



PORTSMOUTH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

SUSAN M. BIRRELL, DIRECTOR
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

August, 2009

Dear Students and Parents/Guardians,

The Portsmouth School Department has greatly expanded its use of computers and the Internet over the past few years. This has allowed teachers to enhance and extend curricula in ways not even envisioned a few years ago. The technologies available today oftentimes allow teachers to present subject matter and challenge students in ways not possible with other media. Along with the advantages of using technology also comes the need to educate students about responsibility and safety when using computers and the Internet. Please know the entire administration and staff of the school department is committed to ensuring our students use computers and Internet access for only educationally sound and productive learning activities.

**"THE PURPOSE OF
THE PORTSMOUTH
SCHOOLS IS TO
EDUCATE ALL
STUDENTS BY
CHALLENGING
THEM TO BECOME
THINKING,
RESPONSIBLE,
CONTRIBUTING
CITIZENS WHO
CONTINUE TO
LEARN
THROUGHOUT
THEIR LIVES."**

In order to comply fully with the federal Children's Internet Protection Act, the school department uses various filtering and monitoring devices and techniques. However, no system is 100% foolproof and we cannot guarantee the appropriateness of all materials that can be accessed on the Internet. Students who do not adhere to the district's rules may locate inappropriate material. A copy of the School Board's Acceptable Use Policy is attached for your review. Although teachers will review the information in this policy with students, we expect parents will spend a few minutes reviewing it with your son or daughter, as many of the rules apply to home computer usage as well.

Before we can allow a student to use a computer with Internet access we must have a signed Acceptable Use Contract/Agreement on file. There are two different formats. One format is for students in grades K through 5 and is to be signed by just the parent or guardian. The second format is for students in grades 6-12 and must be signed by both the student and the parent/guardian unless the student is 18 or older. You should find the appropriate agreement attached to this letter. The reverse side of the contract has a separate form to indicate if the parent/guardian gives permission for the school department to use samples of the student's schoolwork and/or picture on our website.

In summary – there are two (2) forms for you to complete:

1. Acceptable Use Contract/Agreement (appropriate format attached)
2. Permission To Publish Form (on reverse side of the contract/agreement)

Please return these to school as soon as possible, as we cannot allow a student to use a computer with Internet access until a signed form is on file. You should keep the 4 page policy for future reference. If you have any questions or comments, please contact your school's computer teacher, principal or the network administrator.

Best wishes for a productive school year!

Susan Birrell

Susan Birrell, Technology Director

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

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Acceptable Use Policy (Portsmouth School Department Computer Network)

Preamble:

The purpose of this document is to serve as a statement on the proper and acceptable use of various aspects of the Portsmouth School Department Computer Network (PSDCN) including but not limited to the Internet connection(s), computers, and associated peripherals owned/leased and operated by the Portsmouth School Department. All terms and conditions as stated in this policy are applicable to all users of the network.

These rules provide general guidelines and examples of prohibited uses but do not attempt to state all required or prohibited activities by users. Users who have questions regarding whether a particular activity or use is acceptable should seek further guidance from the Computer Technology Director.

One component of the PSDCN is a connection to the Internet. Because of its enormous size and multifaceted resources, the Internet's potential for educational benefit is boundless. However, with the great potential also comes some potential for abuse. Because access to the Internet provides connections to other computer systems located all over the world, users (and parents/guardians of users who are minors) must understand that neither the Portsmouth School Department nor any of its staff members controls the content of the information available on these other systems. Some information may be controversial and sometimes may be offensive. The Portsmouth School Department does not condone the use of such materials.

Users should be aware that some material accessible via the Internet might contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive to some people. While our intent is to make Internet access available to further educational goals and objectives, users may find ways to access other materials as well. We cannot vouch for the appropriateness of all materials found on the greater Internet. Although the school department uses various filtering and monitoring strategies, it is technologically impossible to filter all access while still retaining a meaningful connection. During school activities, staff and/or trained volunteers will monitor and guide students toward appropriate materials.

