual email accounts. Email messages sent by District employees should not be considered private communications and are potentially subject to disclosure. Any password systems implemented by the Board are designed solely to provide system security from unauthorized users, not to provide privacy to the individual system user.

4. Guests may receive individual accounts with the approval of a District administrator if there is a specific, District-related purpose requiring such access. Use of the system by a guest must be specifically limited to the District-related purpose. Any District administrator may terminate the account privileges of a guest user by providing reasonable notice to the user. Guest accounts not active for more than 30 days may be removed along with the user's files without notice to the user.

D. Parental Notification and Responsibility

1. The District will notify parents about the District network and the policies governing its use. Parents must sign an agreement to allow their student to have an individual NBEN account. Parents may request alternative computer activities for their child(ren) that do not require Internet access. A restricted use computer can be made available to network services without Internet access.
2. Parents have the right at any time to investigate the contents of their child(ren)'s files. Parents have the right to request the termination of their child(ren)'s individual account at any time.

E. Violations

1. The District will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning/relating to any illegal activities conducted through the NBEN.
2. In the event there is an allegation that a student has violated the District Acceptable Use Policy, the student will receive a written notice and an opportunity to be heard in the manner set forth in the District's disciplinary code.
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. Violations of this policy may result in suspension or revocation of access privileges to the NBEN. If the alleged violation also involves a violation of other provisions of the District's disciplinary code, the violation will be handled in accord with the applicable provision of the District's disciplinary code.
4. Employee violations of the District Acceptable Use Policy will be handled in accord with the appropriate collective bargaining and District policy.

F. Monitoring

1. All computers, including all hardware and software, and all electronic files and communications stored on or transmitted by the NBEN are the property of the District. All files stored on the NBEN remain the property of the District and no user shall have any expectation of privacy regarding such material.
2. The District reserves the right to review, store and disclose all information sent or received through or stored on the NBEN for any legally permissible reason, including but not limited to determining whether the information is a public record, whether it contains information discoverable in litigation and to access District information in an employee's absence, and to monitor compliance with this policy. The Board may edit or remove any material that it believes may be unlawful, obscene, indecent, abusive, or otherwise harmful to the school community.

3. Electronic records, including emails, may be subpoenaed. District employees should be aware that their files may be discoverable under CT State public records laws. All NBEN users must be aware that all information on the NBEN is subject to the freedom of information laws.

G. Copyright and Plagiarism

1. District policies on copyright will govern the use of material accessed through the District system. Because the extent of 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 policies on plagiarism will govern use of material accessed through the District system. Teachers will instruct students in appropriate research and citation practices.

H. Selection of Material

1. When using the Internet, teachers will select activities that are relevant to the course objectives. Teachers will preview the materials and specific sites they require or recommend students access to determine the appropriateness of the material contained on the site. Teachers will assist their students in developing the skills to ascertain the truthfulness of information posted on the Internet.

I. District Web Site

1. All websites hosted on the NBEN remain the property of the District. The District reserves the right to review and remove inappropriate websites or content. The District has established websites that present information about the District. The Technology Director oversees the District website.

2. Schools and classes may establish websites that present information about the school or class activities. Student web pages, if needed, would be added under a class or teacher web page.

J. District Acceptable Use Policy

1. Personal Safety

- a. Users will comply with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and not post any student's personally identifiable information online without the permission required by FERPA.
- b. Student users will not agree to meet with someone they have met online without their parent's approval and participation.
- c. Users will promptly disclose to their teacher or other school employees any message they receive that is inappropriate or makes them feel uncomfortable.
- d. Users will not use tools, software, or hardware in an effort to bypass Internet filtering.
- e. Users will not install any software without express permission.

2. Illegal Activities

- a. Users will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to the NBEN or to any other computer system through the District System, or go beyond their authorized access. Student users may not attempt to log in through another person's account or use an open account (not logged off) to access a computer or access another person's files.
- 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 NBEN to engage in any illegal act, such as arranging for a drug sale or the purchase of alcohol, engaging in criminal gang activity, threatening the safety of person, etc.
- d. Users will not remove or disable any system files or applications from any computer, including history temporary files.

3. System Security

- a. Users are responsible for the use of their individual account. District employees should take all reasonable precautions to prevent student users or unauthorized persons from accessing their account. Student users shall keep log-in information confidential, and shall not share such information with anyone, and shall not use another person's log-in information to access the NBEN.
- b. Users will immediately notify 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.

4. Inappropriate Language

- a. Restrictions against inappropriate language apply to public messages, private messages, and material posted on websites.
- 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, disruption, or a danger of damage or disruption.
- d. Users will not engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks.
- e. Users will not use the NBEN to bully or harass another person. Bullying is defined as any overt acts by a student or group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds, at a school sponsored activity or on a school bus, which acts are committed more than once against any student during the school year. Harassment is persistently acting in a manner that distresses or annoys another person. Messages that bully or harass another should be reported to the appropriate authorities.
- f. Users will not knowingly or recklessly post false or defamatory information about a person or organization.

5. Respect for 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 system only for educational and professional or career development activities.
- b. Users will only download files after obtaining permission. 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.
- 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. Staff will subscribe only to listservs 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 if 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 the user is unsure whether or not they can use a work, they should request permission from the copyright owner.

c. Users will not copy/distribute software licensed to the North Branford Board of Education. Violators will be held accountable. This may include prosecution.

8. Inappropriate Access to Material

a. Users will not use the NBEN 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, a special exception may be made for hate literature if the purpose of such access to conduct research and access is approved by both the teacher and the parent. District employees may access the above material only in the context of legitimate research.

b. If a user inadvertently accesses 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 Acceptable Use Policy.

9. Potentially damaging activities.

a. Users of the district shall not engage in any activity that has the potential to damage any hardware, software, or the NBEN. The staff in each building, under the supervision of the District Technology Director, shall determine which activities are potentially damaging.

b. Violation of this policy will result in removal of the user's access to the computers within the district. The intent of the user during the violation, the past history of any violations by such user, and the magnitude of the most recent violation will determine the nature of the discipline.

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