

## Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend

### Students

#### Diocesan Internet Acceptable Use Policy

##### I. Background

The Internet is an “electronic highway” connecting millions of computers all over the world and millions of individual users, allowing students access to communicate with fellow students all over the planet.

The Internet is an international collection of thousands of independent networks. It links tens of thousands of computers with the ability to communicate as if on a single network. The Internet provides a means for people to interact and associate with others.

Internet access is now available to students and teachers in many of our Catholic schools. The access is being offered as part of a collaborative project involving the school and a local Internet Service Provider. Our goal in providing this service to teachers and students is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation and communication.

Electronic information research skills are now fundamental to the preparation of citizens and future employees during an Age of Information. It is expected that staff will blend thoughtful use of such information throughout the curriculum and assist students in the appropriate use of such resources.

Use of the Internet enhances the present curriculum of diocesan schools. The Internet is a tool for motivation for increasing reading and writing skills. It is a resource for information and for classroom research projects and other studies related to the curriculum. It provides communication with professionals in every field.

Use of the Internet is determined to be a privilege and not a right of the students in the Catholic schools. As such, Internet usage will be regulated.

##### II. School’s Responsibility

The diocesan Catholic schools will each employ a statement of policy stating the Acceptable Use of the Internet in the school and utilize written Internet User and Permission Agreements. These annual written agreements are to be signed by students, their parents/guardians, and teachers. They outline the agreed to terms and

conditions of Internet use and shall be kept on file. The policy specifically sets out acceptable uses, rules of on-line behavior, and access privileges. It also covers the penalties for violations of the policy, including security violations and vandalism of the system. A sample policy is provided for all schools by the Catholic Schools Office.

All use of the Internet must be in support of education and research and consistent with the purposes and Christian mission of Catholic schools. Students are responsible for good behavior on school computer networks just as they are in a classroom or a school hallway.

Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply. The network is provided for students to conduct research and to communicate with others under proper supervision. Access to network services will only be provided to students after they agree to act in a Christian, considerate and responsible manner.

Independent student use of telecommunications and electronic information resources will be permitted upon submission of permission forms that include guidelines for the student's responsibilities. Based upon the acceptable use guidelines outlined here, the Catholic school administrators will deem what is appropriate and inappropriate and their decision is final. The administration, faculty, and staff of the school may request the principal to deny, revoke, or suspend specific user accounts when violations occur.

The school is not liable for information stored on school diskettes, hard drives or servers; for information retrieved through school computers, networks, or on-line resources; for personal property used to access school corporation computers, networks, or on-line resources; or for unauthorized financial obligations resulting from use of Diocesan resources and accounts to access the Internet.

### III. Acceptable Use

The use of the Internet and related technologies must be in support of education and research and consistent with the educational objectives, purposes, and mission of the Catholic schools. Use of other organizations' networks or computing resources must comply with the rules appropriate for these networks.

Individual users of the computer networks are responsible for their behavior and communications over those networks. It is imperative that users comply with the school's standards and honor the agreements they have signed.

Network storage areas may be treated like school lockers. School administrators may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that students are using the system responsibly and consistent with the acceptable uses outlined herein. Users should expect that files stored on school servers will not be private.

A defined network etiquette is followed.

#### IV. Unacceptable Use

The use of the Internet connection in the school is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of those privileges. The Catholic school administrators will deem what is appropriate and inappropriate, and their decision is final. The following are not permitted:

- A. Accessing, uploading, downloading, or distributing immoral, pornographic, obscene, or sexually explicit materials.
- B. Sending or displaying unchristian, immoral, offensive, violent, pornographic, obscene or sexually explicit messages or pictures.
- C. Using violent, abusive, obscene or sexually explicit language.
- D. Harassing, insulting, or attacking others.
- E. Damaging computers, computer systems, or computer networks or attempting to harm or destroy data of another user.
- F. Violating copyright laws.
- G. Unauthorized use of another's password.
- H. Trespassing in others' folders, work, or files.
- I. Intentionally wasting resources.
- J. Employing the network for commercial purposes
- K. Transmission of any material in violation of any federal, state or local law, regulation, rule or ordinance.

Additionally, malicious use of the network to develop programs that harass other users or infiltrate a computer or computing system and/or damages the software components of a computer or computing system is prohibited.

V. Consequences For Violations of the Privileges

The faculty, staff, or parents/guardians may request the administrator or designee to deny, revoke, or suspend a specific student user's access to the Internet and related technologies due to unacceptable use. Internet policy is stated in the school handbook. Additional disciplinary action may be taken at the school in accordance with existing disciplinary practice as stated in the school handbook and/or Diocesan policy. When applicable, law enforcement agencies may be involved.

VI. Parents'/Guardians' Responsibility

During school, teachers will guide students in accessing appropriate materials. Outside of school, families must bear responsibility for such guidance as they also must with information sources such as television, telephones, movies, radio, and other potentially offensive media.

It is the family's right to decide whether or not to apply for the student's independent access to an Internet account. The school administration and teachers believe that the benefits to students from access in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration exceed the disadvantages. Parents/guardians accept responsibility for guidance of Internet use, setting and conveying standards for the child to follow when selecting, sharing or exploring information and media. Parents/guardians will be responsible for any financial obligation incurred through the use of Internet and related technologies that is not specifically previously approved and included as part of the school's budget.

Parents/guardians are required to sign an annual Permission Form and an Acceptable Use Policy with their child. Students may not access networked computer services such as electronic mail and the Internet without this annual expressed permission. Individuals and families may be held liable for violations.

Parents/guardians will be notified that their children will be using school resources and accounts to access the Internet. Parents/guardians have the option to request alternative activities not requiring Internet access.

VII. School Professionals' Responsibility

The students will, in most cases, be closely supervised during usage of the network. Precaution will be taken that they are instructed on proper usage when they are working independently. Students may pursue electronic research independent of staff supervision only if they have been granted parental

permission and have submitted all required forms. Permission is not transferable and may not be shared.

Staff will provide training in the proper use of the network. They will provide developmentally appropriate guidance to students during students' use of telecommunications and electronic information resources to conduct research and other studies related to the school curriculum. As much as possible, access to the network will be designed to point students to resources which have been evaluated by staff, and students shall be provided with guidelines and lists of information particularly suited to the learning objectives.

The smooth operation of the network relies upon the proper conduct of the ones who use it. They must adhere to strict guidelines. These guidelines include the responsibilities of not violating the privacy of other users, the right of free expression, and not plagiarizing other users' works.

With access to computers and people all over the world also comes the availability of material that may not be considered to be of educational value in the contexts of the school setting and the school's purpose and Christian mission. In some schools a limited precaution has been taken to restrict access to controversial materials by using special software (for example, Surfwatch or Cybersitter).

The technology facilitator is responsible for determining and uncovering incorrect usage of the Internet and also for informing school authorities and the student in question. The facilitator reserves the right to inspect accounts when there is suspicion of misuse. The student is responsible for adhering to all rules and guidelines while on-line with the Internet.

See (Individual) "Catholic School Internet Acceptable Use Policy"; "Internet User and Parent/Guardian Permission Agreement"; "Acceptance of Parent/Guardian Form"; and "Acceptance of Sponsoring Teacher/Technology Facilitator Form" in the School Administrative Handbook.

See Policy 4630 - Student Use of Internet Off Campus