

The Internet is a unique opportunity to enhance instructional methods, appeal to different learning styles, and meet the educational goals of the Board. Through the Internet, users can observe events as they occur around the world, interact with others on a variety of subjects, and acquire access to current and in-depth information.

It is a Gaston County School District objective to make appropriate electronic information resources available to students to assist in furthering educational goals and to provide for efficient school-related communication. This policy governs the use of Gaston County School District electronic information resources and defines students' proper conduct and responsibilities while using Gaston County School District electronic information resources. Electronic information resources are defined as all Gaston County School District computer equipment, including any desktop or laptop computers or other hardware owned by the school system; the Gaston County School District computer network; e-mail accounts; any computer software licensed to the Gaston County Public School System; and stored data. Because electronic information resources are an integral part of the educational curriculum, all students must comply with this policy.

It is the policy of the Gaston County Board of Education to:

1. comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act [Pub. L. No. 106-544 and 47 USC 254(h)].
2. prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications;
3. prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; and
4. prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors

The Gaston County School District shall ensure that school system computers with Internet access comply with federal requirements regarding filtering software, Internet monitoring and Internet safety policies.

Families are hereby warned that some websites or web pages accessible via the Internet contain material that is offensive, illegal, sexually explicit and discriminatory. In accordance with federal law, the Gaston County School District uses appropriate measures, including the use of Internet content filtering software and has procedures in place to further block accessibility to language and visual depictions that are obscene, lewd, pornographic, or harmful to minors. Although it is the intent of the Gaston County School District that school system electronic information resources be used only to pursue educational goals and objectives, filters may not block all offensive material and/or students may find ways to access inappropriate materials. It is the responsibility of the student to behave in an appropriate and responsible manner when accessing all resources and information through the Gaston County School District's network and Internet.

**Student Internet Safety and Technology Responsible Use Policy (RUP)
in Compliance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA)**

Policy Code: **3230**

Students in violation of the Gaston County Schools Responsible Use Policy (RUP) are subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Gaston County Board of Education’s Student Code of Conduct Rule 20 as follows:

Rule 20: Acceptable Use of School Technology (*see Code of Conduct for Consequences*)

Students shall not violate any policies adopted by the Board of Education regarding student Internet and electronic mail usage or the terms of Gaston County Schools Network and Internet Acceptable Use Guidelines or individual school policy. Students must not access inappropriate materials on the Internet as may be defined under such Internet policy; should not violate any safety and security rules when using electronic mail, chat rooms, or other forms of electronic communication, as provided under the Internet policy; should not engage in unauthorized access (“hacking”) or other unlawful activities on-line while using school system computer equipment or Internet access; and should not engage in unauthorized disclosure, use and/or dissemination of personal and/or identification information of the Technology Policy.

Student Responsible Use Agreement (RUA) and Student Responsible Use Guidelines (RUG) may be accessed through the following link:

<http://www.gaston.k12.nc.us/parents/Pages/TechPolicies.aspx>

Legal References: U.S. Const. amend. I; Children’s Internet Protection Act, 47 U.S.C. 254(h)(5); Electronic Communications Privacy Act, 18 U.S.C. 2510-2522; Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g; 17 U.S.C. 101 *et seq.*; 20 U.S.C. 6777; G.S. 115C-325(e), -391

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Gaston County Schools

Student Internet Safety and Technology Responsible Use Guidelines (RUG) *in Compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)*

The Internet is a unique opportunity to enhance instructional methods, appeal to different learning styles, and meet the educational goals of the Board. Through the Internet, users can observe events as they occur around the world, interact with others on a variety of subjects, and acquire access to current and in-depth information.

Teachers are encouraged to incorporate the use of the Internet into lesson plans. Students are encouraged to use the Gaston County School District's network, Internet, and electronic resources for educational purposes.

The use of such resources is a privilege, not a right. Students must conduct themselves in a responsible, efficient, ethical, and legal manner. Unauthorized or inappropriate use, including cyber-bullying and any violation of the following may result in cancellation of the privilege, disciplinary action consistent with the Student Code of Conduct and/or civil or criminal liability:

1. Internet Safety and Technology Responsible Use Policy (RUP) in Compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)
2. Internet Safety and Technology Responsible Use Guidelines (RUG) in Compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)
3. individual school policy

Prior to accessing the network or Internet at school, students must sign the "Gaston County Schools Student Internet Safety and Technology Responsible Use Agreement (RUA)." Parent/Guardian permission is required for minors.

Smooth operation of the Gaston County School District's network relies upon users adhering to the following guidelines which are provided so that users are aware of their responsibilities.

- A. The Network/Internet is provided for school-related purposes. Non-instruction related use will be a site-based decision.
- B. Another site-based decision will be the use of personal electronic devices. A school may choose to allow the use of such devices for instructional purposes, but under no circumstances shall these devices be connected to the GCS network. Such devices will be the total responsibility of the student. The district will not be responsible for damaged or stolen personal electronic devices.
- C. Students are responsible for their behavior and communication on the Network/Internet. Students must meet all standards of expected student behavior and comply with all board policies and school standards and rules.

