

RESPONSIBLE USE POLICY

The Board of School Trustees of the Muncie Community Schools recognizes the importance of computer education and computer access in preparing students for the 21st century. The Muncie Community Schools provides the resources for current technological equipment, professional development and technical support for students, staff, and community to improve achievement. The Board of School Trustees supports access by students to rich information resources along with the development by staff of appropriate skills to analyze and evaluate such resources. It also recognizes that safeguards must be established to ensure that the Corporation's investment in both hardware and software is achieving the benefits of technology and inhibiting negative side effects. In a free and democratic society, access to information is a fundamental right of citizenship.

In making decisions regarding student access to the Internet, the Muncie Community Schools considers its own stated educational mission, goals, and objectives. Electronic information research skills are now fundamental to preparation of citizens and future employees. Access to the Internet enables students to explore thousands of libraries, databases, bulletin boards, and other resources while exchanging messages with people around the world. The Corporation expects that the faculty will blend thoughtful use of the Internet throughout the curriculum and will provide guidance and instruction to students in its use. As much as possible, access from school to Internet resources should be structured in ways which point students to those which have been evaluated prior to use. While students will be able to move beyond those resources to others that have not been previewed by staff, they shall be provided with guidelines and lists of resources particularly suited to learning objectives.

Outside of school, families bear responsibility for the same guidance of Internet use as they exercise with information sources such as television, radio, movies, and other possible offensive media.

Students utilizing Corporation-provided Internet access must first have the permission of and must be supervised by the Muncie Community Schools' professional staff. Students utilizing school-provided Internet access are responsible for good behavior on-line just as they are in a classroom or other area(s) of the school. The same general rules for behavior and communications apply.

The purpose of the Corporation-provided Internet access is to facilitate communications in support of research and education. To remain eligible as users, students' use must be in support of and consistent with the educational objectives of the Muncie Community Schools. Access is a privilege, not a right. Access entails responsibility.

The School Corporation has taken precautions to restrict access of inappropriate material and materials harmful to minors. It must be recognized that it is impossible to monitor and/or restrict access to all inappropriate material encountered on the Internet by the student. Independent student use of telecommunications and electronic information resources will be permitted upon submission of permission forms and agreement forms by parents or guardians of minor students (under eighteen [18] years of age) and by students themselves. Parents/guardians will accept responsibility for supervision of their child's actions if and when use is not in a school setting. Uses of electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communication will be limited to educational topics and supervised to ensure for the safety and security of minors.

Users should not expect that files stored on school-based computers will always be private.

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Electronic messages and files stored on school-based computers may be treated like school lockers. Administrators and faculty may review files and messages to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are acting responsibly.

The following uses of school-provided Internet access are not permitted:

1. to access, upload, download, or distribute pornographic, obscene, or sexually explicit material;
2. to transmit obscene, abusive, sexually explicit, or threatening language;
3. to violate any local, state, or federal statute;
4. to vandalize, damage, or disable the property of another individual or organization;
5. to access another individual's materials, information, or files without Permission (hacking);
6. to violate copyright or otherwise use the intellectual property of another individual or organization without permission;
7. to misuse technology equipment in any other manner, not consistent with the mission or policies of the Muncie Community Schools.

Any violation of Corporation policy and rules may result in loss of Corporation-provided access to the Internet. Additional disciplinary action may be determined at the building level in keeping with existing procedures and practices regarding inappropriate language or behavior. When and where applicable, law enforcement agencies may be involved.

