

## **GUIDELINES FOR INTERNET AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

The Internet has become a global and ubiquitous reality. It offers access to a wealth of knowledge which can be extremely beneficial to students and teachers, adults and minors, and anyone who seeks information. The Internet can also be dangerous. Because the Internet offers the opportunity for anonymity, there is the possibility for cyber bullying and other harmful acts and for sexual predators to have access to minors.

It is important for teachers, administrators and other adults working in schools to maintain appropriate boundaries with respect to students. This is for the protection of both students and adults. The internet and other electronic communications pose unique challenges in this regard.

Computer use, including use of non-school equipment and use outside of the school, can have harmful effects on students, teachers and the school community. Any person who makes inappropriate use of the Internet, cell phones, or other means of electronic communications that is harmful to the good order and discipline of the school, its religious mission or its educational objectives, is subject to disciplinary action.

This document establishes guidelines for the appropriate and professional use of the Internet, electronic mail, and telephone for adults working with students.

Acceptable protocol includes the following:

- Adults should direct e-mail and telephone communication to parents and guardians. In the event that this is not possible, they should consult with the principal or his/her designee.
- E-mail communication should be sent through school e-mail accounts only. Adults should remember to write as if others are certain to read what is written. E-mail communication can easily be shared with others for whom the communication was not intended.
- Only school matters or matters appropriate to be discussed in school should be communicated.
- In responding to student initiated communication, boundaries must be maintained. Adults can be friendly with students but they are never friends.

Unacceptable activities include but are not limited to the following:

- Bullying or harassing a student, parent, teacher, administrator, school employee or other member of the school community.
- Posting statements, pictures, or other materials that are false, derogatory, defamatory, degrading, malicious, disrespectful, or threatening to a student, parent, teacher, administrator, school employee or other member of the school community.
- Using the school seal (logo) or motto without written permission of the principal.
- Creating a website or webpage designed to look like an official school posting without the written permission of the principal.
- Adults may not create a website or personal blog with photos of students or links or gateways to students' webpages or blogs. Students should not be on adults' "buddy lists."
- Adults should not use instant or text messaging with students.

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Signature

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Date