



MIDDLETOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMPUTER AND INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

For the purpose of this document, the term Computer applies to all district technology assets, whether or not they are connected to the network.

Policy

The School Committee recognizes that as telecommunications and other new technologies shift the ways that information may be accessed, communicated and transferred by members of the society, those changes may also alter instruction and student learning. The School Committee supports access by students to rich information resources and the acquisition of appropriate skills to analyze and evaluate such resources. It also recognizes both the need and legal requirement to implement a program that will protect students from access to materials and information deemed inappropriate to the district. The district affords the opportunity to parents/guardians to explicitly grant or deny access to the Middletown Public Schools' Computers and Internet access, as well as permission to publish student work on the Internet. The Middletown Public Schools also recognizes the need for faculty and staff to support appropriate use of the Computers and Internet access and to abide by parent/guardian's decision regarding student access.

Program

In partnership with students, parents, and community of the Middletown Public Schools provides a comprehensive, safe educational environment that is learner-centered, enabling all students to succeed in the global economy of the 21st Century. This environment provides rich opportunities for students to find and utilize current information and resources, and apply academic skills for solving real-world problems through the use of technology. Certain conditions are necessary for schools to effectively use this technology for learning, teaching, and educational management.

Middletown Public Schools is pleased to offer all students, faculty and staff in our district access to its Computer and Internet services. Access to the Internet will enable our students, faculty, and staff to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and educational sites throughout the world. Although the Internet offers extraordinary resources for education, it also hosts a vast collection of inappropriate sites. All users should be warned that some materials accessible via the Internet might contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive to some people. In order to prohibit access to these sites and to meet the Children's Internet Protection Act requirement for e-rate eligibility, Middletown Public Schools has implemented Internet content filtering provided by Rhode Island Network for Educational Technology (RINET). Internet content filtering is a process by which requests for sites on the Internet are inspected and then allowed or denied based

upon a selected set of filtering criteria. It is important to note that no filtering solution is perfect and Internet access entails user responsibility.

We believe the benefits to our students from access to the Internet, in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration, exceed any disadvantages. Parents and guardians are responsible for setting and conveying the standards their children should follow when using media and information services. Middletown Public Schools supports and respects each family's right to decide whether or not to apply for access in our schools.

Students will be given the privilege to use the Computers and Internet along with the responsibility of using it properly by returning a Student-Parent/Guardian Acceptance and Permission Form, completed and signed by the student and parent/guardian, to his/her school principal. In addition, students will need the permission of and must be supervised by the Middletown Public School's faculty and staff.

Internet access is coordinated through a complex association of government agencies, as well as regional and state networks. The smooth operation of the network relies upon the proper conduct of those who use it. In general, this requires efficient, ethical, and legal utilization of the network resources, as well as adherence to school and district codes of conduct. If a user violates any of these provisions, disciplinary action will result. In a case where codes of conduct or laws are broken, further consequences may result. Middletown Public Schools will cooperate fully with local, state, and federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to illegal activities conducted through Middletown Public Schools' Network.

The signature(s) on the Student-Parent/Guardian Acceptance and Permission Form are legally binding and indicate that the parties who signed have read the terms and conditions carefully and understand their content.

Computer and Internet Responsibilities and Guidelines

Responsibilities of Students

- Learn and follow the guidelines set forth in this Acceptable Use Policy.
- Return permission form signed by the student and a parent/guardian stating that they agree that the student will adhere to all guidelines and assume responsibility for their actions.
- Report any Computer and Internet contacts that are defamatory, obscene, racially or sexually oriented or which may contain illegal materials, to the supervising teacher or principal.

Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians

- Review and provide support for this Acceptable Use Policy with your child.
- Provide guidance in the ethical and appropriate use of the Computer and Internet as provided in this Acceptable Use Policy
- Return completed permission form that indicates agreement to student adherence to all guidelines and responsibility for their actions.

Responsibilities of Staff Members

It is expected that staff and faculty members in Middletown Public Schools will use the computer and Internet for research and/or instructional purposes only. Staff and faculty members should maintain the highest ethical behavior in using the Internet and faculty members should promote that behavior among students. Employee violations of the Acceptable Use Policy will be handled in accordance with law, school policy, and collective bargaining agreements, as applicable.

- Learn and follow the guidelines set forth in this Acceptable Use Policy.
- Make every attempt to maintain the curricular focus of Internet use by locating and directing students toward educational sites on the Internet.
- Supervise student use at all times.
- Ensure that all student users have signed permission slips from a parent/guardian.
- Model and provide instruction in the ethical and appropriate use of the Computer and Internet in a proper school setting as provided in the following guidelines.
- Agree not to share access codes, accounts or passwords with any student.
- Report incidences of Computer and Internet misuse and abuse to the Information Technology Office
- Make appropriate accommodations for students who have been denied access to the Network and/or Internet by their parents/guardians

Guidelines

Middletown Public Schools' Computers and Internet access are to be used in a responsible, efficient, and legal manner and must be in support of the educational goals and objectives of Middletown Public Schools and the State of Rhode Island. Middletown Public Schools' strongly believes in the educational value of electronic services and recognizes their potential to support curriculum and to allow staff to efficiently provide educational services. The District goal in providing this service is to promote educational excellence by facilitating research, innovation, communication, and business efficiency.

