

Thorndale I.S.D. Acceptable Use Policy

Board Policy Governing Use of the District's Electronic Communication System

A. Purpose

1. Thorndale I.S.D. is providing employees and students with access to the District's electronic communication system, which includes Internet access.
2. *The District system has a limited educational purpose.* The purpose of the District system is to assist in preparing students for success in life and work in the 21st century by providing them with electronic access to a wide range of information including the ability to communicate with people throughout the world. Additionally, the system will be used to increase District intra-communication, enhance productivity, and assist District employees in upgrading their skills through greater exchange of information with their peers. The District system will also assist the District in sharing information with the local community, including parents, social service agencies, government agencies, and businesses.
3. Users may not use the District system for commercial purposes defined as offering or providing goods or services or purchasing goods or services for *personal business use*. District acquisition policies will be followed for District purchase of goods or services through the District system.
4. Users may not use the District system for political lobbying. District employees and students may use the system to communicate with their elected representatives and to express their opinion on political issues.
5. The term "educational purpose" includes use of the system for classroom activities, professional or career development, and limited high-quality self-discovery activities.

B. District Responsibilities

1. The Superintendent will serve as the coordinator to oversee the District system and will work with other regional or state organizations as necessary.
2. The District Technology Coordinator will approve District activities, ensure teachers receive proper training in the use of the system and the requirements of this policy, establish a system to ensure adequate supervision of students using the system, maintain executed user agreements, and be responsible for interpreting the District Acceptable Use Policy at all levels.
3. The District Technology Coordinator will establish a process for setting-up individual and class accounts, set quotas for disk usage on the system, establish a retention schedule, establish a District virus protection process, and other District activities.

C. Technical Services Provided through the District System

1. *Email*. Email will allow employees and students to communicate with people throughout the world. Users will also be able to subscribe to mail lists to engage in group discussion **related to educational subjects**.
2. *World Wide Web*. The Web provides access to a wide range of information in the form of text, graphics, photographs, video, and sound, from throughout the world. The Web is a valuable research tool for students and employees.
3. *Telnet*. Telnet allows the user to log in to remote computers. Telnet is available **only** at the professional level using the District System and is allowable with permission from the District Technology Coordinator. .
4. *File Transfer Protocol (FTP)*. FTP allows users to download large files and computer software. This service is for **professional use only** and is allowable with permission from the District Technology Coordinator.
5. *Newsgroups*. Newsgroups are discussion groups that are similar to mail lists. The District will provide access to selected newsgroups that relate to subjects that are appropriate to the educational purpose of the system.
6. *Internet Relay Chat (IRC)*. IRC provides the capability of engaging in “real-time” discussions. The District will provide access to IRC **only** for specifically defined **educational** activities.
7. *Blocking and Filtering Software*. The District will acquire software designed to block access to certain sites.

D. Access to the System

1. The District’s Acceptable Use Policy will govern all use of the District system. In addition, student use of the system is also be governed by the disciplinary code. As well, employee use is also governed by the District Policy.
2. *World Wide Web*. All District employees and students will have access to the Web through the District’s networked computers. Parents may specifically request their child(ren) not be provided such access by notifying the District in Writing.
3. *Classroom Accounts*. Elementary age students will be granted email access only through a classroom account. Elementary students may be provided with an individual account under special circumstances at the request of their teacher and with the approval of their parent. An agreement will only be required for an individual account, which must be signed by the student and his or her parent. Parents may specifically request their child(ren) not be provided access through the classroom account by notifying the District in writing.

4. *Individual E-mail Accounts for Students.* Secondary students may be provided individual email accounts. An agreement will be required for an individual email account. This agreement must be signed by the student and his or her parent. Students may have access to their own web-based email accounts. **There is a limit of 10 minutes per day that students may access their email accounts through the District system. At no time should students be allowed to access their account during instructional times unless their access is strictly related to the curriculum.**
5. *Individual E-mail Accounts for District Employees.* District employees will be provided an individual account and may have dial-up access to the system.
6. *Guest Accounts.* Guests may receive an individual account with the approval of a District Administrator. A signed agreement will be required and parental signature will also be required if the guest is a minor (e.g. Districts may allow home schoolers to obtain access through the District system).

