

## **Acceptable Use Agreement**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Technology has become fundamental to good educational practice. The Walker County Board of Education supports the use of technology as a learning resource that will enable students and empower teachers to experience the highest level of educational opportunities possible as we move toward the development of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Classrooms.

To ensure that students receive a quality education and that employees are able to work in a professional and intellectually stimulating environment, it is the policy of the Walker County school district to provide all students and employees with access to a variety of technology resources. All Walker County students and staff must acknowledge and adhere to this policy. The creation of a large and varied technology environment demands that technology usage be conducted in legally and ethically appropriate ways. We recognize that the use of technology always requires attempts to balance the benefits against the possibilities of danger, security problems, and abuse. Rapid changes in technology and growth in the range of content available makes this a constant challenge.

Thus, it is the intention of the Walker County Schools that all technology resources be used in accordance with any and all school system policies and procedures as well as local, state, and federal laws and/or guidelines governing the usage of technology and its component parts. Additionally, it is implied that all students and employees of Walker County Schools will use the provided technology resources so as not to waste them, abuse them, interfere with or cause harm to other individuals, institutions, or companies. The administrators of each school are responsible for establishing specific practices to enforce this policy at individual schools.

Aspects of this policy may specifically address technology equipment personally owned by school system employees and/or students and brought into school facilities or on to school campuses to access school resources and/or personal resources. All personal technologies used on any Walker County campus are subject to this policy and may be used only if such usage is in compliance with all school system policies, procedures, and guidelines as well as local, state, and federal laws. No technologies may be purchased, brought on campus, or used to access school system resources that interfere with or adversely affect functions or operations of school system technology resources/infrastructure.

All electronic content stored on any external storage medium or personal off-site storage location that is brought to or accessed from a Walker County School campus is subject to all school system policies and guidelines, as well as local, state, and federal laws.

Employees are prohibited from emailing outside the school system or storing/saving on external storage devices or portable devices that do not remain on campus, electronic copies of student or staff personal information. This information includes, but is not limited to data containing social security numbers, information protected by FERPA, and any other sensitive and/or protected information. In the event that this type of information is stored on a portable or external device and said device is lost or stolen or if the security of this data is believed to have been breached in any way, the Technology Director should be notified immediately.

Any questions about this policy, its interpretation, or specific circumstances shall be directed to the

Technology Director before proceeding. Violations of this policy will be handled in a manner consistent with comparable situations requiring disciplinary and/or legal action.

The Walker County Schools Technology department issues further specific guidelines detailing appropriate and legal use of copyright, email, technology resource purchasing and disposal, web page creation and maintenance, and the publication of student work. These guidelines are updated as best practices dictate and as case law emerges. These guidelines are considered appendices of the Walker County Schools Acceptable Use Agreement. Students and staff are expected to be aware of and follow the guidelines which are updated annually and posted on the Walker County Schools web site's Technology page and referenced in the Employee Handbook and/or the Student Code of Conduct.

## **I. ACCESS**

A. The use of all Walker County Schools technology resources is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate or suspected inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of those privileges, pending investigation. Moreover, users of Walker County Schools' technology must be aware that Walker County Schools cannot assume any liability arising out of the illegal or inappropriate use of technology resources.

B. Users should not purchase or dispose of software, hardware, peripherals, or other technology-related devices without consulting the technology staff. Regardless of purchase date, location or funding source, all personnel should adhere to the Electronics Purchasing and Disposal Guidelines in regard to all purchases and disposals.

C. Individuals may use only accounts, files, software, and/or other technology resources that are assigned to, provided, or approved for him/her.

D. Individuals identified as a real or suspected security risk will be denied access.

E. Any use of technology resources, regardless of ownership, that reduces the efficiency of use for others will be considered a violation of this policy.

F. Individuals must not attempt to disrupt any technology services or data integrity by engaging in inappropriate activities. Examples include, but are not limited to, spreading viruses, spamming, excessive network and/or Internet activity, or modification of equipment or infrastructure.

G. Individuals must not attempt to modify technology resources, utilities, and configurations, and/or change the restrictions associated with his/her accounts, or attempt to breach any technology resources security system or filtering systems, either with or without malicious intent.

H. Personal technology-related devices such as, but not limited to laptops, cell phones, smart-phones, iTouch/iPods/iPads, cameras or other eDevices, etc. used on school grounds are subject to all items covered in this policy and other applicable published guidelines. The

permission for such personal devices to be brought to school and the use of such devices will be at the discretion of the local school administration and District Network Administrator. The user should not access local area network or wide area network resources that require authentication without the explicit permission of the technology staff. Public Internet access where available will be for visiting devices and is subject to the conditions outlined in this policy and all other school system policies and guidelines, as well as local, state, and federal laws.

I. The district Technology Director, district Network Administrator, local school Technology Coordinators and/or school system administrators will determine when inappropriate use has occurred, and they have the right to deny, revoke, or suspend specific user accounts.

