

Board Policy IFBG: Internet Acceptable Use

Status: ADOPTED

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Sumter County Schools recognizes that access to technology in and out of school gives students greater opportunities to learn, engage, communicate, and develop skills that will prepare them for work, life, and citizenship. We are committed to helping students develop 21st-century technology and communication skills.

To that end, we provide access to technologies for student and staff use.

This Acceptable Use Policy outlines the guidelines and behaviors that users are expected to follow when using school technologies or when using personally-owned devices on the school campus and or network.

- The Sumter County Schools network is intended for educational purposes.
- All activity over the network or using district technologies may be monitored and retained.
- Access to online content via the network may be restricted in accordance with our policies and federal regulations, such as the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).
- Students are expected to follow the same rules for good behavior and respectful conduct online as offline.
- Misuse of school resources can result in disciplinary action.
- Sumter County Schools makes a reasonable effort to ensure students' safety and security online, but will not be held accountable for any harm or damages that result from use of school technologies.
- Users of the district network or other technologies are expected to alert IT staff immediately of any concerns for safety or security.

Technologies Covered

Sumter County Schools may provide Internet access, desktop computers, mobile computers or devices, videoconferencing capabilities, online collaboration capabilities, message boards, email, and more.

As new technologies emerge, Sumter County Schools will attempt to provide access to them. The policies outlined in this document are intended to cover *all* available technologies, not just those specifically listed.

Usage Policies/Web Access

Sumter County Schools provides its users with access to the Internet, including web sites, resources, content, and online tools. Sumter County Schools strictly prohibits the use of school equipment, networks, and servers to access, send, receive, view or download obscene materials, materials harmful to minors, and materials that violate CIPA regulations. Accordingly, access will be restricted in compliance with CIPA regulations and school policies, through the use of qualifying technology protection measures as that term is defined in Section 1703(b)(1) of the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000. Sumter County Schools will routinely update these technology protection measures to ensure they continue to meet or exceed compliance standards and specifications established by the Georgia Department of Education.

To ensure efficacy and encourage transparency Sumter County Schools will provide reasonable opportunities and procedures for parents/guardians of current students to confer and collaborate with school administrators and teachers regarding appropriate internet access for such students.

Web browsing may be monitored and web activity records may be retained indefinitely. Users are expected to respect that the web filter is a safety precaution, and should not try to circumvent it when browsing the Web. If a site is blocked and a user believes it shouldn't be, the user should follow district protocol to alert an IT staff member or submit the site for review, whereupon Sumter County Schools will review the complaint with all due speed, and at a minimum respond to the complaint in writing.

If a student or employee of Sumter County Schools intentionally violates this policy through the use of school equipment to access prohibited materials, regardless of the location of the violation, they will be subject to the consequences listed within this acceptable use policy.

If a person who is not a student or employee of Sumter County Schools intentionally violates this policy through the use of school equipment to access prohibited materials, regardless of the location of the violation, they will be subject to the consequences listed within this acceptable use policy.

Email

Sumter County Schools may provide users with email accounts for the purpose of school-related communication. Availability and use may be restricted based on school policies.

If users are provided with email accounts, they should be used with care. Users should not send personal information; should not attempt to open files or follow links from unknown or untrusted origin; should use appropriate language; and should only communicate with other people as allowed by the district policy or the teacher.

Users are expected to communicate with the same appropriate, safe, mindful, courteous conduct online as offline. Email usage may be monitored and archived.

Social/Web 2.0 / Collaborative Content

Recognizing the benefits collaboration brings to education, Sumter County Schools may provide users with access to web sites or tools that allow communication, collaboration, sharing, and messaging among users. These websites and tools might include social media sites only when directed by school personnel, for the exclusive purpose of accessing and utilizing age-appropriate educational resources under the supervision of such school personnel during the course of a school related activity. When not otherwise under the supervision of school personnel, Sumter County Schools prohibits all students from accessing social media platforms through the use of computer equipment, communications services, or internet access that is operated by Sumter County Schools. When using allowed websites and tools, users are expected to communicate with the same appropriate, safe, mindful, courteous conduct online as offline. Posts, chats, sharing, and messaging may be monitored. Users should be careful not to share personally-identifying information online.

Parents may ask to be informed which social media sites, if any, their child will access under the supervision of school personnel and may prohibit the use of any social media site for their child.

Mobile Devices Policy

Sumter County Schools may provide users with mobile computers or other devices to promote learning outside of the classroom. Users should abide by the same acceptable use policies when using school devices off the school network as on the school network.

Users are expected to treat these devices with extreme care and caution; these are expensive devices that the school is entrusting to your care. Users should report any loss, damage, or malfunction to IT staff immediately. Users will be financially accountable for any damage resulting from negligence or misuse.

Use of school-issued mobile devices off the school network may be monitored.