E. Parental Notification and Responsibility

1. The District will notify the parents about the District network and the policies governing its use. Parents must sign an agreement to allow their student to have an individual account. Parents may request alternative activities for their child(ren) that do not require Internet access.
2. Parents have the right at any time to investigate the contents of their child(ren)'s email files. Parents have the right to request the termination of their child(ren)'s individual account at any time.
3. The District Acceptable Use Policy contains restrictions on accessing inappropriate material. There is a wide range of material available on the Internet, some of which may not be fitting with the particular values of the families of the students. It is not practically possible for the District to monitor and enforce the wide range of social values in student use of the Internet. Further, the District recognizes that parents bear primary responsibility for transmitting their particular set of family values to their children. The District will encourage parents to specify to their child(ren) what material is and is not acceptable for their child(ren) to access through the District system.
4. The District will provide students and parents with guidelines for student safety while using the Internet.
5. Parents are responsible for monitoring their student's use of the Internet when they are accessing the system from home.

F. District Limitation of Liability

1. The District makes no warranties of any kind, either expressed or implied, that the functions or the services provided by or through the District system will be error-free or without defect. The District will not be responsible for any damage users may suffer, including but not limited to, loss of data or interruptions of service. The District is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of the

information obtained through or stored on the system. The District will not be responsible for financial obligations arising through the unauthorized use of the system.

G. Due Process

1. The District will fully cooperate with local, state, and/or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to any illegal activities conducted through the District system.
2. In the event there is an allegation that a student has violated the District Acceptable Use Policy, the student will be provided with a written notice of the alleged violation and an opportunity to present an explanation before a neutral administrator.
3. Disciplinary actions will be handled in accord with the District's Disciplinary Code as well as specifications set forth in the District's Acceptable Use Policy.
4. Employee violations of the District Acceptable Use Policy will be handled in accord with the guidelines set forth in the District's policy governing appropriate behavior and the specifications set forth in the District Acceptable Use Policy.
5. The District Technology Coordinator may terminate the account privileges of a guest user by providing notice to the user. Any District administrator may also recommend terminating a guest account. Guest accounts not active for more than 30 days may be removed, along with the user's files without notice to the user.

H. Search and Seizure

1. System users have a limited privacy expectation in the contents of their personal and email files on the District system.
2. Routine maintenance and monitoring of the system may lead to the discovery that the user has or is violating the District Acceptable Use Policy, the disciplinary code, and/or the law.
3. An individual search will be conducted if there is reasonable suspicion that a user has violated the law or the disciplinary code. The nature of the investigation will be reasonable and in the context of the nature of the alleged violation.
4. District employees should be aware that their personal files may be discoverable under the state public records laws.

I. Copyright and Plagiarism

1. District policies on copyright will govern the use of material accessed through the District system. Because the extent of copyright protection of certain works found on the Internet is unclear, employees will make a standard practice of requesting permission from the holder of the work if their use of the material has the potential of being considered infringement. Teachers will instruct students to respect copyright and to request permission when appropriate.

2. District policies on plagiarism will govern use of material accessed through the District system. Teachers will instruct students in appropriate research and citation practices.

J. Academic Freedom, Selection of Material, Student Rights to Free Speech

1. Board policies on Academic Freedom and Free Speech will govern the use of the Internet.
2. When using the Internet for class activities, teachers will select material that is appropriate in light of the age of the students and that is relevant to the course objectives. Teachers will preview the materials and sites they require or recommend students access to determine the appropriateness of the material contained on or accessed through the site. Teachers will assist their students in developing the skills to ascertain the truthfulness of information, distinguish fact from opinion, and engage in discussions about controversial issues while demonstrating tolerance and respect for those who hold divergent views.