## **II. PRIVACY:**

A. To maintain network integrity and to insure that the network is being used responsibly, if any policy violation or inappropriate behavior is suspected, the Technology Director, Network Administrator, local school Technology Coordinators and/or other designated technology staff reserve the right to inspect any and all data, including data stored by individual users on individual school or personal devices. Users should be aware that all activities may be monitored at any time, without notice.

B. Users should not have any expectation that their use of technology resources, including files stored by them on the Walker County Schools' network, will be private and will be secure from access by others. Reasonable steps will be taken to maintain the security of technology resources, but no assurance can be given that breach of such security will not occur.

C. Because communications on the Internet are public in nature, all users should be careful to maintain appropriate and responsible communications.

D. Walker County Schools cannot guarantee the privacy, security, or confidentiality of any information sent or received, either via the Internet, an email facility, telephone, or otherwise.

E. Users are encouraged to avoid storing personal and/or private information on the district and/or schools technology resources.

## **III. DATA SECURITY:**

A. Students and staff are expected to follow all local, state and federal laws and system policy regarding the protection of student and staff confidential data.

B. Users should not have any expectation that their usage of such resources is private. Reasonable efforts will be taken to maintain security of technology resources, but Walker County Schools cannot ensure that such security will not be breached and cannot assume any liability

arising out of any such breach of security.

C. Individuals must take all reasonable precautions to prevent unauthorized access to accounts and data and any other unauthorized usage within and outside the Walker County Schools. Any such unauthorized usage shall be reported immediately to the local school Technology Director and/or the district Network Administrator.

D. All employees shall be responsible for reporting suspected or actual breaches of data security whether due to inappropriate actions, carelessness, loss/theft of devices or failures of technical security measures.

E. Individuals may not attempt to log into the network using any network account and/or password other than the login(s) assigned to him/her. Individuals may not allow someone to use his/her network account and/or password to access the network, email, specific software packages, or the Internet.

F. Reasonable steps and procedures will be taken to secure student records, media center collections, child nutrition, and accounting information, and such information shall be backed up in a routine manner, with such information being maintained in secure offsite storage.

G. The system-wide technology staff does perform routine backups in an effort to assure continuity of business. There can be no assurance, however, that technology resources will be available within a particular time frame following an outage. There is no guarantee that information that existed prior to an outage, malfunction or deletion, can be recovered. Users are expected to maintain and backup their critical files and data.

#### **IV. COPYRIGHT:**

A. Illegal copies of software/media may not be created or used on school equipment under any circumstance.

B. Any questions about copyright provisions should be directed to the district Technology Director, district Network Administrator, local school Technology Coordinator, or local school Media Specialist.

C. Legal and ethical practices of appropriate use of technology resources are reviewed with students and employees in the system (i.e. as part of the Technology Education Curriculum, during orientation sessions, faculty meetings, or through online methods, etc). Again, all questions regarding legal and ethical practices of appropriate use should be directed to the local school Technology Coordinator, district Technology Coordinator, and/or district Network Administrator.

D. Copyright is implied for all information (text, data, and graphics) published on the Internet.

Student and employee web page authors will be held responsible for the contents of their pages. Do not "borrow" icons, sounds, or graphics from other pages without documented permission. It is the student's or employee's responsibility to secure proper usage permission.

E. Duplication of any copyrighted software/media is prohibited unless specifically allowed in the license agreement and, then, should occur only with the knowledge of the technology staff.

F. A backup copy of all purchased software programs may be made and, thus, become the working copy.

G. All original copies of software programs regardless funds used will be stored in a secure place.

I. In almost every case, if a single copy of given software package is purchased; it may only be used on one computer at a time. Multiple loading or "loading the contents of one disk onto multiple computers," (1987 Statement on Software Copyright) is NOT allowed.

J. If more than one copy of a software package is needed, a site license, lab pack, network version, or Internet portal license must be purchased. The district Technology Director, district Network Administrator and/or local Technology Coordinator and the person requesting the software will be responsible for determining how many copies should be purchased.

K. Any district technology personnel is authorized to sign license acknowledgements for a school within the system. All binding contracts/agreements must be signed by the Superintendent.

L. The district technology staff or local Technology Coordinator is responsible for installation of all software in use on the wide area network, local area network and/or individual devices within and purchased by Walker County Schools. Technology assistants or other designated staff may install software on technology devices with permission by the district Technology Coordinator and/or local school Technology Coordinator.

M. Written permission to post student work on the internet is obtained through the Walker County Schools Technology Usage Agreement.

#### **V. EMAIL:**

A. Walker County Schools provide access to email accounts for all employees, long-term substitutes in our system. Students may be granted email accounts. Secure email accounts may be granted for school related organizations or classes with designated employee sponsors.

B. Walker County Schools does not back up your email for restoration purposes. Walker County Schools will not be liable for lost or deleted emails. Walker County Schools does save email in

accordance with the law and can pull that email up as needed.

C. Technical support is provided for Walker County Schools email accounts used to conduct educational and/or instructional business.

