

## Telecommunications Acceptable Use Policy

Hardy County Schools believes in the educational benefits to students and teachers through access to various online services. The intent of the Hardy County Board of Education is to provide access to the Internet and online services in order to further the educational goals and objectives of the county and its schools.

Technology is to be interwoven with educational and personalized learning to accomplish the county/school goals, to increase student achievement, to increase teacher effectiveness and to provide increased opportunities for lifelong learning. To promote student learning, educators will be equipped to fully integrate technology, to transform instructional practice and to support student acquisition of technology skills necessary to succeed, to continue learning throughout life and to attain self-sufficiency.

The promotion of acceptable use in instruction and educational activities is intended to provide a safe digital environment as well as to meet the Federal Communications Commission guidelines and e-rate audits. Therefore, the following Acceptable Use Policy outlines the guidelines for students and staff.

### Digital/Network Etiquette:

- Be polite.
- Use proper English and appropriate language; avoid “Netspeak;”
- Use extreme caution when revealing personal information, including a home address and phone number, on web sites, blogs, podcasts, videos, wikis, e-mail or as content on any other electronic medium.
- Practice confidentiality of personal information of self and others.
- Use the Internet in a way that will not disrupt the use of the Internet by others.
- Use servers appropriately to store email and educational files.
- Activate the appropriate automatic reply message and unsubscribe to Listservs if account is to be unused for an extended period of time.
- Only publish student pictures or names on class, school or district web sites that are part of the district/school directory information.
- Notify the appropriate school authority of any dangerous or inappropriate information or messages encountered.

### Digital Security:

The security of the WAN is a high priority because there are many users involved. It is the responsibility of the user to avoid abusive conduct which includes altering the WAN software or placing of unlawful information, viruses, unauthorized programs on or through the WAN. All students and staff will be taught about appropriate on line behaviors including Internet harassment, cyber bullying and awareness and interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms.

Individuals who identify a security problem on the system must notify a system administrator; must not demonstrate the problem to other users; must not use another individual’s account or give their password to others; and will, if identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with the computer system, be denied access by the appropriate authority.

Hardy County Schools has protective measures in place that blocks and filters Internet access to pictures that are obscene, pornographic or are considered harmful to others. Students and staff may not

access inappropriate matter on the Internet, may not access or have electronic communication with websites that promote obscenity, pornography or harmful materials, may not have unauthorized access which includes hacking of websites and other unlawful activities, and may not disclose, use or disseminate personal information of others. Employees and students using Hardy County School electronic devices outside the school environment must have filtering software on these devices to ensure all traffic goes through state filtering.

#### **Acceptable Use of Electronic Devices:**

- The use of electronic resources, technologies and Internet must be in support of education and consistent with the educational goals of the county and school.
- The use of telecommunications and/or access to the Internet is an extension of student and staff responsibility in the classroom and must follow all federal and state laws as well as local policy.
- State, county and school owned technology is to be used to enhance learning and teaching as well as to improve the operation of the county and school.
- All safety measures must be enforced when using electronic devices.
- The creation of files, projects, videos, web pages and podcasts using network resources in support of student achievement, personalized learning and educational administration may be developed.
- Participation in school-sponsored blogs, wikis, web 2.0+ tools, social networking sites and online groups is allowed if appropriate.
- On-line publication of original educational materials, curriculum related materials and student work may be developed with parental/guardian permission.
- Staff may use the network for incidental personal use in accordance with all county/school guidelines.

#### **Unacceptable Use of Electronic Devices:**

- Inappropriate use or transmission of any material in violation of copyrighted materials, threatening, abusive, or obscene materials, or material protected by trade secrets.
- Use of electronic devices for commercial activities by for-profit institutions.
- Use for product advertisement or political lobbying.
- Illegal activities and privacy and safety violations.
- Viewing, creating, accessing, uploading, downloading, storing, sending or distributing of obscene, pornographic or sexually explicit materials.
- Downloading, uploading and/or executing viruses, worms, Trojan horses, time bombs, bots, malware, spyware, SPAM, or changes to tools used to filter content or monitor hardware and software.
- Using of email and other electronic user IDs/passwords other than one's own is prohibited.
- Illegally accessing or attempting to access another person's data or personal system files or unauthorized access to other state/county/school computers, networks and information systems.
- Supplying your password and user information to any electronic request or sharing them with others via any other communications.
- Storing passwords in a file without encryption.
- Using the "remember password" feature of Internet browsers and e-mail clients.
- Leaving the computer without locking the screen or logging off.
- Corrupting, destroying, deleting or manipulating system data with malicious intent.
- Requesting inappropriate materials be transferred.
- Violating safety and/or security measures when using e-mail, chat rooms, blogs, wikis, social networking sites, Web 2.0 tools and other forms of electronic communications.
- Hacking, cracking, vandalizing or any other unlawful online activities.

