

## LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY

### STUDENT POLICY GUIDELINES FOR INTERNET USE

Date Approved by  
School Committee:

1/2/97

Signature of Chair:

On File

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#### I. BACKGROUND

The Internet is a vast, global network, linking computers at universities, schools, laboratories, and other sites. Through the Internet, one can communicate with people all over the world through discussion forums and electronic mail. In addition, many educationally valuable files may be downloaded from the Internet. Because of its enormous size and resources, the Internet's educational potential is boundless. Because of its broad reach, however, the Internet also contains the potential for abuse. These Guidelines are intended to help ensure that students use this valuable resource in a safe and appropriate manner.

#### II. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Lexington Public Schools offer Internet access at each school. The sole purpose of this Internet access is to support education and research by providing students and teachers with access to unique resources and an opportunity for collaborative work. All uses of Lexington's Internet access (like all other uses of Lexington's computer facilities) must be in support of and consistent with these educational objectives. All students who use Lexington's Internet access are expected to read these guidelines and/or to take part in a discussion of the guidelines with a teacher. Adherence to the guidelines is a condition for a student's privilege of Internet access.

#### III. APPLICATION

##### Students' Individual Responsibility

All students use of the Internet is to be conducted under faculty supervision. Nevertheless, faculty members are not expected to monitor student use at every moment. Every student is expected to take individual responsibility for his or her appropriate use of the Internet.

##### Levels of Student Access

Two levels of Internet access are provided through the Lexington Public Schools:

**1. *Internet and World Wide Web***

All students will have access to the Internet and World Wide Web, with teacher supervision, in classrooms, libraries, or laboratories. No individual account agreement is required. Before a student may access the Internet and Web, however, he or she must be familiar with these Guidelines.

**Grades K-5:** Before students in Grades K-5 will be authorized to access the Internet and World Wide Web, they will take part in a discussion of these Guidelines with their teacher. Teachers will be asked to sign a statement indicating that they have had such a discussion with their class.

**Grades 6-12:** Before students in Grades 6-12 will be authorized to access the Internet and World Wide Web, they will be asked to sign a statement stating that they have read the Guidelines and agree to adhere to it.

**2. *Individual E-Mail Accounts***

Students may apply for individual e-mail accounts. Before an account will be provided, the application must be completed and signed by the student and, for all students under 18 years old, by the student's parent or guardian.

**Internet Access Is a Privilege**

For both levels of access, Internet access through the Lexington Public Schools is a privilege, not a right. A student's access may be canceled by school officials if this privilege is abused. Inappropriate conduct on the Lexington Public School Internet access will also be subject to disciplinary action, in conformity with the Lexington Public School Policy on Student Conduct and Discipline (which is published in school handbooks) and the disciplinary policies of individual schools.

**Administrators' Access to Student Files**

All student e-mail files and other Internet files and records may be accessed and examined by administrators for educational and administrative purposes, including the need to ensure that these Internet Guidelines are being adhered to. Administrators will also cooperate in providing access to student e-mail and Internet files and records to law enforcement authorities. Students should *not* assume that uses of the Lexington Public Schools Internet access will be private.

**Personal Safety**

The Internet is accessible to the public. Unfortunately, this includes people who want to make contact with students for inappropriate purposes or under false pretenses. The Lexington Public Schools cannot screen the Internet for such inappropriate uses. Therefore, students must be cautious and prudent about supplying personal information and arranging personal meetings. In particular, students should never arrange a personal meeting with a person who was met on-line without their parents' knowledge.

and approval. Students should promptly inform their teacher or school administrator of any on-line communication that the student feels is threatening, harassing, or otherwise inappropriate.

### **System Security and Resource Limits**

Students are expected to follow procedures and guidelines that are issued in order to ensure the security of the Lexington Public School computer system and to respect its resource limits. These include any downloading guidelines and virus protection procedures that may be issued.

### **Network Etiquette**

Students are expected to learn and to abide by generally accepted rules of Internet network etiquette, as well as rules of school decorum. These include common courtesy, politeness, and the avoidance of vulgar language.

### **Unacceptable Uses**

The following uses of the Lexington Public Schools Internet access are unacceptable:

1. Posting private or personal information about another person.
2. Attempting to log in through another person's e-mail account or to access another person's files.
3. Accessing or transmitting obscene or pornographic material.
4. Posting chain letters or engaging in "spamming." ("Spamming" means sending annoying or unnecessary messages to large numbers of people).
5. Engaging in sexual harassment. The Lexington Public Schools Sexual Harassment Policy, which is included in the individual schools' handbooks, is applicable to Internet conduct.
6. Participating in any communications that facilitate the illegal sale or use of drugs or alcohol; that facilitate criminal gang activity; that threaten, intimidate, or harass any other person; or that violate any other laws.
7. **Plagiarism.** "Plagiarism" means that the taking of material created by others and presenting it as if it were one's own. The Lexington High School policy on plagiarism/cheating, which is included in the Lexington High School Student/Parent Handbook, is applicable to Lexington High School students' use of the Internet.

8. Infringing copyrights. Copyright infringement occurs when a person inappropriately reproduces or transmits material that is protected by copyright. For example, most software is protected by copyright and may not be copied without the permission of the copyright owner.
9. Participating in commercial activities that are not directly related to the educational purposes of the Lexington Public Schools.

### **Disclaimer of Liability**

The Lexington Public Schools disclaim all liability for the content of material that a student may access on the Internet, for any damages suffered in the course of or as a result of the student's Internet use, and for any other consequences of a student's Internet use.

### **Changes in the Guidelines**

The Lexington Public Schools reserve the right to change these Guidelines at any time.

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