



## Superintendent's Circular

School Year 2007-2008

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### ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

#### Overview:

Boston Public Schools (BPS) is fortunate to have a connection to the Internet to supplement the other educational resources already available to staff and students. Through the Internet, staff and students have the entire world at their fingertips.

This wonderful resource brings with it additional responsibility. As Internet users, we must be aware of the many issues that surround the Internet. There are many valuable resources available on the Internet that may not be found elsewhere. There are also many sites that can be considered inappropriate for students and serve no educational value. It is the responsibility of all users, staff and students alike, to ensure that, at all times while in a Boston public school, the Internet is being used only for educational purposes. Student use of the Internet will be under the supervision of Boston Public School staff, but due to the nature of the Internet and evolving technology, even with supervision, students might get to an inappropriate site. It is the student's responsibility to report any inappropriate site to the teacher and return to the educational topic assigned.

The following Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), developed by a committee of teachers, principals, parents, and students, should be read carefully and understood by all Internet users. At the school level, and at central offices, the BPS uses a filtering system designed to prevent access to educationally inappropriate sites. However, it is important to understand that no solution is perfect, and we cannot guarantee that students will not have access to inappropriate sites. Employees who are using the Internet as part of their teaching should be aware that they may call the BPS Technology Help Desk (617-635-9200) to request that a specific site be blocked or unblocked. Such decisions will be made by those responsible for monitoring the filtering service within the BPS.

It is important that all BPS employees, students, and families understand that any violation of the AUP may result in the loss of Internet and e-mail privileges or other disciplinary action.

In order to ensure that the BPS Internet connection is used in an appropriate manner and that all users are protected from any inappropriate information published on the Internet, the BPS continues to implement the following opportunities and policies:

Acceptable Use Policy (AUP): A committee of teachers, parents, administrators, and students worked together to develop an AUP for Internet use. This policy was implemented to protect all Internet users and ensure that the integrity of the Internet connection remains intact. All persons requesting an Internet account with the BPS are required to sign that they will uphold the conditions of the AUP.

Professional Development Opportunities: The Office of Instructional and Information Technology offers online resources to enhance teaching and learning to help teachers integrate the use of the Internet with their classroom teaching.

Implementation of a Filtering System: The BPS has implemented a filtering system developed to block Internet sites that have content considered unacceptable for student viewing. A committee of teachers, parents and administrators is available to receive appeals from users who have a specific use in mind for a site that has been filtered.

Student Acceptable Use Policy: Copies of the Acceptable Use Policy (Attachment 1) and the student contract for Internet use are included in the Guide to Boston Public Schools for Families & Students, given to all students at the beginning of the school year. The Student Contract for Internet Use must be completed and signed by all students and their parent/guardian after going over the AUP together. The signed contract must be returned to the school before the student may begin using the Internet.

Staff Acceptable Use Policy: A similar Acceptable Use Policy has been developed for all BPS employees. All staff requesting an Internet account are required to complete the staff AUP and the request for Internet Access attached -before having a network account assigned to them.

Compliance with these policies by all users of the Internet is required. They have been developed for user safety and for educational purposes.

BPS Cyber Safety Campaign: Technology Support Teacher (TST) has been trained to support safe Internet use. BPS student created Internet Safety materials are available at the Office of Instructional & Information Technology.

For more information about this circular, contact:

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Carol R. Johnson, Superintendent

## Attachment 1

### Use of the Internet in School

#### BPS Policies: Using the Internet in School

All Boston public schools are fortunate to have a connection to the Internet to supplement the other educational resources already available to staff and students. Through the Internet, students and staff have the entire world at their fingertips.

This wonderful resource brings with it additional responsibility. As Internet users, we must be aware of the many issues that surround the Internet. Many valuable resources available on the Internet are not found elsewhere. Many sites are also inappropriate for students and serve no educational value. *All* users, staff and students alike, are responsible for ensuring that, at all times while in a Boston public school, the Internet is being used only for educational purposes.

The BPS uses a filtering system to track and monitor all computer use on the network. The filtering system is designed to prevent access to educationally inappropriate sites. BPS educators can request that a specific site be blocked or unblocked. Such decisions will be made by those responsible for monitoring the filtering service within the BPS.

However, it is important to understand that no solution is perfect. Due to the nature of the Internet and evolving technology, even with supervision, we cannot guarantee that students will not get to an inappropriate site. It is the student's responsibility to report any inappropriate site to the teacher and return to the educational topic assigned.

The Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), on this page was developed by a committee of teachers, administrators, parents, school police, and our legal office to ensure the safety of all users. All Internet users should read it carefully and understand it. As parents/guardians, please review it in detail with your children before they begin using the Internet in their school.

It is important that you and your students understand that any violation of the AUP may result in the loss of Internet and e-mail privileges or other disciplinary action. We ask that you work with your students in reinforcing the behaviors associated with the AUP and the student contract in the Guide to the Boston Public Schools for Families and Students.

## Acceptable Use Policy for Networks, Including the Internet

Boston Public Schools policy says that all technology used to access the network will be used in a responsible, legal, and ethical manner. Failure to do so will result in the termination of network and e-mail privileges for the user and/or other disciplinary action. Individual users of the network—students and adults—are responsible for their use of the network. Use of the network must support education and must be consistent with academic actions of the Boston Public Schools. Its use will be supervised by Boston Public School staff. Use of other organizations' networks or computing resources must comply with the rules appropriate for that network. Use of the network for any illegal or commercial activities is prohibited.

### **A responsible network user will:**

- Use language that is considered appropriate
- Be polite
- Send information that other users will not find hurtful or offensive
- Conform with copyright laws and always give credit to the author of the material used
- Never reveal personal information about yourself or any user, such as address, telephone number, credit card numbers, social security number, etc.; and
- Neither tamper with the system nor alter, delete, or destroy anyone else's files, data, or images
- Not share their username & password with others, you are responsible for all activities done through your account

### **A responsible network user must be aware that:**

- Use of the network and e-mail is a PRIVILEGE, not a RIGHT!
- The BPS network is to be used only for educational purposes
- E-mail is not guaranteed to be private
- It is important to log off the computer at the end of every session so another user cannot use your password
- Identifying photos of students with their names or other identifying information may not be used on a website
- Violation of this policy will result in the possible loss of Internet privileges and/or disciplinary action pursuant to the Code of Discipline and/or prosecution under state and federal law
- Persons issued an account are responsible for its use at all times

**Attachment 2**

## **Acceptable Use Policy for Networks, Including the Internet**

### **BPS STAFF:**

It is the policy of the Boston Public Schools that students and staff will use all technology to access electronic ("computer") networks, including the Internet and e-mail, in a responsible, legal, and ethical manner. Failure to do so may result in the loss of network privileges for the user, disciplinary action under the Code of Discipline, and/or prosecution under federal or state law.

Signing below signifies that I have read and understand the Acceptable Use Policy for Boston Public Schools Internet use. I understand that use of the Internet and e-mail in school is a privilege, not a right. It is designated strictly for educational purposes.

I also understand that if I do not sign this agreement, I will not be permitted to use the Internet and e-mail in school.

**Staff Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_