D. Personal use of email is permitted as long as it does not violate Walker County Schools' policy and/or adversely affect others or the speed of the network. The use of Personal Email accounts are not permitted due to lack of security and the threat to network resources.

E. Use of Walker County Schools' email accounts for harassing or threatening is strictly prohibited.

F. Walker County Schools' email accounts may not be used for political activity, personal gain, commercial purposes, or profit.

G. When employing email, all users are responsible for maintaining professionalism at all times. Avoid impulsive and informal communication. Users must be constantly mindful of the need to review carefully and reconsider email communications before responding to and/or sending email. As a general rule, the content of an email should be acceptable to a general audience.

H. Walker County Schools' email accounts may not be used for attempting to send or sending anonymous messages.

I. Walker County Schools' email accounts may not be used for sending mass emails unless to parent lists or for other for educational purposes.

J. Walker County Schools' email accounts may not be used for posting or forwarding other user's personal communication without the author's consent.

K. Because email is not always securely transmitted, discretion must be used when sending, or encouraging the receipt of email containing sensitive information about students, families, school system employees, or any individuals. There can be no assurance that email will be confidential and/or private.

L. There is a system imposed limit on storage for email accounts. Users meeting or exceeding the limit will be unable to send or receive emails.

M. Users required to maintain email(s) for more than 365 days should print said emails and file or store electronically in a different format.

N. The technology staff, Walker County Schools' administrative staff, or Walker County Board of Education do not technically support or maintain individual user initiated email archives, filters, or other email related customizations.

O. Incoming and outgoing email is filtered by the district for inappropriate content, viruses, phishing, and/or malware. However, no filtering system is foolproof, and material deemed inappropriate by individual users or harmful may be transmitted in spite of filtering. Walker County Schools cannot assume any liability for such breaches of the filter.

P. Email accounts will automatically expire on the last full day of employment or upon student graduation.

Q. At the discretion of the Network Administrator, email accounts may be locked without notice.

## **VI. INTERNET USE:**

A. The intent of the Walker County Schools is to provide access to resources available via the Internet with the understanding that staff and students will access and use information that is appropriate for their various curricula.

B. All school rules and guidelines for appropriate technology usage, as well as local, state, and federal laws apply to usage of the Internet.

C. Teachers should screen all Internet resources before projecting them in the classroom.

D. Students gain access to the Internet by agreeing to conduct themselves in a considerate and responsible manner and by providing written permission from their parents.

E. Students are allowed to conduct independent research on the Internet upon the receipt of the appropriate permission forms.

F. Permission is not transferable, and therefore, may not be shared. Existing permission forms are valid until new forms are received. Students are required to have new forms signed when changing schools.

G. Students who are allowed independent access to the Internet have the capability of accessing material that has not been screened.

H. Internet activity can and will be monitored, along with other aspects of technology usage.

I. Internet access for all users is filtered through one central point by URL (web address) and by IP address and may be filtered by keyword.

J. URLs (web addresses) and IP addresses may be added to or deleted from the filtered list by the Technology Director.

K. Staff members may request to review filtered categories. Users requesting sites for blocking or unblocking, must list specific URLs.

L. Successful or unsuccessful attempts to bypass the Internet filter by using proxies or other resources are a violation of this policy.

M. Internet use refers to internet access via all Walker County Schools/Private and public networks.

## **VII. EXAMPLES OF INAPPROPRIATE USE OF RESOURCES:**

This list is not all-inclusive, but is intended to provide general guidance. Anything that would be considered inappropriate in "paper form" or "verbal form" is also considered inappropriate in electronic form. Information, such as but not limited to STI data, accessed through school system technologies may not be used for any private business activity. The following are examples of inappropriate activities when using any Walker County Schools' network, email system, hardware, software, technology services, web service and/or Internet access:

A. Using another user's password or attempting to discover another user's password or private information

B. Sharing passwords

C. Trespassing in another user's files, folders, home directory, or work

D. Saving information on any network drive or directory other than your personal home directory or a specified and district Network Administrator approved location

E. Downloading, installing, or copying software of any kind onto a computer, laptop, home directory, network drive, or other e-device (except for approved updates, software or apps)

F. Harassing, insulting, embarrassing, attacking or in anyway bullying others verbally, written or with technology resources

G. Damaging/abusing technology resources, including, but not limited to, printers, telephones, computers, computer systems, any e-device, computer network devices or networks. (this includes changing any configurations on any of these devices)

H. Intentionally wasting resources such as Internet bandwidth, disk space and printing capacity.

I. Accessing inappropriate material stored on resources such as, but not limited to, digital



cameras, flash drives, iPods, online storage, cell phones, smart watches, web sites, etc.

J. Accessing inappropriate material from websites or attempting to bypass the Internet filter to access web sites that have been blocked (Examples: information that is violent; illegal; satanic; sexual; demeaning; racist; inflammatory; and/or categorized as a social networking, blogging, or journaling sites that are not pre-approved by the Technology Department)

K. Sending, displaying, playing or downloading offensive messages, audio, video or pictures

L. Using obscene, racist, profane, discriminatory, threatening, or inflammatory language in a document, email, web site, chat etc.

