

Computer and Internet Acceptable Use Policy

The Athens City School System is pleased to offer employees access to a networked computer environment that provides access to a variety of instructional software, email, and to the Internet. A large and varied technological environment requires that technology be used legally, ethically, and consistently in ways that address the educational mission and goals of the school system. Access to technology resources is a privilege, not a right and may be revoked if abused.

The equipment, software, Internet bandwidth and data used by employees are expensive and vital assets of the school district and, therefore, the district has established rules that apply to use of technology resources and the Internet. Employees are expected to be familiar with this policy and agree to adhere to the contents prior to using any technology resources owned by the school district. Misuse of the school system's technology may subject employees to revoked computer usage, monetary charges to repair damaged equipment, and/or disciplinary action. Violation of civil and/or criminal law relating to technology and its use can result in criminal prosecution and/or civil liability.

Use of Equipment and E-mail

Computers and mobile devices, the system's e-mail system, the system's wired and wireless computer networks, and software furnished to employees are property intended for school-related use only. Although the school system is under no obligation to monitor email messages, to ensure compliance and acceptable use, computer, Internet, and e-mail usage may be monitored. The school district reserves the right to inspect, without notice, the contents of computer files, regardless of the medium, the contents of electronic mailboxes, and all digital files.

Care should be taken to protect the school system's equipment from damage. Equipment may not be removed from its location unless prior approval has been obtained from the Principal or the Coordinator of Technology Resources. Employees can be held financially responsible for any and all harm to the system's equipment and/or network as a result of misuse and/or intentional damage.

Employees are assigned a private network name and password that should be safeguarded. Employees are responsible for their individual account and should take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from accessing their network password. Under no conditions should the password be shared. The person in whose name an account/user ID is issued is responsible at all times for proper usage.

Employees have folders on the school system's network for data storage. Documents/files that are stored in the employee's folder on the network are backed up on a daily basis and can be retrieved for seven days from the date of the last backup. Documents are maintained in the user's account indefinitely, except in cases of catastrophic events, at which time the backup can

be retrieved from the last day of the seven day period. Employees may also occasionally be requested to reduce the storage space in the user account by deleting files.

Email is not backed up. Employees should not delete email messages from personal mailboxes. Messages are deleted every 30 days from the date the message is received by the network administrator. Employees wishing to keep email messages beyond 30 days must archive them on their computer.

Employees should not use a password, access files, or retrieve any stored data or communication without the proper authorization. Entrance into unauthorized areas will be construed as an illegal attempt to gain access.

Employees should not violate software licenses or copyright laws at any time while using school district equipment or network resources. Employees are responsible for producing proof of license for any software installed on their school-owned devices.

The Athens City School System strives to maintain a workplace free of harassment and is sensitive to the diversity of its employees. Therefore, the school system prohibits the use of computers, the network, and the e-mail system in ways that are disruptive, offensive to others, or harmful to morale. Examples include the display or transmission of sexually explicit images, messages, and cartoons. Other such misuse includes, but is not limited to, ethnic slurs, racial comments, off-color jokes, or anything that may be construed as harassment or showing disrespect for others.

E-mail may not be used to solicit others for the sale of personal items, commercial ventures, religious or political causes, outside organizations, or other non-school-related matters. Email messages should not be reposted without the permission of the person originating the message.

The school system does not guarantee the privacy, security, accuracy, truthfulness, or confidentiality of any information sent or received via the network.

Internet Usage

Internet access is provided to assist employees in obtaining work-related information and resources. The following guidelines have been established to help ensure responsible and productive Internet usage.

All Internet data that is composed, transmitted, or received via the school system's computer communications systems may be subject to disclosure to law enforcement or other third parties. Consequently, employees should always ensure that the information contained in e-mail messages and other transmissions are accurate, appropriate, ethical, and lawful.

The equipment, service, and technology provided to access the network remain, at all times, the property of the school system. As such, the school system reserves the right to monitor Internet

traffic, retrieve and read any data composed, sent, or received via the district's network and stored on the district's network or computers.

Data that is composed, transmitted, accessed, or received via the network must not contain content that could be considered discriminatory, offensive, obscene, threatening, harassing, intimidating, or disruptive to any employee or other person. Examples of unacceptable content may include, but are not limited to, sexual comments or images, racial slurs, gender-specific comments, or any other comments or images that could reasonably offend someone on the basis of race, age, sex, religious or political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by law.

The unauthorized use, installation, copying, or distribution of copyrighted, trademarked, or a patented material on the network or the Internet is expressly prohibited. As a general rule, if an employee did not create material, does not own the rights to it, or has not received authorization for its use, it should not be copied, downloaded, or put on the Athens City School System's Network or the Internet.

Although the computer network runs virus protection software, Internet users should take the necessary anti-virus precautions before downloading or copying any file from the Internet.

System resources should be safe guarded and should be used only for educational activities. Personal files, photos, and videos should not be stored on the district's network. Employees should download large files or videos at times when the system is not being heavily used and should remove the files from the system as soon as they are no longer needed. Employees shall not post chain letters or engage in "spamming".

Employees should treat professional social media space and communication like a classroom and/or a professional workplace. If a particular type of behavior is inappropriate in the classroom or a professional workplace, then that behavior is also inappropriate on the professional social media sites. Employees should exercise caution, sound judgment, and common sense when using professional social media sites.