K. District Web Site

1. *District Web Site.* The District will establish a Web site and will develop Web pages that will present information about the District. The District Technology Coordinator or her appointee will be the designated Webmaster, responsible for maintaining the District Web site.
2. *School or Class Web Pages.* Schools and classes may establish Web pages that present information about the school or class activities. The District Technology Coordinator may designate an individual to be responsible for managing the school Web site. Teachers will be responsible for maintaining their class site.
3. *Student Web Pages.* With the approval of the building principal and the District Technology Coordinator, students may establish personal Web pages. The District Technology Coordinator or her designee will establish a process and criteria for the establishment and posting of material, including pointers to other sites, on these pages. Material presented in the student's Web site must be related to the student's educational and career preparation activities. Student Web pages must include the following notice: "This is a student Web page. Opinions expressed on this page shall not be attributed to the District."
4. *Extracurricular Organization Web Pages.* With the approval of the building principal and the District Technology Coordinator, extracurricular organizations may establish Web pages. The District Technology Coordinator or her designee will establish a process and criteria for the establishment and posting of material, including pointers to other sites, on these pages. Material presented on the organization Web page must relate specifically to organization activities and will include only student-produced material. Organization Web pages must include the following notice: "This is a student extracurricular organization Web page. Opinions expressed on this page shall not be attributed to the District."

L. District Acceptable Use Policy

The following uses of the District system are considered unacceptable:

1. Personal Safety (Restrictions are for students only).

- a. Users will not post personal contact information about themselves or other people. Personal contact information includes address, telephone number, school address, work address, etc.
- b. Users will not agree to meet with someone they have met on-line without their parent's approval and participation.
- c. Users will promptly disclose to their teacher or another school employee any message they receive that is inappropriate or makes them feel uncomfortable.
- d. **Users will not engage in any "chat room or blog" activities unless it is teacher guided. If it is teacher guided it must be directly connected to the curriculum and documented in the teacher's lesson plans.**

2. Illegal Activities

- a. Users will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to the District system or any other computer system through the District system, or go beyond their authorized access. **This includes, but is not limited to, attempting to log in through another person's account or access another person's files.** These actions are considered illegal, even if only for the purposes of "browsing".
- b. Users will not make deliberate attempts to disrupt the computer system performance or destroy data by spreading computer viruses or by any other means. These actions are considered illegal.
- c. Users will not use the District system to engage in any other illegal act, including but not limited to, arranging for a drug sale or the purchase of alcohol, engaging in criminal gang activity, threatening the safety of any person(s), etc.
- d. *Users will not use the District system to send a broadcast message of any kind.*

3. System Security

- a. Users are responsible for the use of their individual account and should take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from being able to use their account. **Under no conditions should a user provide their password to another person.**
- b. Users will immediately notify the District Technology Coordinator if they have identified a possible security problem. Users will not go looking for security problems, because this may be construed as an illegal attempt to gain access.

- c. Users will avoid the inadvertent spread of computer viruses by following the District virus protection procedures if they open attachments.

4. Inappropriate Language

- a. Restrictions against inappropriate language apply to public messages, private messages, and material posted on Web pages.
- b. Users will not use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful language.
- c. Users will not post information that, if acted upon, could cause damage or a danger of disruption to the District system or class instruction.
- d. Users will not engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks.
- e. Users will not harass another person. Harassment is persistently acting in a manner that distresses or annoys another person. If a user is told by a person to stop sending them messages, they must stop. *This includes but is not limited to the forwarding of messages from another person who has not given permission to do so and/or any listservs.*
- f. Users will not knowingly or recklessly post false or defamatory information about a person or organization.

5. Respect for Privacy

- a. Users will not re-post a message that was sent to them privately without the permission of the person who sent them the message.
- b. Users will not post private information about another person.

