

Technology Environment Guidelines

Sheffield City Schools

MISSION:

The mission of Sheffield City School System is to collaborate with families and community members to produce graduates prepared for success through innovative, rigorous, student-centered learning experiences and high expectations for all.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The primary goal of the technology environment is to support the educational and instructional endeavors of students and employees of Sheffield City Schools. Use of any and all technology resources is a privilege and not a right.

INTRODUCTION:

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 Sheffield City Schools to provide all students and employees with access to a variety of technology resources. All Sheffield City 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, consistent with the Mission Statement and instructional goals of Sheffield City Schools. 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 Sheffield City Schools that all technology resources will 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 Sheffield City 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 will be responsible for establishing specific practices to enforce this policy at individual schools.

Some of these policies pertain to technology equipment personally owned by school employees and students and brought into school facilities. All personal technologies used on any Sheffield City 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.

All electronic content stored on any external storage medium or personal off-site storage location that is brought to or accessed from a Sheffield City Schools 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, the Chief Technology Officer should be notified immediately.

Any questions about this policy, its interpretation, or specific circumstances shall be directed to the Chief Technology Officer before proceeding.

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

Sheffield City Schools Technology department issues further specific guidelines detailing appropriate and legal use of copyright, email, technology resource purchasing and disposal, web page creation, 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 Sheffield City Board of Education Technology Usage Policy. Students and staff are expected to be aware of and follow the guidelines which are updated annually on the Sheffield City web site Technology page and referenced in the teacher handbook and the Student Code of Conduct booklet. Additionally, training will be provided to staff and students.

I. ACCESS:

- A.** The use of all Sheffield City 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 Sheffield City Schools' technology must be aware that Sheffield City 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 that reduces the efficiency of use for others will be considered a violation of this policy.
- F.** Individuals must not attempt to disrupt any computer services or data by engaging in inappropriate activities. Examples include, but are not limited to, spreading viruses, spamming, excess network and/or Internet activity, or modification of equipment or infrastructure.
- G.** Individuals must not attempt to modify technology resources, utilities, and configurations, or change the restrictions associated with his/her accounts, or attempt to breach any technology resources security system or filtering system, either with or without malicious intent.
- H.** Personal technology-related devices such as, but not limited to laptops, PDAs, smart-phones, iPods, etc. used on school grounds are subject to all items covered in this policy and other applicable published guidelines. The user should not access local area network or wide area network resources without the explicit permission of the technology staff. Public Internet access is available 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 Chief Technology Officer, local school Technology Leader 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, local School Technology Leader 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 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 Sheffield City 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 penetration 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.** Sheffield City 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 Sheffield City Schools cannot ensure that such security will not be penetrated or breached and cannot assume any liability arising out of any such penetration or 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 Sheffield City Schools. Any such unauthorized usage shall be reported immediately to the local School Technology Leader and/or the Chief Technology Officer.
- 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, 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 back up their critical files and data.

IV. COPYRIGHT:

- A.** Illegal copies of software may not be created or used on school equipment.
- B.** Any questions about copyright provisions should be directed to the Chief Technology Officer, local school Technology Leader, or local school media specialist.
- C.** Legal and ethical practices of appropriate use of technology resources will be taught to students and employees in the system (i.e. as part of the Technology Education Curriculum, during lab orientation, network orientation, or faculty meetings, etc). Again, all questions regarding legal and ethical practices of appropriate use should be directed to the local school Technology Leader and/or Chief Technology Officer.
- 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 is prohibited unless specifically allowed in the license agreement and, then, should occur only under the supervision and direction of the technology staff.
- F.** A backup copy of all purchased software programs should be made and, thus, become the working copy.
- G.** All original copies of software programs, including those purchased with departmental funds, will be stored in a secure place.
- H.** For security and insurance purposes, the local school Technology Leaders, technology aides, and/or the district level technology staff will be the only people with access to original software disks at a given school location, with the exception of CD-ROMs required when accessing the program. System-wide software originals will be housed at the Chief Technology Officer's office.
- I.** In almost every case, if a single copy of a 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 Chief Technology Officer and/or local Technology Leader and the person requesting the software will be responsible for determining how many copies should be purchased.