M. Using a digital camera, camera phone, or any other device capable of storing a still or video image to take inappropriate, harassing, and/or embarrassing pictures

N. Editing or modifying digital pictures with the intent to embarrass, harass or bully is prohibited

O. Participating in unsupervised or non-instructional chats without the permission/supervision of an adult staff member

P. Posting any false or damaging information about other people, the school system, or other organizations

Q. Posting of any personal information as defined previously in this document

R. Broadcasting network messages, documents, photos or participating in sending/perpetuating chain letters

S. Violating any copyright laws

T. Plagiarism of materials

U. Use of technology resources to create illegal materials (i.e. counterfeit money, fake identification, etc.)

V. Use of any Walker County Schools Technology resource for personal gain, commercial or political purposes of any type

W. Accessing any website or other resource by falsifying information

X. Downloading games or playing games on-line that are not instructional in nature

Y. Streaming video or audio not related to the core business of the School System

Z. Students may not make any electronic recordings of any type without prior approval and permission from an administrator or the classroom teacher, this includes but is not limited to audio, video, documents, photos, text chats etc.

### **Walker County Schools: Email, Text Messaging , and Social Networking Guidelines**

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure the proper use of Walker County Schools' email and Internet communication systems and to make users aware of what Walker County Schools deems as acceptable and unacceptable use of its email and Internet communication systems. We reserve the right to amend these guidelines as necessary. In case of revisions, users will be informed by email, by posting on the District Technology web page, through professional development, at faculty meetings, grade level meetings, or department meeting, assemblies, in class, and/or by other means deemed appropriate by the administration.

#### **Email**

##### **Legal Risks**

Email is a school business or educational communication tool, and users are obliged to use this tool in a responsible, effective, and lawful manner. Although by its nature email seems to be less formal than other written communication, the same laws apply. Any email is discoverable in a due process situation or other legal action. In addition, any email exchanged by a school system employee is public record. Other legal risks of email for Walker County Schools and/or their network users include the following:

- sending emails with any libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene remarks;
- forwarding emails with any libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene remarks;
- forwarding confidential information;
- forwarding or copying messages without permission or implied permission; and/or knowingly sending an attachment that contains a virus that severely affects another network.

By following the guidelines in this document, the email user can minimize the legal risks involved in the use of email. If any user disregards the rules set out in these guidelines, the user will be fully liable and Walker County Schools will disassociate itself from the user as far as legally possible. Do not send or forward emails containing libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene remarks. If you receive an email containing libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene remarks, promptly notify your supervisor.

- Use caution if you forward a message without implied permission or without acquiring permission from the sender first, especially if it contains sensitive or personal information.
- Do not forge or attempt to forge email messages.
- Do not send email messages using another person's or a bogus email account.

- Do not copy a message or attachment belonging to another user without the permission or implied permission of the originator
- Do not disguise or attempt to disguise your identity when sending email

### Best Practices

Walker County Schools considers email as an important means of communication and recognizes the importance of proper email content and of speedy replies in conveying a professional image and in delivering good customer service. The use of email in education, however, is proliferating and the precise legal issues regarding appropriate use are yet to be determined. We are confident that:

- Any email pertaining to a particular student is discoverable in a due process situation or other legal action.
- Any email exchanged by school system employees about individual students is public record.
- The nature of email lends itself to impulsive, overly informal, and sometimes unprofessional communication.
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Therefore Walker County Schools urges users to adhere to the following guidelines:

### **Guidance On Email Between School Employees And Parents/Guardians**

Examples of generally appropriate use of email between school employees and parents/guardians:

- Teachers invite parents to provide email addresses and then send out emails to those addresses reporting on classroom activities, projects, and assignments. These messages are generic and do not refer to specific students.
- Teachers may initiate or respond to email from a parent or guardian about a specific child, exchanging objective not subjective information such as the student's attendance, participation, homework, and performance in class.

Examples of **inappropriate** use of email between school employees and parents/guardians:

- Using email to report serious problems regarding individual students.
- Using email to discuss confidential and sensitive matters, including:
  - Medical/psychiatric/psychological diagnoses and treatments.
  - Contents of special education and/or Section 504 evaluations, intervention plans, IEPs, 504 plans, disciplinary matters.
  - Family problems and other sensitive family information.
- Using, in email, language that is subjective, judgmental, unprofessional, pejorative, and/or labeling.

Examples:

- o “Have you considered that Johnny might have ADHD?”
- o “Overall, I think that Johnny is unmotivated/lazy.”
- o “I don’t think there is anything wrong with Johnny except his negative attitude.”

Email between teachers and parents should be positive and/or general in nature when possible. Discussions involving serious problems and any and all protected information (medical, psychological, psychiatric, Special Education, and Section 504, and disciplinary matters) should occur in person or by telephone.