Data Security

Employees are expected to follow all local, state and federal laws and system policy regarding the protection of student and staff confidential data. Users should take great care to protect computer generated reports that contain confidential student information.

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 the school district 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.

Employees are responsible for their individual network accounts and must take all reasonable precautions to prevent unauthorized access to accounts and data and any other unauthorized usage within and outside the Athens City School District. Individuals must take all reasonable

precautions to prevent any such unauthorized usage shall be reported immediately to the local school principal and/or the district technology director.

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.

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.

Use of Personal Devices at School

Personally owned devices used during school hours that are connected to the Athens City School District data network are to be used for academic purposes only. Participation in online gaming, downloading of large data files, viewing or listening to streaming media without educational value are examples of activities that are not allowed, even on personally owned devices, while connected to the school district's network.

Personally owned technology devices that are connected to the Athens City School District's data network are governed by the policies, procedures and guidelines outlined in this policy as well as any local, state, and federal laws. Technologies may not be used on the district's network that interfere with or adversely affect functions or operations of school system technology resources/infrastructure.

By connecting a mobile device to the Athens City School District data network, the school district reserves the right to enforce any security measures deemed necessary and to inspect, at any time, any personally owned device. These measures could result in the personal device being examined if there is believed to be a security breach.

The school district assumes no responsibility for the loss or damage of personal devices used at school and will not provide technical support for personal devices.

Disciplinary Action

Abuse of the Athens City School System's Network and/or the Internet access provided by the school system which is in violation of the law or school board policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including possible termination of employment and/or criminal prosecution. Employees are held personally liable for any violations of this policy. When inappropriate use of the Internet or network is determined, the result may include cancellation of these privileges. The following behaviors are examples of previously stated or additional actions and activities that are prohibited:

- Sending or posting discriminatory, harassing, or threatening messages or images;
- Using the school system's time and resources for personal gain;
- Stealing, using, or disclosing someone else's password without authorization;
- Copying, pirating, or downloading software and electronic files without permission;
- Sending or posting confidential material related to students and/or employees;
- Violating copyright laws;
- Failing to observe licensing agreements;
- Engaging in unauthorized transactions that may incur a cost to the organization or initiate unwanted Internet services and transmissions;
- Sending or posting messages or material that could damage the image or reputation of the Athens City School System;
- Participating in the viewing or exchange of pornography or obscene materials;
- Sending or posting messages that defame or slander other individuals;
- Attempting to break into the computer system of another organization or person;
- Sending or posting chain letters, solicitations, or advertisements not related to school system purposes or activities;
- Using the Internet for political causes or activities, religious activities, or any sort of gambling;
- Jeopardizing the security of the electronic communications system;
- Sending or posting messages that disparage another organization's products, services, or educational program;
- Passing off personal views as representing those of the school system;
- Sending anonymous e-mail messages;
- Engaging in any other illegal activities.

Monitoring

The school system's technology network is a limited forum, similar to the school newspaper, and therefore the school system may restrict employees' speech. All users with access to the Athens City School System's Network must sign a User Agreement acknowledging the receipt of this policy. Employees should expect no privacy in the contents of their personal files, network activity, school email accounts, or Internet activity on the Athens City School System's Network and computers. Routine maintenance and monitoring of the network may lead to discovery of violations of this policy or the law. Additionally, an individual's network activity and Internet site history may be reviewed if a reasonable suspicion of a violation exists. The school system will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted while using school technology resources. The school system is sensitive to the legitimate privacy rights of employees and will make efforts to guarantee that workplace monitoring is done in an ethical and respectful manner. Monitoring will be done by the Department of Technology, and disciplinary measures will be dealt with by the appropriate personnel.

Limitation of Liability

The Athens City School Board expressly denies all warranties of any kind either express or implied, in connection with the Board's provision of access to and use of its computer networks and the Internet provided under this policy. It shall not be responsible for any claims, losses, damages or costs (including attorney's fees) of any kind suffered including negligence, directly or indirectly, by any user arising out of the user's use of the computer network or the Internet under this policy. By using the school system's technology resources, users are taking full responsibility for their use, and are agreeing to indemnify and hold the Athens City School Board, the Athens City School System, and all of their employees, administrators, teachers, agents, and staff harmless from any and all loss, costs, claims or damages resulting from the user's access to the Board's computer network and the Internet, including but not limited to any fees or charges incurred through purchases of goods or services by the user. By using the school system's technology resources, the user agrees to cooperate with the School Board in the event of the Board's initiating an investigation of a user's use of his or her access to the Board's computer network and the Internet, whether that use is on a school computer or on another computer outside the school system's network.

The Athens City School System makes no guarantee that the functions or services provided by or through the Athens City School System's Network will be error-free or without defect. The school system will not be responsible for any damage the employee may suffer, including but not limited to loss of data or interruption of service. The school system is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information provided through or stored on the network.

SOURCE: Athens City Board of Education, Athens, AL

ADOPTED: November 14, 2002; REVISED: September 13, 2007; REVISED: June 18, 2013

LEGAL REF:

Employee Signature Page

I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the terms of the *Computer and Internet Acceptable Use Policy* adopted by the Athens City Board of Education, June 18, 2013.

Print Name

Signature

Date