- K.** The Chief Technology Officer, Superintendent or Principal is authorized to sign license agreements for a school within the system. Copies of any system-wide license agreements must be signed by the Chief Technology Officer and/or Superintendent and distributed to all schools that will use the software.
- L.** The district technology staff or local Technology Leader is responsible for installation of all software in use on the wide area network, local area network and/or individual workstations/laptops within Sheffield City Schools. Technology lab aides or other designated staff may install software on local workstations with permission by the Chief Technology Officer and/or local school Technology Leader.
- M.** Written permission to post student work on the internet is obtained through Sheffield City School Technology Usage Agreement.

V. EMAIL:

- A.** Sheffield City Schools will provide access to email accounts for all employees, and long-term substitutes. Email accounts may be granted for school related organizations or classes with designated employee sponsors.
- B.** Sheffield City Schools uses Google Apps for email. The retention for email is based on Google standards.
- C.** Technical support is provided for Sheffield City 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 Sheffield City Schools' policy and/or adversely affect others or the speed of the network.
- E.** Use of Sheffield City Schools' email accounts for harassing or threatening is strictly prohibited.
- F.** Sheffield City Schools' email accounts may not be used for political activity, personal gain, commercial purposes, or profit.
- G.** When employing email, all employees are responsible for maintaining professionalism at all times. Avoid impulsive and informal communication. Employees 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.** Sheffield City Schools' email accounts may not be used for attempting to send or sending anonymous messages.
- I.** Sheffield City Schools' email accounts may not be used for sending mass emails unless to parent lists or for other for educational purposes.
- J.** Sheffield City 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 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 no Google imposed limit on storage for email accounts.
- M.** Users through Google Apps will also have access to a cloud drive for storage of documents.
- N.** The technology staff, Sheffield City Schools' administrative staff, or Sheffield City Board of Education do not support or advocate the use of email archives due to the Google Mail storage capacity.
- O.** Incoming and outgoing email is filtered by the Google for inappropriate content. However, no filtering system is foolproof, and material deemed inappropriate by individual users may be transmitted in spite of filtering. Sheffield City Schools cannot assume any liability for such breaches of the filter.
- P.** Email accounts will automatically expire on the last full day of employment.
- Q.** At the discretion of the Chief Technology Officer or Superintendent, email accounts may be locked without notice.

VI. INTERNET USE:

- A.** The intent of Sheffield City 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 Chief Technology Officer.
- 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.

VII. WEB PUBLISHING:

- A.** The Sheffield City Schools' web site is limited to usage associated with activities of Sheffield City Schools. The web site cannot be used for profit, for commercial purposes, to express personal opinions, or to editorialize.
- B.** The Technology Staff reserves the right to reject all or part of a proposed or posted web page.
- C.** All pages posted on the Sheffield City Schools' web site must be designed/written with approved software.
- D.** It must be easy to determine the name or title of the person responsible for the content on each web page or sections of web pages housed on Sheffield City Schools' website.
- E.** A staff member's primary web page should be housed on Sheffield City Schools' web site.
- F.** Links from pages housed on Sheffield City Schools' website to personal blogs, social networking sites, advertisements unrelated to school system business, and/or personal web pages are prohibited.
- G.** Student pictures or other personally identifiable information can be used in accordance with the signed "Sheffield City Schools Technology Usage Agreement" and in accordance with FERPA guidelines.
- H.** Student posting of personally identifying information of any kind on Sheffield City website or linking to personal information from the Sheffield City website is prohibited. Personally identifying information includes home and/or school address, work address, home and/or school phone numbers, full name, social security number, etc.
- I.** Individual students may be identified by first name and first letter of last name unless permission to do so is denied by the parent or guardian in writing on the Technology Resource Agreement form. Full names, for secondary students only, may only be used in reporting student participation in school sponsored extracurricular activities, achievements, and other positive recognitions.
- J.** Caution should be used when photographs of any students are included on web pages. Group photographs without names are preferred for all students. In some cases, use of first names, last initial is appropriate for secondary students. Photographs of individual secondary students, with full names, may be used to recognize student achievements, and other positive recognitions.
- K.** No written permission is required to list faculty/staff and their school contact information (phone extension, email address, etc.)

- L. Permission for publishing employee photographs on the Sheffield City website is assumed unless the employee specifies otherwise in writing to his or her direct supervisor.
- M. Infringement of copyright laws, obscene, harassing or threatening materials on web sites are against the law and are subject to prosecution.