Educational Purposes:

The purpose of the PSDCN is educational. Users are responsible for ensuring that their activities adhere to the provisions of this policy and to generally accepted educational standards. The Portsmouth School Department reserves the right to regulate use for valid educational purposes. The school department will not unreasonably restrict use on the basis of disagreement over content.

It is the purpose of the PSDCN to enhance established school curriculum. While there will be need to instruct learners in the skills needed to make use of the network, its purpose will be to serve as a resource for improving, extending, and enriching the teaching and learning in the Portsmouth School Department.

Privilege:

The use of the PSDCN is a privilege and not a right. Inappropriate use will result in restriction or cancellation of access privileges. Just as there are developmental levels that determine the concepts taught or the activities carried out at various grade levels, so there will be varying degrees of access to the Portsmouth School Department Network that will be allowed to users at different levels. Some of these levels will be determined by age or grade, and some by demonstration of acceptance of responsibility.

No Expectation of Privacy:

The PSDCN is maintained and managed by the network administrator in such a way as to insure its availability and reliability in performing its educational mission. Users have no reasonable expectation of privacy concerning any materials transferred over or stored within the PSDCN. The school department reserves the right to monitor all computer, Internet, e-mail, and other network activity through random checks and electronic means in order to ensure system security/integrity and to ensure usage consistent with this policy.

Filtering, Monitoring, and Other Protection Measures:

The Portsmouth School Department relies on the honor of its students and staff to exercise appropriate, polite, respectful, and responsible use of computers and Internet access. In compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act [Public Law 106-554], the PSDCN employs various filtering hardware and software. These measures are intended to block sites that may contain content considered to be "visual depictions" of material that is obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors. These filtering measures apply to all school department computers. However, since it is technologically impossible to block all such potential sites, it is also the policy of the Portsmouth School Department that student Internet use will be monitored by an adult employee or adult volunteer at all times. An adult user may submit a request to the network administrator to temporarily override these filtering measures for bona fide research by that adult user.

To further protect students from dangerous or objectionable activities and to ensure the PSDCN is only used for its intended purposes, the Portsmouth School Department prohibits use of the following:

- Chat Rooms
- Web based and personal e-mail accounts (school based accounts will be used as described herein)
- Peer-to-peer file sharing (including, but not limited to: Morpheus, Scour, and Gnutella)
- Instant Messaging (including, but not limited to: AOL IM, MSN Messenger, and Yahoo Messenger)
- On-line games (unless specifically authorized by a teacher for instructional purposes)

The Portsmouth School Department reserves the right to make individual exceptions to the above restrictions upon requests to the network administrator.

E-Mail Accounts:

In order to foster communication, students (Grades 9-12), faculty, staff, and administrators will be issued school department e-mail accounts upon request. These accounts are intended to be used for educational and school-related activities. Incidental personal use of school department e-mail is allowed only to the extent that it does not interfere with the user's school-related work and the system's operation and integrity. Students in grades K through 8 will not be issued personal e-mails accounts. Classroom group accounts may be used by teachers at all grade levels for class activities. The following procedures and restrictions shall apply to all school department e-mail accounts:

- Students will not post personal information such as home addresses, phone numbers, or other identifying information about themselves or others in e-mail messages.
- Students will promptly report to a school staff member any message they receive that may be deemed inappropriate or that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- Users (students or staff) will not use the school department's e-mail system or other computer resources for private financial gain, advertising, political lobbying, or solicitation purposes.
- All users are expected to use judgment and caution in communications concerning students and staff to ensure confidentiality.

