

POLICY
RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE

Guiding Principle

The policy is intended to provide general guidelines and examples of prohibited uses, but does not attempt to state all required or prohibited activities by users. Failure to comply with School policy and these rules may result in loss of computer and internet access privileges, disciplinary action and/or legal action.

Purpose

This policy's intent is to ensure appropriate educational access to school computers and the RISD network.

Policy

The Internet offers a wealth of information, the opportunity for the exchange of ideas and information, and the possibility of collaborative work. Use of computers, networks, network equipment and internet access is a privilege for staff and students and not a right. We expect staff and students to use these tools in a responsible manner for educational purposes and to be considerate of all other users. Acceptable use of computers and related devices, networks, and Internet access is any use which is consistent with the educational objectives of RISD. Staff and students will be instructed on the appropriate use of the Internet. Parents will be required to sign a permission form to allow their students to access the Internet and acknowledge that they have read and understand the “Internet Acceptable Use Policy.”

Staff and students will sign a form acknowledging they have read and understand the “Internet Acceptable Use Policy” that they will comply with the policy, and understand the consequences of violating the policy. Parents will sign a form to that effect.

Filtering

RISD complies with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA), Pub. L. No. 106-554 (codified at 20 U.S.C. §§ 6801, 9134 (2001); 47 U.S.C. § 254 (2001)). CIPA requires that schools and libraries which receive specific federal funds certify to the funding agency that they have in place an internet safety policy. This policy requires blocking access to obscenity, child pornography, or, as to minor students, material harmful to minors. This policy also prohibits hacking, use of chat rooms, disclosure of personal information concerning students, and unlawful activities involving children online. It also provides for the safety and security of minors while using electronic mail and other forms of electronic communication. The internet will be filtered, in accordance with CIPA, to limit users to educationally appropriate sites, as determined by RISD. At the same time, RISD is aware that material on the internet is uncensored and we can make no guarantee that information found on the internet will be reliable or inoffensive. The filtering system may be disabled by at a teacher’s request for students by the administration for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

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Computer Use is a Privilege, Not a Right

Student use of the school's computers, networks and Internet services is a privilege, not a right. Unacceptable use/activity may result in suspension or cancellation of privileges as well as additional disciplinary and/or legal action. The Director shall have final authority to decide whether a student's privileges will be denied or revoked.

Prohibited Use

The user is responsible for his or her actions and activities involving RISD computers, networks and Internet services and for his/her computer files, passwords and accounts. Examples of unacceptable uses that are expressly prohibited include but are not limited to the following:

1. **Accessing/Transmitting Inappropriate Materials:** Accessing, submitting, posting, publishing, forwarding, downloading, scanning, sending or displaying materials which are defamatory, abusive, obscene, vulgar, sexually explicit, sexually suggestive, threatening, discriminatory, harassing and/or illegal.
2. **Illegal Activities:** Using RISD computers, networks and internet services for any illegal activity or activity that violates other school policies, procedures and/or rules, such as encouraging the use of tobacco, alcohol or controlled substances.
3. **Violating Copyrights:** Copying or downloading copyrighted materials without the owner's permission.
4. **Plagiarism:** Representing as one's own work any materials obtained on the internet (such as term papers, articles, etc.). When internet sources are used in student work, the author, publisher, and web site must be identified.
5. **Copying Software:** Copying or downloading software without the express authorization of the system administrator.
6. **Non-School-Related-Uses:** Using RISD computers, networks, and internet services for non-school-related purposes such as for private financial gain, commercial, advertising or solicitation purposes or any other personal use.
7. **Cyber-stalking and Cyber-harassment:** In accordance with Rhode Island law, whoever transmits any communication by computer or other electronic device to any person or causes any person to be contacted for the sole purpose of harassing that person or his or her family is guilty of a misdemeanor. (R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-52-4.2).
8. **Violence and Discrimination:** Using the computer, networks and internet services to send or receive any data or information which advocates illegal acts, violence or discrimination toward people or organizations, or which is outside the scope of educational use.
9. **Misuse of Password/Unauthorized Access:** Sharing passwords, using other users' passwords without permission, and/or accessing other users' accounts; forging or attempting to forge electronic mail messages.

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10. **Malicious Use/Vandalism:** Any malicious use, disruption or harm to RISD computers, networks and internet services, including hacking activities and creating/uploading of computer viruses. (R.I. Gen. Laws §§11-52-3; 11-52-4.1).

11. **Unauthorized Access to Chat Rooms/News Groups:** Accessing chat rooms or news groups without specific authorization from the teacher, supervisor, or administrator.

No Expectation of Privacy

RISD retains control, custody and supervision of all computers, networks and internet services owned or leased by RISD. RISD reserves the right to monitor all computer and internet activity by students. Students have no expectation of privacy in their use of school computers, including electronic mail and stored files.

The RISD computer network belongs solely to RISD and any files, records, electronic mail or other communication may be examined, edited, or deleted by RISD at any time, without warning or notice.

Compensation for Losses, Costs and/or Damages

The student and/or the student's parent/guardian shall be responsible for compensating RISD for any losses, costs or damages incurred by RISD and related to violations of these rules, including investigation of violations.

RISD Assumes No Responsibility for Unauthorized Charges, Costs or Illegal Use

RISD assumes no responsibility for any unauthorized charges made by students including but not limited to credit card charges, long distance telephone charges, equipment and line costs, or for any illegal use of its computers, such as copyright violations.

Student Security

A student shall not reveal his/her or any other student/classmate's full name, address or telephone number on the Internet. Students should never meet people whom they have contacted through the Internet without parental permission. Students should inform their teachers and/or administrators if they access information or messages, which are dangerous, inappropriate or make them feel uncomfortable in any way.

System Security

The security of RISD computers, networks and internet services is a high priority. Any user who identifies a security problem must notify the teacher, administrator, or system administrator immediately. The user shall not demonstrate the problem to others. Any user who attempts or causes a breach of system security may have his/her privileges revoked and may be subject to additional disciplinary and/or legal action. It is unacceptable to connect any personal computing device to the school's network without written permission from the Office of Technology. It is

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unacceptable to engage in School Internet activity for private or financial gain or to manage an illegal substance.

Violation of Policy

This policy applies to all school computer use, Internet activity and communication. If a user is found to be in violation of the policy, his or her network and Internet rights and privileges will be suspended until an investigation is conducted. Upon completion of the investigation, the Director will issue a decision to revoke or reinstate the computer user's privileges. Such violations may also result in further disciplinary measures or legal action.

Disclaimer

All staff and students of RISD take full responsibility for their actions in the use of the computers, networks and Internet services. RISD makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. RISD will not be responsible for any damages the user suffers, including but not limited to the loss of data, delays, non-deliveries, or service interruptions.

Individual users are solely responsible for all charges and fees that they may incur in using the network, including outside telephone, printing, and merchandise purchases made through the network. RISD is not a party to such transactions and shall not be liable for any costs or damages, whether direct or indirect, arising out of any network transactions by the user.

Legal References:

- Children's Internet Protection Act, 20 U.S.C. §§ 6801, 9134; 47 U.S.C. § 254
- R.I. Gen. Laws §11-52-2
- R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-52-3
- R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-52-4.1
- R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-52-4.2

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