VIII. 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" 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 Sheffield City Schools' network, email system, hardware, software, technology service, and/or Internet access:

- A. Using another user's password or attempting to discover another user's password.
- 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 teacher-specified and approved location.
- E. Downloading, installing, or copying software of any kind onto a workstation, laptop, home directory, or any network drive (except for approved updates).
- F. Harassing, insulting, embarrassing, or attacking others via technology resources.
- G. Damaging any technology resources, including, but not limited to, printers, telephones, computers, computer systems, or computer networks (this includes changing workstation configurations such as screen savers, backgrounds, printers, BIOS information, preset passwords, etc.).
- H. Intentionally wasting limited resources such as Internet bandwidth, disk space and printing capacity.
- I. Accessing inappropriate material such as, but not limited to, digital cameras, flash drives, iPods, Yahoo Briefcase, cell phones, web sites, etc.
- J. Accessing inappropriate material from web sites 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 site, etc.).
- K. Sending, displaying, or downloading offensive messages or pictures.
- L. Using obscene, racist, profane, discriminatory, threatening, or inflammatory language in a document, email, etc.
- M. Using a digital camera, camera phone, or any other device capable of storing a still or video image to take inappropriate 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 on-line chat rooms 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.
- R. Broadcasting network messages or participating in sending/perpetuating chain letters.
- S. Violating copyright laws.
- T. Plagiarism of materials that are found on the Internet.
- U. Use of technology resources to create illegal materials (i.e. counterfeit money, fake identification, etc.)
- V. Use of any Sheffield City Schools Technology resource for personal gain, commercial or political purposes.
- W. Accessing any website or other resources by falsifying information.
- X. Downloading or accessing social media online.
- Y. Streaming video or audio not related to the core business of the School System.

Sheffield City Schools

Email, Text Messaging, and Social Networking Guidelines

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure the proper use of Sheffield City Schools' email and Internet communication systems and to make users aware of what Sheffield City 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; and/or by other means deemed appropriate by the administration.

Email

Legal Risks

Email is a business 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 e-mail for Sheffield City 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 Sheffield City 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

Sheffield City 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 exchanged by school system employees about individual students is public record.
- Any email pertaining to a particular student is discoverable in a due process situation or other legal action.
- The nature of email lends itself to impulsive, overly informal, and sometimes unprofessional communication.

Therefore Sheffield City Schools urges users to adhere to the following guidelines:

Guidance for 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 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:
 - "Have you considered that Johnny might have ADHD?"
 - "Overall, I think that Johnny is unmotivated/lazy."
 - "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?"

That kind of message should be deleted and the teacher receiving it should call the parent who sent it. Alternately, the teacher could reply to it, deleting everything from the body of the email sent by the parent, and then respond with directions about how the teacher can be reached by telephone or in person.

Guidance for 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 straightforward 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
- 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, 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:

- Users should exercise caution before subscribing to a 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.
- Delete email messages in a timely manner
- Print email messages required for documentation.
- Messages in the Deleted Items folder will be automatically removed in 30 days according to Google standards. A more frequent manual deletion of items by the individual user is recommended.
- User deleted emails will be permanently purged according to Google standards.
- Messages in the Sent Items folder will be removed according to Google standards. A more frequent manual deletion of items by the individual user is recommended.
- Emails will remain in user accounts as long as they see fit.
- All email accounts are assigned a quota of unlimited amount of space.

Electronic Social Networking/Instant Messaging

Electronic social networking/instant messaging 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 IM from a student?

A: This very much depends on the nature of the communication received. We would strongly discourage any use of 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? 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, MySpace, or similar account. 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.

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 Information

Virus Protection and Filtering

Incoming and outgoing emails sent to or received from Sheffield City Schools' Google email accounts 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.

Incoming emails may be blocked if the message size is over 25 MB or if there are multiple attachments.

Disclaimer

Sheffield City Schools recommends that employees add a disclaimer to outgoing emails or automatically attach a disclaimer such as the one below to each email sent outside the school system.

“This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to which they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the system manager. Please note that any views or opinions presented in this email are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of Sheffield City Schools. Finally, the recipient should check this email and any attachments for the presence of viruses. The company accepts no liability for any damage caused by any virus transmitted by this email.”