The following guidelines are provided to further clarify the responsibilities the user will acquire when given access to corporate technology:

1. All users shall utilize corporation technology tools and the Internet in support of education and research that is consistent with the mission, goals, and objectives of the Muncie Community Schools.
2. All users of corporation technology tools and the Internet shall adhere to the provisions of Public Law 96-517, Section 7 (b), with regard to copyrighted software.
3. Unauthorized copies of any software on computers or networks belonging to the school corporation are prohibited.
4. Installing, copying, altering, or tampering with data files, software programs, networks, or system settings on any school computer is not permitted.
5. Unauthorized persons may not use equipment, software, security passwords, or access codes belonging to the school to access or attempt to access data files, a network, or data systems either in local or remote locations.
6. Network accounts are to be used only by the authorized owner of the account for authorized purposes. User names, passwords, and log-in codes are exclusive to individuals, and that individual is responsible for its proper use at all times. Each staff member, student, or individual has the responsibility for the appropriate use of his/her account and will be held responsible for any policy violations traced to your account.
7. Users of network accounts with access to personal information regarding minors are responsible for preventing unauthorized dissemination of that information.

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8. All users of the Internet shall honor copyrights of those who have posted materials on the Internet. Ownership of text, music, software, and other media is protected to the full extent of the law.
9. All users of the Internet must protect their privacy and not reveal personal addresses or phone numbers of other users, and users should not respond to unsolicited online contact. Any user who receives threatening or unwelcome communications should bring them to the attention of an administrator or teacher. Users must be aware that there are many services available on the network or Internet that could potentially be offensive to certain groups of users.
10. Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with the computer system may be denied access to technology tools and/or the Internet.
11. Do not knowingly degrade the performance of the network (e.g., downloading huge files during prime time; sending mass e-mail messages or electronic chain letters).
12. Do not quote personal communications in a public form without the original author's prior consent.
13. Use of the network for any illegal activity is prohibited.
14. Avoid knowingly or inadvertently spreading computer viruses.
15. Use appropriate language. Profane or obscene language is not permitted at any time.
16. Avoid using inflammatory speech. Be courteous and polite.
17. Electronic mail (e-mail) is not guaranteed to be private. People who operate the system do have access to all mail and appropriate school personnel have the right to monitor use of the Internet, including e-mail. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to the authorities.
18. The corporation is not responsible for unauthorized financial obligations resulting from use of school corporate resources/accounts while accessing the Internet.

Teachers are expected to follow the procedures and securities already in place and to take reasonable precaution to insure proper supervision for students accessing the Internet.

Parents/guardians must sign a consent form for their child to have access to the Internet which recognizes that even though the Corporation's intent is to make Internet access available in order to fulfill its educational goals and objectives, students may find ways to access other material(s) as well. Although the Corporation has installed software and technical systems to regulate Internet access, those precautions cannot guarantee compliance with the Corporation's Responsible Use Policy.

Persons given authorization to access technology equipment belonging to the Muncie Community Schools, including but not limited to parents, substitute personnel, university students, and volunteers, must adhere to all guidelines contained in the Responsible Use Policy, Board Policy, and Administrative Guidelines.

Each school year, at all schools, sessions will be provided to education minors about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms, cyberbullying awareness and response, as required by the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act.

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PARENTS OF STUDENTS IN THE MUNCIE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS SHALL BE PROVIDED WITH THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

The Muncie Community Schools is pleased to offer its students access to the Internet. The Internet is an electronic highway connecting millions of devices and individual users all over the world. This computer technology will help propel our schools through the communication age by allowing students and staff to access and use resources from distant computers, communicate and collaborate with other individuals and groups around the world, and significantly expand their available information base. The Internet is a tool for life-long learning.

Families should be aware that some material accessible via the Internet may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive to some people. In addition, it is possible to purchase certain goods and services via the Internet which could result in unwanted financial obligations for which a student's parent or guardian would be liable.

While the District's intent is to make Internet access available in order to further educational goals and objectives, students may find ways to access other materials as well. Even should the District institute technical methods or systems to regulate students' Internet access, those methods could not guarantee compliance with the District's Responsible use policy. The District believes that the benefits to students of access to the Internet exceed any disadvantages. Ultimately, however, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources. Toward that end, the Muncie Community Schools makes the District's complete Internet policy and procedures available on request for review by all parents, guardians, and other members of the community; and provides parents and guardians the option of requesting for their minor children alternative activities not requiring Internet use.

NOTICE: This policy and all its provisions are subordinate to local, state, and federal statutes.