404. INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE
PPSD POLICY

General Belief	Providence Public School District (PPSD or the District) provides access to its computer network to students and staff so as to promote and enhance student learning through communication, innovation and sharing of resources. The Providence School Board supports access by staff and students to enrich educational resources available on the internet. The use of the internet must be for educational and research activities and be consistent with the educational objectives of PPSD. The internet offers a wealth of information, the opportunity for the exchange of ideas and information, and the possibility of collaborative work. Use of computers, networks, network equipment and internet access is a privilege for staff and students and not a right. The Board expects staff and students to use these tools in a responsible manner for educational purposes and to be considerate of all other users.
Purpose and Scope	The purpose of the Internet Acceptable Use Policy is to provide guidelines and strategies to ensure the appropriate use of the internet by the PPSD community.
Definitions	The following definitions are provided to assist in understanding this policy and the legal obligations of the District. **CIPA (Children Information Protection Act):** A federal law that requires schools and libraries that receive specific federal funds to certify that they have an internet safety policy that blocks access to obscene or harmful content, as well as other measures to protect children online. **COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act):** A federal law that imposes certain requirements on operators of websites or online services directed to children under 13 years of age. **District Employee or Employee:** All District appointed personnel, pursuant to Providence Public School Board appointments**.** **District Partner:** District contractors, consultants, vendors, representatives from outside organizations, and volunteers who work in schools and/or have contact with students. **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):** A federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. **Parent/Guardian:** Any individual who has legal custody over a minor student within the District.

	Students: All individuals registered and enrolled as a student in the District, regardless of age. **Technology Committee:** A District-appointed committee which shall include designated members of IT staff, administrators, educators, and/or other individuals who will be responsible for recommending to the School Board the categories of content to be filtered. **Users:** Any District student, employee, or partner utilizing District computers and related devices, networks, and/or internet.
Guidelines and Implementation Strategies	The Superintendent will develop administrative regulations to implement the Internet Acceptable Use Policy. 1. <u>Acceptable Use of the Internet</u> Acceptable use of computers and related devices, networks, and internet access is any use which is consistent with the educational objectives of PPSD, including, but not limited to following: a) All communications should be polite with appropriate language use. b) Student personal information (including, but not limited to names, phone numbers, addresses, etc.) will not be entered, transmitted, or posted over the internet for public use without prior written authorization by District administration. c) Students will never agree to meet someone they have met online without parental written approval. Parents who agree to such a meeting are responsible for arranging appropriate supervision. d) Staff and students must respect the privacy of other users, and be aware that all communications and information are the property of PPSD. e) When creating a website, blog or any online resource for student learning, teachers and staff should contact administration for approval. f) Compliance with all federal, state, and local laws, including, but not limited to, the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). 2. <u>Unacceptable Use of the Internet</u> The following regulations for unacceptable use of computing devices using voice, video, and data networks, including the internet, will apply to all PPSD staff, and students. Users shall not: a) Promote or engage in any activities which are deemed criminal under federal, state, or local laws, including but not limited to copyright, credit card and electronic forgery laws or anything that is not within the scope of education use. b) Maliciously attempt to harm or destroy the hardware or data of another user, whether in school or at any site connected to the internet. This includes, but is not limited to, the creation and spreading of computer viruses.