System Monitoring

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

Email Accounts

Email accounts are assigned to new employees when their employment is approved by the Board of Education and when the new employee has read and signed the Sheffield City Schools Technology Usage Policy. All email accounts maintained on the Sheffield City email and Internet communication systems are property of Sheffield City Schools. Sheffield City maintains 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. Email accounts are deleted immediately when employees retire, resign, or leave the school system for a period of six months or more. Only Sheffield City employees are given email accounts. Upon request by the administration, Sheffield City employee sponsored accounts, such as PTA accounts, may be created. 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.

Electronic Communications for Personal Use

Although Sheffield City Schools’ email and Internet communication systems is meant for school business, Sheffield City Schools allows the reasonable use of email for personal use if certain guidelines are adhered to:

- Personal use of email should not interfere with work.
- Personal emails must also adhere to the guidelines in this policy.
- Personal emails 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 emails 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 emails, are Sheffield City Schools’ property.

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 Sheffield City Schools presume that you understand and are aware of the rules and guidelines and will adhere to them.

Sheffield City Schools

Web Page and Web Publishing Guidelines

General Webpage Guidelines

- Sheffield City Schools (SCS) web pages are developed for curriculum and instructional use, school-authorized activities, or information about the Sheffield City School District or its mission.
- Web pages must adhere to Sheffield City Schools Technology Usage Policy.
- SCS 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 must be obtained from the student and parent 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 SCS web pages. Students may not link to personal web pages from school project, club, athletic, class, or any other school sponsored web page.
- Staff are prohibited from linking to personal blogs, journals and/or personal web pages from class or organization web pages and should post school-sponsored email accounts for communicating with students and/or parents.
- Web pages are subject to approval by the Chief Technology Officer, local School Technology Leader, and building principal and must adhere to the regulations and restrictions established by Sheffield City Schools.
- 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 Sheffield City Schools District 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 navigational 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 by School Technology Leader.
- Links to sites that are not accessible inside the network (blocked by school filter) should not be used.

- The District technology staff and/or School Technology Leader 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 Chief Technology Officer and/or School Technology Leader prior to use.
- Student projects should be stored on an approved Sheffield City Schools web server.

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 "640 x 480," "800 x 600," and "1024 x 768".
- 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 properly in 256 colors.
- Avoid using white text or links (white is difficult to print).
- Photos should be sized and named appropriately. Photos should be in .jpeg format. .Png files should not be posted.
- Graphics should be used judiciously.
- Photo albums that are larger than 12 should be created using an appropriate web page tool and may be only stored on the designated Sheffield City Schools web server. 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 School Technology Leader.
- 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 affect 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.
- 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.

Publishing Student Information

- Individual students may be identified by first name and first letter of last name unless permission to do so is denied by the parent or guardian in writing on the Technology Resource Agreement form. Full names may only 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 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.

Sheffield City Schools

Copyright Guidelines

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure all staff and students in the Sheffield City 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 non-print. The "Copyright and Fair Use Guidelines for Teachers" chart should 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:

- The purpose and character of the use of the work (whether the use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes),
- The nature of the copyrighted work (factual work versus fictitious work),
- The amount and substantiality (extent) of the portion used in relationship to the copyrighted work as a whole (quantity and quality of portion used),
- 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. In addition to listing all 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 librarians.

Student Work

Written permission must be obtained from the student and parent before posting student work on the Internet.

Citations

Examples of bibliographic citations for use in Sheffield City 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>.

Sheffield City Schools

Electronics Purchasing and Disposal Guidelines

This procedure is intended to provide for the proper purchasing and disposal of technology-related electronic equipment (computers, televisions, printers, monitors, fax machines, copiers, etc.) hereafter referred to as electronic equipment. For further clarification of the term “technology related electronic equipment,” contact the Sheffield City Schools’ (SCS) Chief Technology Officer.

Purchasing Guidelines

All electronic equipment that will be used in conjunction with Sheffield City Schools’ technology resources or purchased, regardless of funding, should be purchased from an approved list or be approved by the Chief Technology Officer. 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.

All electronic equipment over \$500 should be inventoried in accordance with the Sheffield City Schools’ Finance Department guidelines using the on-line Fixed Asset Form. It is the responsibility of the Chief Technology Officer to inventory equipment used in the local school via the on-line Fixed Asset Form. The district technology staff is responsible for ensuring that any network equipment, file servers, or district computers, printers, etc. are inventoried using the on-line Fixed Asset Form.