- Disclosing, using or disseminating personal information regarding students and staff.
- Cyber bullying, hate mail, defamation, harassment of any kind, discriminatory jokes and remarks and other unauthorized uses.
- Personal gain, commercial solicitation and compensation of any kind.
- Downloading, installing, and/or executing non-educational gaming, audio files, video files or other applications without permission or approval.
- Support or opposition for ballot measures, candidates and any other political activity.
- Information posted, sent or stored online that could endanger others such as bomb construction and drug manufacturing.
- Plagiarism or reproducing/repurposing audio/video without permission or consent.
- Vandalizing technology equipment or data.
- Use in or support of illegal activities.

### **Web Publishing:**

Hardy County Schools recognizes the educational benefits of school personnel and students publishing information on the Internet. Hardy County Schools also recognizes the importance of guidelines that address content, overall responsibility, quality, technical standards and student responsibilities. This policy complies with standards more fully addressed in Policy 2460 of the West Virginia Department of Education.

Webpages/sites must reflect the professional image of the County, its employees and students. The content of all pages must be consistent with the Board's Mission Statement, and staff-created webpages/sites are subject to prior review and approval of the Superintendent or designee. Student-created webpages/sites are subject to approval of the school principal. The creation of webpages/sites by students must be done under the supervision of a professional staff member.

The purpose of webpages/sites hosted by the Hardy County Schools is to educate, inform and communicate information to the educational community. The County provides design assistance and website hosting for all school websites. While schools may publish pages to web hosting sites, all pages should have a link on the County website. The Board retains all proprietary rights related to the design of websites that are hosted on the Board's servers, absent written agreement to the contrary.

Development of webpages is a worthwhile learning experience for students. Parents/guardians and community members may be excellent resources for webpage development. While students, parents/guardians and community members may participate in the development of the school website/page, a school employee must be ultimately responsible for posting information to the webpage/site and for webpage/site security.

Written parental/guardian permission must be obtained before student names, images or work may be published on the Internet. No personal information, including home address and home telephone, will be published. Students who want their class work to be displayed on any Board website must have written parent/guardian permission and expressly license its display without cost to the Board.

Under no circumstances is a staff created webpage/site, including personal webpages/sites, to be used to post student progress reports, grades, class assignments or any other similar class-related material. The Board maintains its own websites that employees are required to use for the purpose of conveying grade and progress information to students and/or parents/guardians.

Staff members are prohibited from requiring students to go to the staff member's personal webpages/sites (including, but not limited to, their Facebook pages) to check grades, obtain class assignments and/or class-related materials and/or turn in assignments.

Business/commercial links should be limited to business partners or websites that contain educational or technical support. Advertising of commercial products is forbidden. Under no circumstances is a Board webpage/site to be used for commercial purposes, advertising, political lobbying or to provide financial gains for any individual. All links and content included on Board webpages/sites must meet the above criteria and must comply with copyright, intellectual property and state, federal, and international law.

**Educator, Service Personnel and Staff Responsibilities:**

- Collaboration, resource sharing and student/teacher, student/student and teacher/parent or guardian dialogue can all be facilitated by the use of social media and other electronic communication. Such interactivity outside the school wall can greatly enhance face-to-face classes. It is imperative that a clear line be drawn between personal social networking and professional/educational networking to protect the safety of the students and the integrity of educational professional and service staff.
- To assist educators and staff in maintaining a professional relationship with students and to avoid situations that could lead to inappropriate relationships, the following regulations apply to all school personnel in the school system.
  1. School personnel must maintain a professional relationship with all school students both inside and outside the classroom while using any form of social media and any other electronic communication.
  2. The viewing, storing, transmission or downloading of pornography or sexually suggestive or sexually explicit material or text on a work computer or other electronic storage or communication device, whether at work or home, by school personnel or anyone else to whom the school personnel has made the computer or electronic storage or communication device available is prohibited. This includes personal computers, electronic storage or communication devices as well if they are at school.
  3. All information stored within work computers or servers is the property of the state, county or school and personnel should have no expectation of privacy with respect to its contents.
  4. Educators will promote and model acceptable use, digital citizenship and online responsibility to support personalized learning and digital-age assessments to meet the educational learning policies for all students.
  5. Teachers and other staff will teach and discuss the appropriate use of electronic resources, technologies, and the Internet with their students, monitor their use and intervene if the uses are not acceptable. The state provided tool for this instruction will be utilized.
  6. School personnel who receive information by electronic means, including social networking, that fall under the mandatory reporting requirements must do so.
  7. School personnel must be careful not to use copyrighted material in a manner that violates copyright law.
  8. School personnel are responsible for protecting their passwords associated with their computers and e-mail address and must not make them accessible to others.
  9. Hardy County School employees taking county owned electronic devices home must have appropriate filtering software to ensure all traffic is routed through the state filter when the computer is being used at home.

- Telephone usage in all school, school offices, and school facilities is designated for professional business use. Although personal calls are not prohibited, telephones in all schools, school offices, and school facilities primary use is for business. No personal long-distance calls are to be billed or charged to any county school, school office, or school facility. A monthly accounting by each school, school office, and school facility regarding long-distance phone calls shall occur. Each principal or school facility manager is responsible for the monitoring and accounting of telephone usage and verification of long-distance calls.