c) Attempt to use or discover another's password or account. Additionally, users will not allow other persons (other than authorized staff members) to use their name, logon password, or files for any reason. User passwords do not guarantee confidentiality.
d) Impersonate another user or attempt unauthorized entry into a network.
e) Knowingly spread viruses and/or attempt to destroy shared files, or files not belonging to them.
f) Use the network or the internet in such a way as to disrupt access by others (such as downloading large files, sending mass email messages).
g) Delete, erase, rename, or make unusable another person's computer files, programs, or storage media, including department shared documents. Personal use of the computers for non-work related activities such as game playing is not acceptable during the work day.
h) Disclose, use and/or disseminate personal information of another person, or any information (i.e., social security numbers, pictures, full name, home address, or home phone number) regarding students, and staff without permission of the individual /parent/guardian or when required by law.
i) Install wireless access points and/or wireless routers without the authorization from the Technology office. The Technology office configures, secures, and manages devices on the network.
j) Send or receive any data which is profane or obscene or that advocates illegal acts, violence or discrimination toward people or organizations, or that is not within the scope of educational use.
k) Engage in bullying, harassment, discriminatory language, depictions or threats of violence, and any actions prohibited in the student code of conduct, District policy, or local, state or federal law.
l) Engage in activity for private or financial gain private advertising or promotion of a business.
m) Use PPSD's computing services and facilities for political purposes.

3. Social Media Use

All employees must adhere to the Social Media for Employees Policy and Regulation.

4. Children Information Protection Act (CIPA)

PPSD complies with CIPA, which requires that schools and libraries that receive specific federal funds certify to the funding agency that they have in place an internet safety policy. This policy requires blocking access to obscenity, child pornography, or, as to students, material harmful to minors, as defined in CIPA. CIPA also requires technology protection measures that prohibit hacking, disclosure of personal information concerning children, and unlawful activities involving children online. It also provides for the safety and security of minors while using electronic

mail and other forms of electronic communication. It also mandates that schools educate minors about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms, and also include cyber bullying awareness and response.

a) Internet Filtering. The internet will be filtered, in accordance with CIPA to limit users to educationally appropriate sites, as recommended by the Technology Committee. At the same time, PPSD is aware that material on the internet is uncensored and that the District cannot guarantee that information found on the internet will be reliable or inoffensive.

   The Technology Committee will review and recommend the filtering of content and categories of content. The Technology Committee shall prepare a document with the list of filtered categories that have been chosen, along with, a brief explanation of the educational or legal basis for the decision to filter each category. The Technology Committee shall annually review the requests made to unfiltered categories and make recommendations to the Office of Technology for any adjustments. Any revisions, if necessary, to the current categories and/or content that is filtered, will be submitted to PPSD leadership.

b) Requests to Unblock Websites. Websites may be unblocked in certain circumstances according to the following criteria:
   - Educational purposes – there is educational material being blocked by the filtering system. Where access to a specific site consistent with the purpose of education is blocked, the site shall be unblocked.
   - Staff related purposes – a staff member needs a website unblocked related to their job (such as purchasing, law enforcement, and bona fide research).

c) Any person requesting to have a site unblocked should submit a formal, written request to the PPSD technology help desk. Requests should include the following:
   - Date of the request
   - Website address to be unblocked
   - Explanation of purpose for unblocking the site (refer to criteria above)
   - Name and title of the requester

d) When replying to a request to unblock a website, the reviewer/help desk will provide specific reasons if a request is denied. The denial can be appealed to another administrator.

e) PPSD will maintain a record of any request to allow access to a website that is blocked by the internet filtering measures and the responses provided, and submit an annual report to the School Board on the number of requests granted and denied to unblock a website.

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f) The Office of Technology will annually review the requests made in the preceding year in order to determine whether the filtering categories and standards should be revised.

g) Responsibilities of School Staff While Working With Students
In addition to the filter, staff will exercise sound judgment and responsibility when giving students assignments using the internet as a resource. Students should have specific information, objectives and search strategies formulated before they access the internet. The staff member initiating the assignment must diligently supervise students using the internet to prevent unacceptable or inappropriate use of this resource. This supervision should be understood to mean continuous monitoring of students in computer labs, classrooms or media centers. Staff should guide students in the selection and evaluation of education materials, and assist students to develop safe practices for online learning particularly when the educational experience involves email, and other forms of direct electronic communications. Staff will be responsible to:

i. Review and evaluate online resources to ensure they are appropriate and applicable to the curricular needs of the assignment and the developmental level of the student(s).
ii. Monitor student computer use.
iii. Provide instruction to students (appropriate to the student's ability/developmental level) on the following topics:
iv. Guide students in the efficient use of appropriate online resources.
v. Notify students that the use of computers, the PPSD network, and the internet is a privilege and not a right.
vi. Provide information to raise student awareness of cyber safety issues.
vii. Provide information related to plagiarism and the use of online sources and/or information.
viii. Follow established PPSD Internet Acceptable Use Policy.
ix. Ensure that all use of technology is instructionally appropriate and supports PPSD outcomes.

5. Email

The following practices apply to use of PPSD email:

a) E-mail is a communication tool and should not be used as a file store.
b) E-mail communications sent or received on PPSD computers may be subject to public disclosure and may be subject to use in legal proceedings.
c) Users agree not to allow others to use their PPSD account.
d) Users are required to maintain individual mailboxes and are expected to purge messages no longer needed on a regular basis; this includes messages in the PPSD Spam Filter.
e) E-mail users are prohibited from initiating or propagating electronic chain letters.

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	f) Inappropriate mass-mailings are prohibited. This includes multiple mailings to distribution groups or individuals within PPSD e-mail address book. This also includes mass-solicitation for personal activities or personal gain. g) E-mail Archive is maintained to meet Federal Guidelines on all incoming and outgoing email on each user's account.
Training, Oversight, and Communication	Staff and students will be instructed on the appropriate use of the internet. Parents or guardians will be required to sign a permission form to allow their students to access the internet. Staff and students will sign a form acknowledging that they have read and understand the Internet Acceptable Use Policy which includes submittal of PPSD online forms (IAUP), that they will comply with the policy and understand the consequences for violating the policy.
Compliance with Laws, Confidentiality Requirements	General school rules and policies apply to all District computer use, internet activity and communication. If a user is found to be in violation of any of the provisions detailed in the above-mentioned policy, all network and internet rights and privileges will be suspended until an investigation is conducted. Upon completion of the investigation, a decision will be given by the supervisor to revoke or reinstate the computer user's privileges. Such violations may also result in further disciplinary measures or legal actions. All staff and students of PPSD take full responsibility for their own actions in regard to the use of handling of the technology and the use of the internet, network and email. PPSD makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. PPSD will not be responsible for any damages the user suffers, including but not limited to the loss of data, delays, non-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by its negligence or the users' errors or omissions. Individual users are solely responsible for all charges and fees that they may incur in using the network, including outside telephone, printing, and merchandise purchases made through the network. PPSD is not a party to such transactions and shall not be responsible for any costs or damages, whether direct or indirect, arising out of the network transactions by the user. PPSD's computer network belongs solely to PPSD, and any files, records, electronic mail or other communication may be examined, edited, or deleted by PPSD at any time, in accordance with PPSD's policy or regulations. In general, electronic mail in personal accounts will not be inspected without the

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	consent of the sender or a recipient, except as necessary to investigate a complaint. The Superintendent will ensure that all PPSD employees and all PPSD contractors comply fully with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations, and with all Board policies. In the event any part of any policy is unlawful, the Superintendent will report such event to the Board as soon as practicable and request of the Board a modification of the policy.
Legal Reference	E-rate schools, minors 47 USC § 254(h)(5)(B)(i) E-rate schools, adults 47 USC § 254(h)(5)(C)(i) Libraries, minors 47 USC § 254(h)(6)(B)(i) Libraries, adults 47 USC § 254(h)(6)(C)(i) Schools under Education Act Sec. 3601(a)(1)(A)(i) Libraries under Museum and Libraries Act 20 U.S.C. 9134(f)(1)(A)(i) Rhode Island General Law § 16-21.6-1. Internet Filtering.
History	Approved by Board: August 26, 2002, Resolution 8-31-02 Amended: September 10, 2012; October 9, 2019

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