Behaviors that can result in restriction/revocation of access privileges include but are not limited to:

- involvement in any activity prohibited by law
- any attempts to gain unauthorized access to any computer, network, or communications system (e.g., "hacking")
- intentional use of invasive software such as "viruses," "worms," and other detrimental activities
- using profanity, vulgarities, obscenity or other language which tends to be offensive to or tends to degrade others
- using the network for financial and/or personal gain or for political lobbying except as expressly allowed during a school activity
- viewing, storing, or transferring obscene, sexually explicit or pornographic materials
- "chain" type letters, hate mail, anonymous messages, threatening messages, harassment, racial, sexist and discriminatory remarks, and other antisocial behaviors
- sharing passwords or using someone else's password
- transferring, utilizing, or storing materials in violation of copyright laws or license agreements

- intentionally infringing upon the intellectual property rights of others in computer programs or electronic information including plagiarism and/or unauthorized use of reproduction
- trespassing in another's folders, work, or files
- any additional activity or behavior considered to be unacceptable

The Portsmouth School Department reserves the right to include additional activities to this listing of restricted activities as the need arises.

Responsibilities:

All users shall assume full liability - legal, financial, or otherwise - for their actions when using the PSDCN.

Responsible use of the PSDCN requires that users NOT:

- interfere with the normal and proper operation of this network or the Internet
- adversely affect the ability of others to use equipment or services
- conduct themselves in ways that are harmful or deliberately offensive to others
- use the network for any illegal purpose
- change computer files that do not belong to the user
- store or transfer unnecessarily large files
- create, transfer, or otherwise use any text, image, movie, or sound recording that contains pornography, profanity, obscenity, or language that offends or tends to degrade others

All users of the PSDCN will be held fully responsible for the use of their account to transfer or store materials. Any inappropriate activities carried out will be considered to be the actions of the account holder. Therefore, passwords must not be shared or transferred. Users should take reasonable precautions to protect their passwords and prevent others from being able to use their account.

Students are not to reveal their personal home address, home phone number, or the home address or home phone number of any other individuals. Students must notify a parent/guardian and a teacher or staff member immediately if any individual is trying to contact them for illicit or suspicious activities.

The responsibility of the user is to familiarize himself/herself with and abide by the rules of this Acceptable Use Policy and make appropriate use of the available resources.

Portsmouth School Department Website:

The Portsmouth School Department maintains a website for the purpose of publishing information that is considered important to parents, students, and other community members. This website is hosted as a subset of the City of Portsmouth Website. Whenever information or photographs of students or student work will be published, the students' parents or guardians must sign a Permission to Publish form. The following rules apply to all information published on the website:

- Students will be identified by first name only
- No personal information (home address, home phone, etc.) will be published
- Documents will not contain information that indicates the physical location of a student at a given time other than attendance at a particular school or participation in an activity
- All published materials shall adhere to the guidelines of the City of Portsmouth Website and the Portsmouth School Department Acceptable Use Policy

Copyrighted and Proprietary Materials, and Plagiarism:

All users shall respect copyright and proprietary interest of any materials accessed through the PSDCN. Users may not duplicate copyrighted software, including school owned software, without permission from the copyright holder whether for personal use or the use of others. Duplicating copyrighted materials or the use of such materials are offenses subject to

criminal prosecution. Plagiarism is expressly forbidden (plagiarism is the claiming of another's work as your own). Proper citations will be used when citing electronic information.

Disciplinary actions:

Violations of the provisions of this Acceptable Use Policy may result in one or more of the following disciplinary actions:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Restriction of access privileges
- Removal from a class activity
- Removal from a course
- Student detention, suspension, or expulsion
- Referral to the appropriate legal authorities for possible criminal prosecution

Internet Log Files:

The PSDCN servers are configured to maintain log files of various activities including Internet access. These logs are used to monitor the network functions and integrity as well as to gather information for system maintenance and educational decision making. Log files may also be used as evidence in disciplinary actions. The network administrator will maintain log files for a period of 10 calendar days. The contents of these log files are available to the public under RSA 91-A: Access to Public Records and Meetings.

References and acknowledgments:

The policies and regulations outlined here are modeled after sample documents and recommendations from:

- NHEMA/NHSTE (New Hampshire Educational Media Association/New Hampshire Society for Technology in Education) Internet Policy Toolkit
- Acceptable Use Policies from various New Hampshire school districts (Exeter, Manchester, Merrimack, Moultonborough, Nashua, Rochester, Salem, and others)
- Acceptable Use Policies from various other school districts (Auburn, ME, Kennebunk, ME, Bellingham, WA, Los Angeles Unified School District, and others)
- Iowa State University Code of Computer Ethics

Revised and Adopted by the Portsmouth School Board on June 25, 2002

PORTSMOUTH, NH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

Grade K-5 Student Acceptable Use Agreement

Dear Parent and/or Guardian,

As part of the school department's continuing effort to provide all students with high quality, up-to-date educational resources, we now have Internet access on many of the computers in all Portsmouth Schools, including our elementary schools.