Parents may initiate **inappropriate** email exchanges. Example:

“Johnny is in your American History class and is failing. His father is an alcoholic and we are divorced. Johnny has ADHD and clinical depression. Can you please tell me how he is doing in your class and what I can do to help him?”

The teacher should reply to the email deleting everything from the body of the email sent by the parent, responding with directions about how the teacher can be reached by telephone or in person.

### **Guidance On Email Between School Employees Concerning Students**

Examples of generally appropriate use of email between school employees:

- Emails which provide positive information, objective comments, and/or neutral information regarding school performance. In other words, conducting straight-forward business, staying away from sensitive and confidential areas.

Examples of **inappropriate** use of email between school employees:

- Using email to report on serious problems regarding individual students.
- Using email to discuss confidential and sensitive matters, including:
  - Medical/psychiatric/psychological diagnoses and treatments.
  - Contents of special education and/or Section 504 evaluations, intervention plans, IEPs, 504 plans, disciplinary matters.
  - Family problems and other sensitive family information.
- Using, in email, language that is subjective, judgmental, unprofessional, pejorative, and/or labeling.

Examples:

- “I think Johnny has ADHD.”
- “Overall, I think that Johnny is unmotivated/lazy.”
- “I don’t think there is anything wrong with Johnny except his negative attitude.”
- “I think this child’s problem is his home life.”

Discussions involving severe problems, subjective comments, and any and all protected information (medical, psychological, psychiatric, Special Education, and Section 504, and

disciplinary matters) should occur in person or by telephone.

General **Best Practices** involving all email are as follows:

**Writing emails:**

- Use short, descriptive Subject: lines.
- Avoid lengthy, detailed email messages. Consider using an attachment for “How To” information, directions, procedures, processes, or similar types of information.
- Avoid unnecessary attachments or large file attachments such as multiple pictures, mini movies, etc. AVOID USING ALL CAPITALS.
- If using cc or bcc feature, take steps to inform the cc or bcc recipient of any action expected unless the action is explicit in the email. The bcc option is often used to avoid revealing recipient email addresses to the entire group receiving the email; otherwise, the bcc option should be used sparingly if at all.
- If you forward emails, state clearly what action you expect the recipient to take.
- Use the spell checker before you send out an email.
- If the content of an email is not of a public nature,
  - Only mark emails as important if they really are important.
  - Consider using another form of communication or protect the information by using a password.
- Only mark emails as important if they really are important.

**Replying to emails:**

- Emails should be answered within 24 hours, and at minimum employees are expected to check email at least once per day.
- Responses should not reveal confidential information and should be professional.

**Newsgroups/ListSers:**

- Users should exercise caution before subscribing to a listserv, newsletter or news group. This type of email may be overwhelming and cancelling a newsgroup and/or newsletter subscription is often difficult if not unsuccessful. These are broadcasted emails, this means everyone who is is member will get a copy of what you send to the group. Properly used they can be great tools when one needs to send information to the masses and have them respond accordingly.

**Maintenance:**

- Delete emails that are not needed for later use.
- Print email messages required for documentation.
- Messages in the Deleted Items folder will be automatically deleted after 30 days

- If you wish to keep something but remove it from view use the Archive feature.
- Google sets your storage quota for your account its currently at 30GB. Failure to stay at or below the quota will result in the user being unable to send or receive email or save files.
- Avoid responding to request in emails that could be “phishing” attempts.
- Avoid opening attachments that are suspicious or mass forwarding virus hoaxes.
- Check with the technology staff when in doubt of the suspicious nature of emails.

**AT NO POINT** should you respond to a request on the phone or electronically to a request for a password or any other personal data unless you are the person who initiated the call. This includes credit cards, debit cards, social security information, and student information. If you have doubts tell them you will call them back, do not use the website or number they give you. Call to the previously known number or send to the previously known email.

### **Electronic Social Networking, Instant Messaging including Texting, etc.**

Electronic social networking and/or instant messaging, such as but not limited to Twitter, IM, or texting, among staff and students is a particularly sensitive matter in a time when growing numbers of school employees maintain social networking accounts, email extensively in their personal lives, and are accustomed to using instant messaging services.

An absolute prohibition of communicating electronically with students seems excessive. On the other hand, teachers and school staff must maintain the highest standards should they choose to interact with students through electronic media. Below are some typical situations on which employees might need guidance.

Guidelines below are presented in a Q&A format.

Q: Is it ok for me to initiate electronic communications with a student?

A: If a teacher initiates overly personal contact with students outside of school, whether in person or electronically, he or she may create an impression of an unhealthy interest in that student’s personal life and may leave himself or herself open to an accusation of inappropriate conduct. Therefore, caution should be exercised in this type of communication

Q: What if I receive an email or other electronic message such as a text from a student?

A: This very much depends on the nature of the communication received. We would strongly discourage any use of texting, instant messaging or “chat”-type communication with students for purposes other than school related communications. If a communication is received which appears to be a social greeting, you might do best just to acknowledge it in an appropriate way at school. A very brief acknowledging electronic response might be appropriate in some circumstances. However, it is perfectly OK not to respond to such greetings. If you choose to not respond, making an extra effort to cheerfully greet the student at school might be appropriate.