Personal Electronic Devices Policy

In accordance with GA HB340 the "Distraction-Free Education Act" Sumter County Schools K-8 students may not use their personal electronic devices for the duration of the school day. All personal electronic devices must be stored within school lockers, a designated place within the classroom, or a magnetically sealed Yondr pouch. Parents and legal guardians will be able to contact their children through the school's front office, which will relay all necessary information to their children. Students will also be able to contact their parents and guardians through the

front desk staff at their school. In the event of an emergency, Sumter County Schools will follow the district and school level safety plans.

Sumter County High School students should keep personal electronic devices turned off and put away during school hours—unless in the event of an emergency or as instructed by a teacher or staff for educational purposes.

Because of security concerns, when personal electronic devices are used on campus, they should not be used over the school network without express permission from IT staff. In some cases, a separate network may be provided for personally-owned devices

Personal electronic devices include, but are not limited to, smartphones, smartwatches, smart glasses, tablets, e-readers, and headphones.

Security

Users are expected to take reasonable safeguards against the transmission of security threats over the school network. This includes not opening or distributing infected files or programs and not opening files or programs of unknown or untrusted origin.

If you believe a computer or mobile device you are using might be infected with a virus, please alert IT. Do not attempt to remove the virus yourself or download any programs to help remove the virus.

Downloads

Users should not download or attempt to download or run .exe programs over the school network or onto school resources without express permission from IT staff.

You may be able to download other file types, such as images or videos. For the security of our network, download such files only from reputable sites, and only for education purposes.

Netiquette

Users should always use the Internet, network resources, and online sites in a courteous and respectful manner.

Users should also recognize that among the valuable content online is unverified, incorrect, or inappropriate content. Users should use trusted sources when conducting research via the Internet.

Users should also remember not to post anything online that they wouldn't want parents, teachers, or future colleges or employers to see. Once something is online, it's out there—and can sometimes be shared and spread in ways you never intended.

Plagiarism

Users should not plagiarize (or use as their own, without citing the original creator) content, including words or images, from the Internet. Users should not take credit for things they didn't create themselves, or misrepresent themselves as an author or creator of something found online. Research conducted via the Internet should be appropriately cited, giving credit to the original author.

Personal Safety

Users should never share personal information, including phone number, address, social security number, birthday, or financial information, over the Internet without adult permission. Users should recognize that communicating over the Internet brings anonymity and associated risks, and should carefully safeguard the personal information of themselves and others. Users should never agree to meet someone they meet online in real life without parental permission.

If you see a message, comment, image, or anything else online that makes you concerned for your personal safety, bring it to the attention of an adult (teacher or staff if you're at school; parent if you're using the device at home) immediately.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying will not be tolerated. Harassing, dissing, flaming, denigrating, impersonating, outing, tricking, excluding, and cyberstalking are all examples of cyberbullying. Don't be mean. Don't send emails or post comments with the intent of scaring, hurting, or intimidating someone else.

Engaging in these behaviors, or any online activities intended to harm (physically or emotionally) another person, will result in severe disciplinary action and loss of privileges. In some cases, cyberbullying can be a crime. Remember that your activities are monitored and retained.

Examples of Acceptable Use

I will:

- Use school technologies for school-related activities.
- Follow the same guidelines for respectful, responsible behavior online that I am expected to follow offline.
- Treat school resources carefully, and alert staff if there is any problem with their operation.
- Encourage positive, constructive discussion if allowed to use communicative or collaborative technologies.
- Alert a teacher or other staff member if I see threatening, inappropriate, or harmful content (images, messages, and posts) online.
- Use school technologies at appropriate times, in approved places, for educational pursuits.
- Cite sources when using online sites and resources for research.
- Recognize that use of school technologies is a privilege and treat it as such.
- Be cautious to protect the safety of myself and others.
- Help to protect the security of school resources.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Users should use their own good judgment when using school technologies.

Examples of Unacceptable Use

I will **not**:

- Use school technologies in a way that could be personally or physically harmful.
- Attempt to find inappropriate images or content.
- Engage in cyberbullying, harassment, or disrespectful conduct toward others.
- Try to find ways to circumvent the school's safety measures and filtering tools.
- Use school technologies to send spam or chain mail.
- Plagiarize content I find online.
- Post personally-identifying information, about myself or others.
- Agree to meet someone I meet online in real life.
- Use language online that would be unacceptable in the classroom.
- Use school technologies for illegal activities or to pursue information on such activities.
- Attempt to hack or access sites, servers, or content that isn't intended for my use.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Users should use their own good judgment when using school technologies.

Limitation of Liability

Sumter County Schools will not be responsible for damage or harm to persons, files, data, or hardware.

While Sumter County Schools employs filtering and other safety and security mechanisms, and attempts to ensure their proper function, it makes no guarantees as to their effectiveness.

Sumter County Schools will not be responsible, financially or otherwise, for unauthorized transactions conducted over the school network.

Violations of this Acceptable Use Policy

Violations of this policy may have disciplinary repercussions, including:

- Suspension of network, technology, or computer privileges
- Notification to parents
- Detention or suspension from school and school-related activities
- Legal action and/or prosecution