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 and the Director of Finance must approve disposal by discard or donation. Written documentation including Fixed Asset number, description, and serial number must also 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 Technology Leader to modify the on-line Fixed Asset Form to reflect any in-school transfers, in-district transfers, donations, or discards. The district technology staff is responsible for modifying the on-line 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 reimaged and re-installed.



Discard

All electronic equipment in the Sheffield City 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. An average cathode ray tube found in a television or computer monitor may contain as much as three to six pounds of lead.

A district-approved vendor must be contracted for the disposal of all electronic equipment. The vendor must provide written documentation verifying the method used for disposal and a certificate stating that no data of any kind can be retrieved from the hard drive or any other component capable of storing data.

Under no circumstances should any electronic equipment be placed in the trash. Doing so may make Sheffield City 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, 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 SCS is not agreeing to and is not required to support or repair any donated equipment. It is donated AS-IS.

SCS staff should make every effort before offering donated equipment, to make sure that it is in good condition and can be re-used. Microsoft licenses are not transferable outside Sheffield City School system.

Donations are prohibited to individuals outside of the school system or to faculty, staff, or students of Sheffield City Schools.

Required Documentation and Procedures

For purchases, transfers and redistributions, donations, and disposal of technology-related equipment, it is the responsibility of the appropriate technology team 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 to the district technology office.

When equipment is donated, a copy of the letter requesting the equipment should be on-file with the district technology office.

Any computer equipment that is being donated should 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 by writing zeros in all sectors, using a wiping program approved by the district technology office, followed by a manual scan of the drive to verify that zeros were written. If a machine was used to process confidential or sensitive data, a three step wiping process should be used, with the first step being a wiping pass using random bytes, the second step being a wiping pass using zero, and the third step being a computation of a 64 bit checksum, with a requirement that the resulting value of the checksum being zero.

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.

A district-approved vendor **MUST** handle all disposals that are not redistributions, transfers, or donations. The district technology office will fund a maximum of three “pick-ups” per year. Equipment must be stored in a central location. Summary forms must be turned into district technology office and approved by the Finance Director 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.

Sheffield City Schools Technology Usage Agreement

Parents/Students:

Students may not be allowed computer access until this form has been completed, signed, and returned. If you have any specific questions regarding the policy, please contact the Chief Technology Officer or school principal. The complete text of the Sheffield City Schools' Technology policy can be found in the Technology page of the District webpage at: [Technology Environment Guidelines](#)

School: _____

Grade: _____

Last Name: _____

From time to time, your child's school may wish to publish examples of student projects, group photographs, or student recognitions on the Sheffield City Schools' various websites. A student's personal information will NOT be published on the Sheffield City Schools' web sites. Pictures used on the Sheffield City Schools' web sites may include but are not limited to students when they are involved in projects, sports, when they are in large groups, or when they receive recognition. Selected school materials to be published on the web could include: art work, written papers, videos, class projects and/or computer projects.

Students:

I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to all terms in the Sheffield City Schools' Technology Usage Policy as outlined in the Sheffield City Schools' Policy Manual. I further understand that, as a user on the Sheffield City Schools' network, I am responsible for appropriate behavior when using any Sheffield City Schools' technology resource.

I understand that any or all of the following disciplinary actions could be imposed if I break any of the rules in the policy:

- loss of access to any technology resources such as but not limited to computers, printers, the Internet, and/or video equipment;
- additional disciplinary action determined as appropriate at a specific school by school staff; and/or
- legal action, when applicable.

I also understand that this agreement will be binding during my entire career at my current school.

Student Name printed

Student Signature:

Parent/Guardian:

- | | Yes | No |
|--|-----|-----|
| ➤ My child may use the Internet while at school according to the rules outlined in the Sheffield City Schools Technology Environment Guidelines. | ___ | ___ |
| ➤ My child's picture may be published on the Internet and/or school websites. | ___ | ___ |
| ➤ My child's first name and last initial may be published on the Internet. | ___ | ___ |
| ➤ My child's selected school materials may be published on the Internet and /or school websites. | ___ | ___ |

Parent Name printed

Parent's Signature:

_____ Date _____