If a student sends a message with disturbing content, you should discuss this with your administrator or supervisor, including a school counselor in the discussion as needed. If a student sends a message that appears to suggest an emergency (an allegation of abuse or a student sharing suicidal thoughts or plans), try to contact your administrator or supervisor at once.

Q: What about Facebook accounts or other social networking sites? Should I respond to an invitation to become a student's "Friend"?

A: We recommend that you not engage in online social networking with students unless the site is used for school information or academic reasons only. This would only be an issue, of course, if you choose to maintain a Facebook, Google+ or a similar type service. If you do so, we recommend that you be extremely cautious about the content of your profiles and pages. If you are strictly using a social networking site for school related topics and stay away from personal content then these sites should be treated much like any other educational blog. However, the use of comments, "writing on walls," and so on, would be likely to lead to major problems if an approval process is not in place before posting. You may find that it is easier to simply tell your students that you have a policy not to accept students as "friends."

## **General Email and Communication Information**

### Virus Protection and Filtering

Incoming and outgoing emails sent to or received from Walker County Schools' emails and other communications are scanned for viruses, spam, and content. However, users are expected to exercise caution when opening emails from unknown users or when using the web-based email client from home computers. Emails may be blocked if the message size is over 25Mb or if there are suspicious attachments.

### System Monitoring

Users must have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send or receive on the Walker County Schools' computer system. All communication can be monitored without prior notification if Walker County Schools deems this necessary. If there is evidence that users are not adhering to the guidelines set out in this policy, Walker County Schools reserves the right to take disciplinary action, including termination and/or legal action.

### Email/Communication Service Accounts

Email/Communication Service Accounts are assigned to employees and approved students when they have read and signed they have acknowledged they have an understanding of the Walker County Schools Acceptable Use Agreement. All accounts maintained on the Walker

County email and Internet communication systems are property of Walker County Schools. Walker County Schools maintains student accounts, employee accounts and employee-sponsored accounts. Passwords should not be given to other people and should be changed if the user believes his/her password is no longer secure. Accounts are archived immediately when a user retires, resigns, or leaves the school system. Archived accounts may be deleted after 6 months for storage purposes. Only Walker County Schools employees and approved students are given accounts. Upon request by the administration, Walker County Schools employee sponsored accounts, such as PTA accounts, may be created if approved by the Technology Department. Employee-sponsored accounts are subject to these guidelines and it is the responsibility of the sponsoring employee to educate the user of this and all other relevant technology-related policies and guidelines. All accounts are a privilege that is granted by the Technology Department, at any time the Technology Department can lock or terminate accounts.

### Electronic Communications for Personal Use

Students are not allowed personal electronic communications. Walker County Schools' email and Internet communication systems is meant for school business. However, Walker County Schools allows the reasonable use of email for personal use for staff only if certain guidelines are adhered to:

- Personal use of electronic communications systems should not interfere with work.
- Personal communications must also adhere to the guidelines in this policy and are subject to that same monitoring as other communications.
- Personal communications should be deleted regularly so as not to clog up the system.
- The forwarding of chain letters, junk mail, inappropriate jokes and executables is strictly forbidden.
- Do not send personal mass mailings.
- Do not send any communications for personal gain, to solicit business for friends, family, etc., or for political purposes.
- All messages distributed via the school system's email and Internet communication systems, even personal communications, are Walker County Schools' property.

### **General Webpage/Web Publishing Guidelines**

Walker County Schools (WCS) web pages are developed for curriculum and instructional use, school-authorized activities, or information about the Walker County School District or its purpose.

- Text, graphics, audio, and/or video posted on any web based page such as but not limited to web pages, wikis, on-line journals, blogs, twitter sites, Moodle pages, glogs, voice threads, etc, qualify as "web pages."
- Web pages, pictures, and/or video/audio must adhere to Walker County Schools Acceptable Use Agreement.