- D. Students may only access the Network/Internet through their school network login. Use of another person's login/address/password is prohibited. Students may not allow other users to utilize their login.
- E. Students may not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, data or passwords belonging to other users, or misrepresent other users on the network.
- F. Students may not use the Network/Internet to engage in unauthorized access, cyber-bullying, "hacking" or other unlawful activities.
- G. Transmission of any material in violation of any State or Federal law or regulation, or District policy is prohibited.
- H. Any use of the Network/Internet for commercial purposes, advertising, or political lobbying is prohibited.
- I. Students are expected to abide by the following generally-accepted rules of network etiquette:
 - 1) Be polite, courteous, and respectful in your communications to others. Use language appropriate to school situations in any communications made through the District's computers/network. Do not use obscene, profane, vulgar, sexually explicit, defamatory, or abusive language in your communications.
 - 2) Never reveal names, addresses, phone numbers, or passwords of yourself or other students, family members, teachers, administrators, or other staff members while communicating on the Internet.
 - 3) Do not transmit pictures or other information that could be used to establish your identity without prior approval of a teacher.
 - 4) Never agree to get together with someone you "meet" on-line without prior parent/guardian approval.
- J. Use of the Network/Internet to access, process, distribute, display or print child pornography and other material that is obscene, objectionable, inappropriate and/or harmful to minors is prohibited. As such, the following material is prohibited: material that appeals to an obsessive interest in nudity, sex, and excretion; material that depicts, describes or represents in an obviously offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors; an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and material that lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value as to minors. Offensive messages and pictures, inappropriate text files, or files dangerous to the integrity of the District's computers/network (e.g., viruses) are also prohibited.
- K. Malicious use of the District's computers/network to develop programs that harass other users or infiltrate a computer or computer system and/or damage the software components of a computer or computing system is prohibited. Students may not use the District's computers/network in such a way that would disrupt their use by others. Students must avoid intentionally wasting resources.

- L. All communications and information accessible via the Internet should be assumed to be private property (i.e. copyrighted and/or trademarked). All copyright issues regarding software, information, and attributions of authorship must be respected.
- M. Students are prohibited from downloading any software to network drives or local hard drives. All downloads must be to floppy disk or jump, flash, thumb, usb drive or memory stick. Only public domain software may be downloaded. If a student transfers a file or software program that infects the Network with a virus and causes damage, the student/parent/guardian may be liable for any and all repair costs to make the Network once again fully operational.
- N. Privacy in communication over the Internet and the Network is not guaranteed. To ensure compliance with these guidelines, the District reserves the right to monitor, review, and inspect any directories, files and/or messages residing on or sent using the District's computers/network. Communications relating to or in support of illegal activities will be reported to the appropriate authorities.
- O. Use of the Internet and any information procured from the Internet is at the student's own risk. The District is not responsible for any damage a user suffers, including loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, service interruptions, or inaccurate information. The user accepts personal responsibility for any information obtained via the Gaston County Schools network. Personal liability will rest with the user. The user shall hold Gaston County Schools blameless from any claim, expense, liability, or damage arising out of, or in connection with, users' use of the system, including, but not limited to, telephone toll charges, database access fees, and software charges. The District is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services.
- P. Information (including text, graphic, audio, video, etc.) from Internet sources used in student papers, reports, and projects should be cited the same as references to printed materials.
- Q. Disclosure, use and/or dissemination of personal identification information of minors via the Internet is prohibited, except as expressly authorized by the minor student's parent/guardian on the "Student Internet Safety and Technology Responsible Use Agreement *in Compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)*."
- R. Proprietary rights in the design of web sites hosted on the District's servers remains at all times with the District.
- S. Users must respect the privacy of others. When using e-mail, chat rooms, blogs or other forms of electronic communication, students must not reveal personally identifiable, private or confidential information, such as the home address or telephone number, of themselves or fellow students. In addition, school employees must not disclose on the Internet or on school system websites or web pages any personally identifiable information concerning students (including names, addresses or pictures) without the written permission of a parent or guardian or an eligible student, except as otherwise permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Users also may not forward or post personal communications without the author's prior consent.

