HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR ELECTRONIC SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

The Houston Independent School District (HISD) strongly believes in the educational value of electronic services and recognizes the potential to support curriculum and student learning by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication.

Access to the Internet allows students to explore thousands of libraries, databases, museums, and other repositories of information. Families should be aware that some material accessible via the Internet may contain items that are inappropriate, inaccurate, or potentially offensive. While the purposes of the school are to use electronic resources for constructive educational goals, students may find ways to access other materials. We believe that the benefits to students from electronic services in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration exceed the disadvantages. But ultimately, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources. Therefore, we support and respect each family's right to deny electronic services to their student by submitting an "opt-out" form to the school's principal (see below).

Authorized student use of information resources must be consistent with the educational purposes for which these resources have been provided. The use of HISD electronic services is to assist students in completing educational activities and should be used in a manner that enhances educational experiences and complies with HISD policies. All student users must adhere to the provisions of this Acceptable Use Policy as a condition for continued use of the HISD network. This policy must be followed anytime there is a connection to the District's wired or wireless network via any electronic device. HISD reserves the right to monitor any user's online activities. Users should have no expectation of privacy regarding their use of HISD property, including the network, Internet access, files, text, chat room conversations, and e-mail.

Internet Safety

In compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act ("CIPA"), the Houston Independent School District is required to adopt and implement an Internet safety policy addressing: (a) access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet; (b) the safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications; (c) unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking," and other unlawful activities by minors online; (d) unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors; and (e) measures restricting minors' access to materials harmful to them. Furthermore, each campus educates students on cyberbullying, appropriate online behavior, and social networking as required by Broadband Data Improvement Act.

1. HISD has implemented filtering and/or blocking software to restrict access to Internet sites containing pornography, obscene depictions, or other materials harmful to minors under 18 years of age, to the extent practicable, while using its network. This control also applies to other forms of communication such as e-mail, chat rooms, social networking sites, instant messaging, etc. However, no software is foolproof, and there is still a risk a user may be exposed to a site or message containing such materials.

2. The student's parent or guardian is responsible for supervising and monitoring all computer usage that occurs outside the HISD network.

3. Students shall not reveal personal information, including name, home address, telephone number, photos, etc. on the Internet. The students are advised never to access, keep, or send anything that they would not want the general public to see.

4. Students shall not meet in person with anyone they have met only online via the Internet.

5. The user is personally responsible for his or her actions in accessing and utilizing the school's computer resources.

6. Students must abide by all laws, regulations, the Code of Student Conduct, Acceptable Use Policy, and other related HISD security policies.

Privacy

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. Under FERPA, parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Students and qualified parents can view certain educational records of the student online through HISD's Parent Student Connect portal. These records are safeguarded through all available means and access will be restricted to parents/guardians and the student through the use of user names and passwords.

Acceptable Actions

HISD students may use the network and electronic services provided by HISD to pursue educational activities. Students will learn how Internet resources can provide valuable educational information. Students will be expected to follow accepted rules of network etiquette. These rules include, but are not limited to the following:

• Be courteous and respectful. Do not send or display offensive messages or pictures.

• Use appropriate language in any type of communication. No profane, abusive, or impolite language shall be used to communicate nor should materials be accessed that are not in line with the rules of school behavior.

• Keep personal information such as logins, passwords, addresses, and phone numbers confidential.

• Use electronic services for educational purposes only.

• If you encounter materials that violate the rules of appropriate use, disconnect immediately and notify an adult.

Unacceptable Actions

Improper use of electronic services provided by HISD is prohibited. Be prepared to be held accountable for your actions and for the loss of privileges if this Acceptable Use Policy is violated. In addition to the paragraph below labeled "Penalties for Improper Use," the HISD Code of Student Conduct addresses the consequences for violations. Actions that constitute unacceptable use include, but are not limited to the following:

- Do not use a computer to harm other people or their work.

- Do not damage the computer or the network in any way.

- Do not interfere with the operation of the network by installing software, shareware, or freeware, including the alteration of any controls designed to provide Internet safety or alteration of HISD's default computer image.

- Do not violate copyright laws or participate in any criminal activities punishable by law.

- Do not view, send, or display offensive messages or pictures.

- Do not share your password with another person or offer access to any person via your account.

- Do not reveal your personal address or phone numbers or those of other students or colleagues, including the completion of profile data.

- Do not waste limited resources such as disk space or printing capacity.

- Do not distribute advertisements, solicitations, commercial ventures, or political lobbying.

- Do not trespass in another's folders, work, or files.

- Do not pursue internal or external "hacking", use anonymous e-mail sites, spread viruses, initiate spam, or attempt to access inappropriate material.

All HISD students are granted access to all electronic services available. If you DO NOT want your student to have access to electronic services, please complete and submit the opt-out form and access will be denied.

Penalties for Improper Use

The use of the network is a privilege, not a right, and may be revoked if abused. Misuse, damage, or vandalism of HISD technology resources may also lead to disciplinary and/or legal action, including suspension, expulsion, or criminal prosecution by governmental authorities.

Disclaimer

HISD makes no guarantee about the quality of services provided and is not responsible for any claims, losses, damages, costs, or other obligations arising from the use of its network. Any charge accrued to the user of HISD's network is borne by the user. Statements by the

user on the Internet are from the author's individual point of view and do not represent the views of HISD, its employees, or members of the Board of Education.

Student and Parental/Guardian signatures on the Code of Student Conduct represent consent to conform to the Acceptable Use Policy.