

Ashburnham Westminster Regional School District Acceptable Use Procedures for Technology and Electronic Resources for Students

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I. Introduction

"The mission of technology in Ashburnham Westminster Regional School District is to enhance and enrich the educational experience of staff, students and the community in order to allow them to succeed as individuals and to reach their maximum potential." – District Technology Mission Statement

The Ashburnham Westminster Regional School District provides access to technology and electronic resources to support its strategic plans and educational objectives. The access of technology and electronic resources shall be consistent with the purposes listed in the district's Acceptable Use Policy. It is the responsibility of each user of the district's computer system / network to know these policies and procedures and to conduct their activities accordingly.

II. General Provisions

All users should be aware of the following provisions:

A. Network and Internet Monitoring

The Ashburnham Westminster Regional School District has systems in place that may monitor and record all Internet usage. These security systems are capable of recording each web site visit, chat, newsgroup, e-mail message and file transfer in and out of the district network for each user. The district reserves the right to intermittently monitor Internet traffic and other usage of electronic resources. Users should have no expectation of privacy when browsing the web, sending or receiving e-mail or using other electronic resources.

B. Filtering

In accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), passed by the U.S. Legislature in January 2001 (Public Law 106-554), our schools shall employ filtering software to block access to inappropriate content on all computers with Internet access. Our district certifies that a policy of Internet safety and technology protection measures shall be enforced.

The determination of whether material is appropriate or inappropriate is based on the content of the material and the intended use of the material. Users shall not use the district's computer system / network to access material in violation of the following standards:

Prohibited Material: obscene materials, child pornography, material that appeals to a prurient or unhealthy interest in, or depicts or describes in a patently offensive way, violence, nudity, sex, death or bodily functions, material that has been designated for 'adults' only and material that promotes or advocates illegal activities.

Restricted Material: materials that promote or advocate the use of alcohol or tobacco, hate or discrimination, satanic or cult group membership, school cheating and weapons. Sites that contain personal advertisements or facilitate making online connections with other people are restricted.

Limited Access Material: materials that are generally considered to be non-educational, such as games, electronic commerce, jokes, recreation, entertainment, sports and investments.

“Prohibited Material” may not be accessed at any time, for any purpose. “Restricted Material” may not be accessed by elementary and middle school students at any time, for any purpose. “Restricted Materials” that have clear educational relevance, such as material with literary, artistic, political or scientific value will need to be evaluated by a staff member. If approved by a staff member, high school students, in the context of specific learning activities, may access “Restricted Material”. “Limited Access Material” may be accessed in the context of specific learning activities that are directed by a teacher or during periods of time that a school may designate as “open access” time.

Users should be aware that filtering software will not block ALL inappropriate web sites. If inappropriate material is mistakenly accessed, the users should immediately disclose this access to an appropriate staff member.

The Ashburnham Westminster Regional School District shall not be held responsible for misuse of material downloaded from any online service, or for inappropriate or sexually explicit material being downloaded through the network.

III. User Provisions

A. Inappropriate Use

Students shall not:

1. Attempt to gain unauthorized access to the district computer system / network or any other computer system or go beyond your authorized access.
2. Make deliberate attempts to disrupt, degrade or damage the district computer system / network or any other computer system or destroy data by spreading computer viruses or by any other means.
3. Use the district computer system / network to engage in illegal acts, including accessing and / or transmitting material in violation of any U.S. or Commonwealth law, including copyrighted material.
4. Access, download, display, transmit, produce, generate, copy or propagate any material that is obscene or pornographic; advocates illegal acts; contains ethnic slurs or racial epithets; or discriminates on the basis of gender, national origin, sexual orientation, race, color ancestry, religion, handicap or age.
5. Use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening or disrespectful language in electronic communications.
6. Engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks.
7. Post information that could cause damage or danger of disruption.
8. Use the district computer system / network to harass another person, or post false or defamatory information about a person or organization.