6. Respecting Resources Limits

- a. Users will use the system only for educational and professional or career development activities and limited, high-quality, self-discovery activities.
- b. Users will not download files without permission from the District Technology Coordinator.
- c. Users will not post chain letters or engage in “spamming”. Spamming is sending an annoying or unnecessary message to a large number of people.
- d. ***Teachers and staff will check their e-mail frequently, delete unwanted messages promptly, and stay within their e-mail quota.***

7. Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement

- a. Users will not plagiarize works that they find on the Internet. Plagiarism is taking the ideas or writings of others and presenting them as if they were original to the user.
- b. Users will respect the rights of copyright owners. Copyright infringement occurs when an individual inappropriately reproduces a work that is protected by copyright. If a work contains language that specifies acceptable use of that work, the user should follow the expressed requirements. If the user is unsure whether or not they can use a work, they should request permission from the copyright owner.

8. Inappropriate Access to Material

- a. Users will not use the District system to access material that is profane or obscene, that advocates illegal acts, or that advocates violence or discrimination towards other people and/or organizations. For students, a special exception may be made for hate literature if the purpose of such access is to conduct research and both the teacher and the parent approve access. District employees may access the above material only in the context of legitimate research.
- b. If a user inadvertently accesses such information, they should immediately get off the site and disclose the inadvertent access in a manner specified by their school. This will protect users against an allegation that they have intentionally violated the Acceptable Use Policy.

9. Consequences for Misuse of the District System

- a. Students violating the District policy with regard to downloading files, installing software, messaging, using another student's I.D., using the Internet without a teacher or librarian in the room, accessing inappropriate sites, accessing or engaging in chat room or blog discussions that are not directly related to the curriculum, disrupting the District system in any way, or other inappropriate actions not mentioned above, will face consequences for these actions.
- b. Possible consequences for misuse of the District system include but are not limited to:
 - In School Suspension with loss of exemptions.
 - Removal from all networked computers for one semester.
 - 2nd offense – Removal from network computers for one calendar year.
 - 3rd offense – Removal from network computers permanently.

10. Student and Parent/Guardian Release to Publish on the Thorndale ISD Web Page

As part of our growing integration of technology in the classroom and the publishing of documents on the District's web page, and the integrated use technologies in general we would like to include our students' work and photographs. In order to publish student work and/or their photograph we will need both student and parent/guardian permission.

The following guidelines will apply for all students:

- Personal phone numbers and home addresses, or names of other family members will not be included
- Contact person on any web page will be the teacher and/or the Web Master – not the student
- Documents may not include any information which indicates the physical location of a student at a given time other than attendance at a particular school or participation in school activities
- All documents must conform to school board policies and established school guidelines

Elementary and Middle School Students:

- The above information applies
- In addition, only the first name and the first initial of the last name of the student will be published to ensure privacy
- Sports rosters without photographs will include both first and last names – just as published in local newspapers

High School Students:

- Personal contact information will not be included
- First and last name with a photograph – for example – Student of the Month, Fall and Spring Citizen, Homecoming Queen, National Honor Society, Honor students, etc.
- Sports rosters with photographs and names

When group pictures are used on the web page – should you and/or the student not grant permission, the student's name will be omitted and the face will be blurred to prevent identification.

There will be from time to time, teachers that want to produce or have their students produce PowerPoint presentations that would include photographs of their classmates. This includes, but is not limited to, graduation presentations.

Should you and/or the student have any questions concerning this policy or how the web page differs from publishing in our local newspapers, please contact any of the following District's personnel:

Robert Lindemann, Interim Superintendent of Schools: 898-2538

Suzanne Quick, District Librarian and Technology Coordinator/Web Master: 898-5226

Don Mathis, High School Principal: 898-2421

John Rueter, Middle School Principal: 898-2670

James Dreyer, Elementary Principal: 898-2912

Please see attached page for signatures.