- WCS web pages cannot be used for profit, or commercial, or political purposes. All posted work must be of publishable quality with regard to spelling, usage, and mechanics. All web page authors are responsible for the maintenance of their own pages, including, but not limited to, adding new content, updating existing content, and deleting outdated content.
- All links should be checked regularly to make sure they are current and working. Pages that are not updated in a timely fashion, that contain inaccurate or inappropriate information, that violate copyright laws, or that contain links which do not work will be removed. The author will be notified.
- Unfinished pages should not be posted until they are fully functional.
- Staff and/or student work may be published only as it relates to a class project, course, or other school-related activity.
- Written permission is obtained from the student and guardian via the Technology Resource Agreement before posting student work on the Internet.
- No student's personal information, including but not limited to, phone numbers, email addresses, or mailing addresses may be posted on WCS web pages.
- Staff is prohibited from linking to personal blogs, journals and/or personal web pages from class or organization web pages and should post and use school-sponsored electronic communication accounts for communicating with students and/or parents.
- Web pages are subject to approval by the district Technology Director, local school technology coordinator, and building principal and must adhere to the regulations and restrictions established by WCS.
- Work must be of publishable quality in regard to correct spelling, usage, mechanics, etc.
- Each school's main page, at a minimum, should include the school's name, address, phone number, fax number, and a link to Walker County School Districts main page.
- Each web page should contain a link back to the previous level in the school's site, and a link to the site's main navigation page.
- Pages that contain time-sensitive information, such as calendars, school events, staff information, etc., should be updated regularly.
- Unauthorized use of copyrighted material is prohibited.
- Web page counters may be added on a site only if an "invisible" counter type and approved the technology department.
- Links to sites that are not accessible inside the network (blocked by school filter) should not be used.
- The District technology staff and/or Local School Technology Coordinator may remove any web page(s) or content that is deemed inappropriate.
- "Guest books," "chat areas," "message boards," or similar tools must have curriculum value and should be evaluated by and approved by the district Technology Coordinator and/or local school Technology Coordinator prior to use.

### **Technical Web Publishing Guidelines**

- Pages should be sized so they will display properly in a variety of screen resolutions. Pages should be previewed and tested at least at "800 x 600," and "1024 x 768".
- Regular text entries on web pages should be limited to the standard fonts.
- Avoid color schemes or backgrounds that make the information on the page hard to read.
- Colors should be "web safe" as much as possible, so they will display.
- Photos should be sized and named appropriately. Photos should be in .jpeg format. .Png files should not be posted.
- Graphics should be used judiciously, verify all graphics are appropriate and all photo credits and waivers are in place before posting.
- Photo albums that are larger than 12 photos should be created using an appropriate web page tool.
- The publisher may be asked to or a school or school system webmaster may remove these albums at anytime if space becomes an issue. If a publisher is unsure of the location for storing photo albums, he/she should consult his/her technology coordinator.
- Animated GIF files should be used very sparingly and need to be relatively small. The amount, size, and type of graphics used have the most direct effect on the "load time" of web pages.
- Video and audio files may be used when they are appropriate and are compressed properly. They are generally large files that take long "load times" for the user, and many times require some users (non-district networked machines) to have special plug-ins or viewers/players, in order to view or hear the files. So keep that in mind when using these type files.
- Web Pages should be easy to navigate and quick to load. Paths of information should be clearly defined, while allowing for non-sequential browsing.
- Web pages should not be overcrowded.
- Full screen images and multiple images should be avoided whenever possible.
- Web Page content and links should be checked and updated frequently.

### **Guidelines for Publishing Student Information**

- Individual students may be identified by full name unless permission to do so is denied by the parent or guardian in writing on the Technology Usage Agreement form. Full names may be used in reporting student participation in school sponsored extracurricular activities, achievements, and other positive recognitions.
- Group photographs of students may be identified by the group name.
- Student photos or videos of students may be posted on the web with parent or guardian permission as indicated on the Technology Resource Agreement.
- No other personally identifying information about a student is allowed, such as email

address, phone number, home address, etc.

- Walker County Schools reserves the right to publish the above in written or digital format through local, state or national media for the purpose of promoting the district or the accomplishments of our employees and students.

## **Copyright Guidelines**

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure all staff and students in the Walker County School System are aware of and adhere to the provisions of the copyright law (Title 17, United States Code). We reserve the right to amend/modify these guidelines as necessary. In the case of revisions, staff and students will be informed appropriately.

### General Information

Copyright regulations pertain to all types of materials including print and nonprint.

The “Copyright and Fair Use Guidelines for Teachers” chart available online may be used to inform staff and students of what is permissible under the law.

The four criteria of fair use for copyrighted works are these:

1. The purpose and character of the use of the work (whether the use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes).
2. The nature of the copyrighted work (factual work versus fictitious work).
3. The amount and substantiality (extent) of the portion used in relationship to the copyrighted work as a whole (quantity and quality of portion used).
4. The effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

Teachers and staff are responsible for copyright compliance for themselves and for their students in their students' assigned work.

### Multimedia

Multimedia refers to the combining of different types of media, including, but not limited to, text, music, film, digitized images, and graphics. Teachers and students must follow copyright guidelines for each type of media used in creating a multimedia production or project. In addition to listing all of their sources in a concluding bibliography, authors must include on the opening screen a statement that the presentation contains copyrighted material which has been used under the fair use exemption of the U. S. Copyright Law. Students may use their own multimedia projects that contain copyrighted material only in the class or course for which they were created. An educator is required to obtain permission for each portion of copyrighted material after two years of fair use.

## Web Publishing

The fair use provisions of the Copyright Law do not extend to Web publishing. Written permission from the owner of each piece of copyrighted material must be obtained before any work is published on the Internet. Information about obtaining permission is available from local school media specialists.

## Student Work

Written permission must be obtained from the student and parent before posting student work on the Internet via the Technology Usage Agreement form or signed note.

## Citations

Examples of bibliographic citations for use in Walker County Schools are based on MLA format and are available in each school and online.