9. Use the district computer system / network to for commercial purposes. This includes offering, providing or purchasing products that are unrelated to business related to Ashburnham Westminster Regional School District.
10. Plagiarize or infringe upon copyrights of works found on the Internet.
11. Send or forward 'spam' or chain letters or forward e-mails of broad interest.
12. Use an account of another person or vandalize another user's data.
13. Permit or authorize any other person to use their name or login password.
14. Waste electronic storage space by saving unnecessary files or programs.
15. Engage in any other inappropriate use of the district computer system / network.
16. Disclose personal contact information via electronic communications. This includes a full name along with other information that a person can use to locate the user, including, but not limited to, parent names, home address or location, work address or location or telephone number. Exceptions will be made for high school students to disclose information for other educational institutions, companies or other entities for career development purposes or with specific staff approval.

B. Appropriate Use

Students shall:

1. Use the system only for educational, career development and limited, high-quality, professional research.
2. Notify an appropriate staff member if a possible security problem has been found.

IV. Electronic Communication

District resources for electronic communication shall be used for educational purposes. Incidental and occasional use of electronic mail may occur when such use does not generate cost to the district, but such messages will be treated no differently from other messages in the system. Prohibited electronic communications include, but are not limited to:

1. Use of electronic communications to send files that are in violation of copyright laws.
2. Use of electronic communications to send messages which are restricted by laws and regulations.
3. Use of electronic communications to intimidate or harass others, or to interfere with the ability of others to conduct school / district business.
4. Constricting electronic communications to appear to be from someone else.
5. Obtaining access to files or communications of others for the purpose of satisfying idle curiosity, with no substantial school / district business purpose.
6. Use of any electronic communications in violation of this policy or any other school / district policy.

Electronic Communications Retention

1. Per Federal Electronic Discovery rules, all email communication is to be archived for a period of time as determined by Massachusetts document retention guidelines.
2. Users should expect limited privacy in electronic communications.

3. All electronic communications are subject to search and are the property of the Ashburnham Westminster Regional School District. Deleting an email from your mail account does not delete it from the archiving server.
4. All district related business should be conducted using district provided email services and student or staff information should never be shared using personal email accounts.

IV. Software and Hardware

A. Supported Software and Hardware

Installation, troubleshooting and training for all other software and hardware used by administration, faculty, staff and students will be supported as time and these licenses must be owned by the district.

1. Installation, troubleshooting and training for all other software and hardware used by administration, faculty, staff and students will be supported as time permits.
2. Software will be purchased in sufficient quantities to support the greatest number of simultaneous users, or as site licenses.
3. Single copies of software are considered evaluation copies and will not be supported or installed on multiple computers, or made available from the network for multiple computers.

B. Unsupported Software and Hardware

1. Hardware or software which makes the computers or network harder to maintain and support and which offers no benefit over comparable hardware or software will not be supported.
2. Technology staff reserves the right to reimage any computer as necessary.
3. The district does not support equipment brought in from the outside by any user.
4. Technology staff reserves the right to confiscate any equipment that interferes with the operation of the network.
5. The Ashburnham Westminster Regional School District is not responsible for damage to or loss of equipment brought in from the outside. This includes computers, laptops, phones, music devices and data storage devices.
6. Technology staff must grant permission for the use of electronic equipment not owned by the school / district.

C. Wiring

Any wiring of computers or peripherals must be done in accordance with local and state building codes. Connectivity requests shall be made through the district IT department. The district IT department is solely responsible for this process.

V. Data Storage

Technology staff has the right to reimage any computer as necessary. Due to this, no personal data or files should be stored solely on a local machine.

The Ashburnham Westminster Regional School District makes every effort to run regular backups of data and e-mail hosted on its systems and networks; however, it cannot guarantee that in the event of data loss or catastrophic failure all information will be recovered.

VI. Due Process

The district will cooperate fully with local, state and federal officials in any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through the district computer system / network.

In the event that there is a claim that a user has violated this policy or school disciplinary code in the use of the district computer system / network, the user will be provided with notice and opportunity to be heard in the manner set forth in the school disciplinary code.

If a violation also involves a violation of other provisions of the school disciplinary code, it will be handled in a manner described in the code. Additional restrictions may be placed the use of the district computer system / network for that user.