### **Internet Access from Personally Owned Devices:**

In order to provide increased access to educational opportunities and to support the educational process, the County permits personally owned devices to access the Internet in accordance with standards established by the county. Personally owned devices (PODs) include, but are not limited to, portable computers, web-enabled mobile devices, cell phones, and “smart” devices.

Board members, county employees, students, as well as contractors, vendors, and agents of the County, may use their PODs to access the County provided Internet while they are on-site at any County facility to support the educational process, provided the user registers the mobile device with the school or County and complies with E-rate and Board policies and procedures. Connecting to the Internet shall be in accordance with standards established by the County. Students must use the County provided Internet for instructional activities; the POD’s data plan should be turned off during classroom instruction.

Using a personally owned device to establish a wireless network is prohibited. At no time may student PODs be used on school property or at a school-sponsored activity for the purpose of accessing and/or viewing Internet websites that are otherwise blocked at school. Access to County servers is permitted with Hardy County School’s approval to use personally owned devices.

By bringing PODs onto the property of the Board or to a school-sponsored event or activity, the owner assumes sole responsibility for safety and care of the POD. The Board/School assumes no responsibility for theft, loss, damage or vandalism to PODs brought onto its property or the unauthorized use of such devices. The Board/School is not liable for any charges incurred by the user of the POD.

Personally owned devices using the County Internet must have current operating system updates, appropriate anti-virus software and other security features enabled. County personnel will provide assistance connecting to the County Internet. County personnel will not load software onto or repair or maintain any POD.

Students may use PODs in the classroom as a tool to support the learning process according to rules defined by the teacher, school and/or Board.

When permitted by school rules and as long as they do not create a distraction, disruption, or otherwise interfere with the educational environment, students may use PODs before and after school, during their lunch break, during after school activities (e.g. extra-curricular activities) and at school-related functions. Students may use PODs while riding to and from school on a school bus or other vehicle provided by the Board or on a school bus or Board-provided vehicle during school-sponsored activities, at the discretion of the bus driver, classroom teacher or sponsor/advisor/coach. Distracting behavior that creates an unsafe environment will not be tolerated.

However, when directed to do so by a school employee, PODs shall be powered completely off (not just placed into vibrate or silent mode) and stored out of sight. The requirement that PODs must be powered completely off will not apply in a circumstance when a student obtains prior written approval from the building administrator (e.g. an ill family member or a personal health condition).

Student possession of a POD on school property or during a school-sponsored event is a privilege that may be forfeited by any student who fails to abide by the terms of this policy or otherwise engages in misuse of this privilege.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action and/or confiscation of the device. The building administrator will also refer the matter to law enforcement if the violation involves an illegal activity (e.g. child pornography). Discipline will be imposed on an escalating scale ranging from a warning to an expulsion, based on the number of previous violations and/or the nature of or circumstances surrounding a particular violation. If the device is confiscated, it will be released/returned only to the student's parent/guardian. Any device confiscated by County staff will be marked with the student's name and held in a secure location in the building's office until it is retrieved by the parent/guardian. Personally owned devices in County custody will not be searched or otherwise tampered with unless reasonable suspicion exists that warrants the same. If a student violates the terms of this Policy, she/he may lose her/his privilege to bring a POD to school for a designated length of time or on a permanent basis, as the circumstances warrant.

**Compliance:**

Employees and students using electronic devices in Hardy County Schools will be required to acknowledge their awareness of the Acceptable Use Policy by signing An Acceptable Use Agreement. Students who are under the age of eighteen years must also have the signature of a parent/guardian acknowledging they have also reviewed the Acceptable Use Policy and are giving permission for their child to use and have access to electronic devices owned by Hardy County Schools as well as granting permission for their child to access the Internet while attending Hardy County Schools.

SOURCE: Board of Education Minutes  
DATE: April 22, 2002 – August 9, 2010 – June 18, 2012 – July 21, 2014 – July 24, 2017 –  
December 4, 2023  
LEGAL REFERENCE: WVDE Code 2460; CIPA

Hardy County Schools' Telecommunications Acceptable Use Agreement  
Student Agreement

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Student Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Student's School \_\_\_\_\_

I have read the Hardy County Schools' Telecommunications Acceptable Use Policy and agree to the content contained within the policy. I understand that if I violate the policy, disciplinary action will be taken and my privilege to bring and/or use electronic devices in school may be suspended or terminated.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I have read Hardy County Schools' Telecommunications Acceptable Use Policy and agree my child may bring and/or use electronic devices and access the Internet while in school.

I understand that my child will be given appropriate disciplinary action if he/she violates this policy. Furthermore, I understand and agree that if my child is found to be negligent in the breakage of electronic devices owned by Hardy County Schools, I will be held responsible for their repair or replacement.

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Hardy County Schools' Telecommunications Acceptable Use Agreement  
Employee Agreement

Employee's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Employee's School \_\_\_\_\_

I have read the Hardy County Schools' Telecommunications Acceptable Use Policy and agree to the content contained within the policy. I understand that if I violate the policy, disciplinary action will be taken and my privilege to bring and/or use electronic devices may be suspended or terminated and/or that I may be suspended or terminated from employment with Hardy County Schools.

Employee Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_