Davidson, Hall. "Copyright and Fair Use Guidelines for Teachers." October 2002. Technology and Learning. 30 June 2003 <[http://halldavidson.net/copyright\\_chart.pdf](http://halldavidson.net/copyright_chart.pdf)>.

## **Electronics Purchasing and Disposal Guidelines**

This procedure is intended to provide for the proper purchasing and disposal of technology-related electronic equipment (including but not limited to computers, televisions, printers, monitors, fax machines, copiers, cell phones, data projector bulbs, copiers, etc.) hereafter referred to as electronic equipment. For further clarification of the term "technology-related electronic equipment," contact the Walker County Schools' (WCS) district Technology Director.

### Purchasing Guidelines

All electronic equipment that will be used in conjunction with Walker County Schools' technology resources or purchased, regardless of funding, should be purchased from a District Technology Coordinator approved list or District Technology Coordinator. Failure to have the purchase approved may result in lack of technical support or denied access to other technology resources.

All electronic equipment is subject to Alabama bid laws.

### Disposal Guidelines

Equipment should be considered for disposal for the following reasons:

- End of useful life
- Lack of continued need
- Obsolescence
- Wear, damage, or deterioration
- Excessive cost of maintenance or repair

The local school principal, Technology Director, and the Director of Finance must approve school disposals by discard or donation. Written documentation including Fixed Asset number, description, and serial number must be provided to the district Technology Office using the appropriate form.

### Methods of Disposal

Once equipment has been designated and approved for disposal, it should be handled according to one of the following methods. It is the responsibility of the local school to modify the appropriate Fixed Asset Form to reflect any in-school transfers, in-district transfers, donations, or discards. The district technology staff is responsible for modifying the appropriate Fixed Asset Form to reflect any transfers within the central offices, transfers of central office electronic equipment to local schools, central office donations, or central office discards.

#### *Transfer/Redistribution*

If the equipment has not reached the end of its estimated life, an effort should be made to redistribute the equipment to locations where it can be of use, first within an individual school or office, and then within the district. Service requests may be entered to have the equipment moved and reinstalled and, in the case of computer equipment, to have it re-imaged and re-installed.

#### *Discard*

All electronic equipment in the Walker County Schools district must be discarded in a manner consistent with applicable environmental regulations. Electronic equipment may contain hazardous materials such as mercury, lead, and hexavalent chromium

Before equipment can be discarded it will need to be reported to the Technology Director for proper instruction of disposal.

Under no circumstances should any electronic equipment be placed in the trash. Doing so may make Walker County Schools and/or the employee who disposed of the equipment liable for violating environmental regulations or laws.

#### *Donation*

If the equipment is in good working order, but no longer meets the requirements of the site where it is located, and cannot be put into use in another part of a school or system, it may be donated upon the written request of the receiving public school system's superintendent or non-profit organization's director.

It should be made clear to any school or organization receiving donated equipment that WCS is not agreeing to and is not required to support or repair any donated equipment. It is donated AS IS. WCS staff should make every effort before offering donated equipment, to make sure that it is in good condition and can be re-used. Software licenses are not transferable outside the Walker County School system.

Donations are prohibited to individuals outside of the school system or to current faculty, staff, or students of Walker County Schools. All donations and/or sales must be approved by the Finance Director and Technology Director.

#### Required Documentation and Procedures

For purchases, transfers and redistributions, donations, and disposal of technology-related equipment, it is the responsibility of the appropriate staff member to create/update the Fixed Asset Form to include previous location, new school and/or room location, and to check the appropriate boxes for transfer or disposal information. When discarding equipment, remove the fixed asset tag from the equipment and attach it to the fixed asset form. Copies of the forms should be sent to the local school bookkeeper or designated district level bookkeeper and a spreadsheet sent to the district technology office including all relevant information so that items can be digitally removed from the network servers.

When equipment is donated, a copy of the letter requesting the equipment should be on-file with the District Fixed Assets office prior to the donation.

Any equipment that is being donated must be completely wiped of all data. This step will not only ensure that no confidential information is released, but also will ensure that no software licensing violations will inadvertently occur. For non-sensitive machines, all hard drives should be fully wiped using a wiping program approved by the district technology office, followed by a manual scan of the drive to verify that zeros were written.

Remove any re-usable hardware that is not essential to the function of the equipment that can be used as spare parts: special adapter cards, memory, hard drives, zip drives, CD drives, etc.

All disposals that are not redistributions, transfers, or donations must be reported to the Technology Director for instructions on pick-up date. Equipment should be stored in a central location prior to pick-up. Summary forms must be turned into district technology office and approved by the Fixed Asset Department prior to the scheduled "pick up" day. Mice, keyboards,

and other small peripherals may be boxed together and should not be listed on summary forms.

### **Questions**

If you have any questions or comments about these guidelines, please contact your principal or immediate supervisor. If you do not have any questions Walker County Schools presume that you understand and are aware of the rules and guidelines and will adhere to them.