

Somerville Public Schools
Electronic Communication System/Network
Acceptable Use Policy
SPS Students

Purpose

The Somerville Public Schools is pleased to offer its students access to the school's computer network, including access to the Internet. Access to the school's network will enable students to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and bulletin boards. Potentially, students will also be exposed to advertisements of various kinds.

The Somerville Public Schools believe that there is educational value in the Internet, and recognize the potential support to our curriculum. Through the Internet, one can communicate with people all over the world through discussion forums and electronic mail. 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 misuse. These guidelines are intended to help ensure that students use this valuable resource in a safe and appropriate manner.

Families should be aware that some material accessible via the Internet might contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or offensive. While our goal is to provide Internet access to promote educationally supportive materials and sites, students will have access to other information as well. The benefits of student access to the Internet far exceed any disadvantages. Somerville Public Schools will make every effort to ensure that students use the Internet properly. Students using the Internet are expected to conduct themselves responsibly. Furthermore, these technologies are expensive to purchase, to install, and to maintain. As property of the Somerville Public Schools all technology must be handled carefully so as to benefit all users.

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

Grades K-12

Before students in Grades K-12 are authorized to access the Internet and World Wide Web, they will take part in a discussion of these Guidelines with their teacher and/ or building Technology Facilitator.

Internet Access is a Privilege

For all users, Internet access through the Somerville Public Schools is a privilege, not a right. A student's access may be canceled by school officials if this privilege is misused. Revocation of computer access privileges may be necessary. Inappropriate conduct as applied to Internet access will be subject to disciplinary action, as outlined in the policy manual of the Somerville Public Schools.

The intent of this policy is to ensure that all uses of the Internet are consistent with the educational goals of Somerville Public Schools.

UNACCEPTABLE USES

All Internet users will be expected to understand that the following uses of the Somerville Public Schools Internet access are unacceptable:

- * Using the Internet for illegal purposes or in support of illegal purposes.
- * Purposefully posting or divulging ANY private or personal information about yourself or another person (this includes the student's location).
- * Attempting to log on through another person's e-mail account or to access another person's files. (hacking)
- * Purposefully accessing or transmitting obscene or pornographic material.
- * Purposefully posting chain-letters or engaging in sending annoying messages to large numbers of people. (spamming)
- * Using the school network to retrieve, transmit, or make available to others a message that is inconsistent with the educational purposes of the Internet.
- * Using the network in a fashion inconsistent with the directions from teachers and other staff and generally accepted network etiquette.
- * Plagiarism. "Plagiarism" means the taking of material created by others and presenting it as if it were one's own.
- * 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 permission of the copyright owner.
- * Any use for political or commercial purposes that are not directly related to the educational purposes of Somerville Public Schools.
- * Any use that disrupts the educational goals of Somerville Public Schools.
- * Purposefully entering a chat room for a purpose not directly related to an educational task.
- * Any downloading of large or harmful files.
- * Downloading free ware, share ware or other software which affects the system software of a computer.
- * Purposefully disrupting the hard drive set-up of a computer, including changing desktop or hard drive folder names, colors or contents.

Student Responsibility

Access of material that has been deemed inappropriate for educational use by Somerville Public Schools' faculty or staff is strictly prohibited. If users encounter such material by accident, they should quit the application immediately. Students should report the incident directly to a teacher. Students will not have the opportunity to simply "surf" the Internet or browse among World Wide Web pages. Students will use the Internet for a specific educational purpose during lab time or for a class assignment.

Access to Student's Files

All student files, including e-mail files and other Internet files and usage may be monitored by faculty for educational and administrative purposes, including the need to ensure that these Guidelines are being followed. Also, faculty may be asked to provide access to student files and

records to law enforcement authorities. Students should not assume that the uses of Somerville 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. The Somerville Public Schools cannot screen the Internet for such inappropriate uses. Students must be cautious and prudent about supplying personal information and arranging any kind of meetings. 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 Somerville Public Schools' computer system and to respect its resource limits. These include any downloading guidelines and virus protection procedures that may be issued.

No students should bring a disk from home and utilize it in a school computer without permission from the Technology Staff.

Software installation of any kind, with the exception of that done by the Technology Staff, on school computers will be strictly prohibited.

Students will not be allowed to use the district's computer resources to create their own web page unless it is in conjunction with a class assignment.

Changes in Policy

Somerville Public Schools reserves the right to change and amend this policy at any time.

Disclaimer of Liability

The Somerville 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.