All rules and policies of the Middletown Public Schools' apply, and are not limited to the following:

1. All users are responsible for appropriate behavior when using the Computer and the Internet just as they are when involved in any school activity. General school rules and policies apply to all computer use and Internet activity and communication.
2. The purpose of using the Internet at school is to support research and educational goals. Use of the Computers and Internet must always support those goals.
3. Games and electronic mail may only be used if a student has explicit permission from a staff member.
4. All users must:
 - Protect oneself and others by not sharing their passwords or using another user's password
 - Protect oneself and others by not revealing personal addresses or phone numbers
 - Use appropriate language
 - Abide by all copyright laws, including but not limited to unauthorized copying of software

5. The following actions are prohibited:

- Participating in commercial activity (defined as buying, selling, bartering, or advertising; including, but not limited to the use of credit cards)
- Downloading and/or installing software, shareware or freeware
- Using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communication without permission of the supervising teacher
- Disrupt the use of the network or others
- Destroying, modifying, or abusing hardware or software in anyway
- Wasting limited resources such as disk space or printing capacity
- Sending or displaying offensive messages or photos
- Using another person's password or account
- Accessing other people's folders, files or programs
- Harassing, insulting or attacking other users
- Willfully destroying or vandalizing other people's work, computers or computer programs and files

Sanctions

Privileges. The use of the Computers and Internet at Middletown Public Schools is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use will result in disciplinary action.

Vandalism. Vandalism will result in disciplinary action. Vandalism is defined as a willful or ignorant defacing, disabling, or destruction of data of another user, software, computers, peripherals, or other network resources. This also includes, but is not limited to, uploading, creating, or transmitting computer viruses.

Security. Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users. Attempts to login to the system as any other user or to share a password will result in-school disciplinary action. If a security problem is identified by you, notify the supervising teacher. Do not demonstrate the problem to other users.

Privacy. System administrators may review files and communications at any time to maintain system integrity and insure that users are using the system responsibly. There should be no presumption of privacy for communications stored, sent, received, or accessed through Middletown Public Schools' computers, network, e-mail system, and Internet connection. It is a matter of law that any document pertaining to the public business on a publicly funded system is a public record. All electronic correspondence and data, is subject to the discovery process based upon the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

Disciplinary Action. Disciplinary action may be taken in the event that the provisions of this policy are violated. The disciplinarian administrator and the technology department will have discretion in deciding on what action, if any will be taken against persons violating the provisions of this policy. Handling of violations to this policy may vary according to the particular situation. Where the use of the computer is an integral part of the instructional program, violators need to be disciplined immediately and regain access to the computer so that instruction may continue. Disciplinary action may consist of 1) parent contact 2) restitution/restoration for damages and time involved 3) detention 4) suspension 5) legal

action 6) access suspended. If a users access is suspended as a result of violations, the user may appeal the suspension to the Technology Committee. Employee violations of the Acceptable Use Policy will be handled in accordance with law, school policy, and collective bargaining agreements, as applicable.

□ ***Disclaimer.*** Middletown Public Schools will not be responsible for any damages suffered, including loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, service interruptions, or inaccurate information.

APPENDIX

- 1) Student-Parent/Guardian Acceptance and Permission for Computer and Internet Use
- 2) Student-Parent/Guardian Acceptance and Permission for World Wide Web Publishing of Student Work

Policy Approved By The School Committee May 29, 2002
Revised - February 15, 2007

**Middletown Public Schools
Computer and Internet Acceptable Use Policy**

*Student-Parent/Guardian Acceptance and Permission
for
Computer and Internet Use*

The Student (user):

I have received my parent(s)/ guardian(s) permission and I have read the Middletown Public School’s Computer and Internet Acceptable Use Policy. I understand and agree to all the provisions, rules and regulations outlined within. I understand that any violation of the Middletown Public School’s Computer and Internet Acceptable Use Policy may result in disciplinary action.

Print Student’s Name	Student’s Signature	Date
School Name	Grade	

The Parent/Guardian:

As the parent(s)/ guardian(s) of the above named student I have read the Middletown Public School’s Computer and Internet Acceptable Use Policy and I understand and agree to all the provisions, rules and regulations outlined within. I hereby give permission for my child to use the Internet services provided by the Middletown Public Schools. I do understand that my child is required to follow this policy. I further understand that there is a potential for my son/ daughter to access information on the Internet that is inappropriate for students and that every reasonable effort will be made on the part of the faculty and staff of the Middletown School Department to monitor access to such information, but that my son/ daughter is ultimately responsible for restricting himself/herself from inappropriate information.

Print Parent/Guardian’s Name	Parent/Guardian’s Signature	Date
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Please return to the building principal.

**Middletown Public Schools
Computer and Internet Acceptable Use Policy**

*Student-Parent/Guardian Acceptance and Permission
for
World Wide Web Publishing of Student Work*

I give Middletown Public Schools the right to use my son or daughter's work on the Internet. This material would only be used with regard to activities related to the Middletown Public Schools web site. A student's last name, address or any other easily identifiable will not be included.

I grant permission for the World Wide Web publishing as described above.

Print Student's Name

Student's Signature

School

Grade

Print Parent/Guardian's Name

Parent/Guardian's Signature

Please return to the building principal.