Please know the entire administration and staff of the school department is committed to ensuring our students use computers and Internet access for only educationally sound and productive learning activities. During school activities teachers and other staff will guide students toward appropriate materials. Furthermore, it is the policy of the Portsmouth School Department that students will be actively monitored by an adult staff member or volunteer whenever they use a school computer with Internet access.

The School Board has adopted an updated Acceptable Use Policy to comply fully with the federal Children's Internet Protection Act. A copy of that policy is included with this agreement.

Your son/daughter's teacher or your school's computer teacher will review the information in the Acceptable Use Policy in age-appropriate language before allowing him/her to use the Internet on a school computer. We also request that you review the policy with your child to reinforce the importance of Internet safety for all children. **One rule that we consistently emphasize is that students should never give out personal information (home address, phone #, etc.) about themselves or others when using the Internet.** Please reinforce this rule with your son/daughter.

Please complete the blanks below to indicate you grant permission for your son/daughter to use the Internet on school computers and that you have reviewed the Acceptable Use Policy with your child. Please return this form to school as soon as possible so there will be no delays in your child's computer use.

Thank you for your help and cooperation.

Print: _____
(Print Student's Name)

Signed: _____
(Parent/Guardian Signature)

Date: _____

School: Dondero, Little Harbour, New Franklin
(Circle One)

Grade: _____
(during 09/10)

NOTE: This agreement will be in effect for as long as the student attends the school indicated above, and may be revoked at any time by the parent/guardian by contacting the school principal or the Computer Department at 436-7100, extension 2903.

Please also see the PERMISSION TO PUBLISH FORM on the reverse side of this page.

PORTSMOUTH, NH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

PERMISSION TO PUBLISH A PICTURE OF A STUDENT OR SAMPLE OF STUDENTS' SCHOOL WORK

Dear Parent or Guardian,

As you may be aware, the Portsmouth School Department hosts a Webpage at:
www.cityofportsmouth.com/school/

Occasionally we wish to post a picture of a particular school activity such as a science project, a play, artwork, sporting event, or other activity. This may involve posting a picture showing a student or group of students or a sample of a student's work.

If a student's picture or work is used:

- He/she is only identified by first name
- Personal information such as phone number, address, etc. will not be published
- Documents will not include information that indicates the physical location of a student at a given time other than attendance at a particular school or participation in an activity

Before posting pictures of students or samples of student work we require that the parent(s)/guardian(s) sign the permission form below.

CONSENT AND RELEASE

I grant the Portsmouth School Department permission to post pictures of my son/daughter or a sample of his/her work such as a poem, story, artwork, etc. on the school department's website. I understand these pictures may distinctly identify him or her. I further release the City of Portsmouth, and the Portsmouth School Department and its employees, officials and agents from liability of any claims, including without limitation, claims for libel, defamation, invasion of privacy and right of publicity, and infringement of proprietary rights, arising out of or relating to the exercise of rights granted under this CONSENT AND RELEASE.

Please check the below blanks to indicate which permission(s) you grant and then sign and date as indicated.

_____ The Portsmouth School Department has permission to post samples of my son/daughter's schoolwork on its website.

_____ The Portsmouth School Department has permission to post a picture of my son/daughter on its website.

Print Name of Student

Print Name of Parent (s) or Guardian(s)

Signature of Parent(s) or Guardian(s)

Date

(School attending during 09/10)

NOTE: This agreement will be in effect for as long as the student attends the school indicated above, and may be revoked at any time by the parent/guardian by contacting the school principal or the Computer Department at 436-7100 EXT. 2903.