- T. Users are prohibited from cyberbullying and other harassing activities conducted through school networks. Harassment includes, but is not limited to (a) slurs, comments, jokes, innuendoes, unwelcome compliments, cartoons, visual depictions, pranks, or verbal conduct relating to an individual that have the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment; (b) have the purpose or effect of unreasonable interfering with an individual's work or school performance; or (c) interfere with school operations.
- U. Users who intentionally or negligently damage computers, computer systems, electronic devices, software or computer networks are guilty of vandalism. Users may not knowingly or negligently transmit computer viruses or self-replicating messages or deliberately try to degrade or disrupt system performance. Users must scan any downloaded files for viruses.
- V. Users may not create or introduce games, network communications programs or any foreign program or software onto any school system computer, electronic device or network without the express permission of the Chief Technology Officer or designee.
- W. Users are prohibited from engaging in unauthorized or unlawful activities, such as "hacking" or using the computer network to gain or attempt to gain unauthorized or unlawful access to other computers, computer systems or accounts. Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors is forbidden by the Children's Internet Protection Act.
- X. Users are prohibited from using another individual's computer account. Users may not read, alter, change, execute or delete files belonging to another user without the owner's express prior permission.
- Y. Users are prohibited from connecting any personal technologies to Gaston County School District owned and maintained local and wide area networks without express permission from the Chief Technology Officer or his/her designee. Such technologies include but are not limited to computers, laptops, wireless access points and routers, printers, iPods, smart phones, PDAs.
- Z. Users are prohibited from accessing non-district issued e-mail and/or Internet accounts with the exception of those supported by the district.
- AA. If generic, student E-mail accounts are provided by Gaston County Schools for curriculum based activities, the student will follow all other guidelines outlined in this policy.
- BB. Students are prohibited from streaming music and videos for non-instructional or non-teacher directed purposes.

The Gaston County Schools Website's primary purpose is to communicate effectively with its community. Schools and departments will develop and maintain their own section of the district website to provide information to the community about curriculum, instruction, school-authorized activities and other general information about our school system.

Accordingly, the following guidelines will apply:

- I. All Gaston County Schools websites shall be hosted on the District Webserver. All personnel involved in publishing to the District Webserver must have on file a Network and Internet Acceptable User Agreement (Policy Code 3230/7370) and a Web Publishing Guidelines Agreement. (<http://www.gaston.k12.nc.us/district/policies/webpub.htm>)

- II. Elementary Schools
 - A. No image shall be added to a web page that singles out a specific student.
 - B. Images should be of a group nature only and not contain legible nametags or other identifying names of students.
 - C. Captions or accompanying text to the image shall not contain specific names of students.
 - D. Identifiable images shall not be posted without proper permission from the parent/guardian.
 - E. Student images should never be published without the direct permission of the students in that image.

- III. Middle Schools
 - A. Images may be added to a web page that single out a specific student.
 - B. Images may contain legible text or identifiers of the person or persons in the image.
 - C. Captions or accompanying text may contain the first name of students within a shot, but never a last name or other personal information.
 - D. Identifiable images shall not be posted without proper permission from the parent/guardian.
 - E. Student images should never be published without the direct permission of the students in that image.

IV. High Schools

- A. Images may be added that single out a specific student.
- B. Images may contain legible text or identifiers of the person or persons in the image.
- C. Captions or accompanying text may only contain first and last names where appropriate, but no other personal information.
- D. Identifiable images shall not be posted without proper permission from the parent/guardian.
- E. Student images should never be published without the direct permission of the students in that image.

Gaston County Schools

Student Internet Safety and Technology Responsible Use Agreement (RUA)
in Compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)

To use networked resources, all students must return this form, signed by the student and the parent/guardian.

The activities that are not permitted include, but are not limited to the following:

- Sending or displaying offensive communication or pictures
- Using obscene language
- Giving personal information, such as complete name, phone number, address or identifiable photo, without permission from teacher and parent/guardian
- Harassing, insulting or attacking others
- Damaging or modifying computers, computer systems or computer networks
- Violating copyright laws
- Using others' logins, usernames, and/or passwords
- Trespassing in others' folders, work or files
- Intentionally wasting resources (e.g. printing)
- Employing the network/Internet for commercial purposes, financial gain, fraud or illegal activities

Other expectations are listed in the Student Internet Safety and Technology Responsible Use Guidelines (RUG).

It is understood that access to the Internet through the Gaston County Schools network is a privilege that is to be used for educational purposes. We have read and understand the Gaston County Schools Student Network and Internet Acceptable Use Guidelines and agree to abide by these guidelines. We have discussed appropriate and inappropriate use of the computer network.

It is understood that any violation of these guidelines is unethical and may constitute a criminal offense. Any violation of these guidelines will cause access privileges to be revoked and school disciplinary and/or appropriate legal action will be taken.

Since all files are on a public network and on equipment provided by the school system, it is understood that these files are subject to examination and review at any time.

Although Gaston County Schools provides Internet access that is constantly filtered and supervised, it is understood that there are text and graphic files available on the Internet which are inappropriate for minors. It is also understood that the student is ultimately responsible for his/her actions and the school system will not be held responsible for materials which the student might access.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

PLEASE PRINT
Student's Name: _____ User Name (Issued by School) _____ Graduation Year _____
Parent/Guardian's Name: _____ Street Address _____
Home Phone: _____ City: _____ Teacher: _____