

## NETWORK AND INTERNET SAFETY

The New Hanover County Schools wide area network (WAN) connects thousands of users to electronic information, communication tools, and the World Wide Web. This WAN utilizes a complex association of both hardware and software throughout the New Hanover County Schools district. The integrity and stability of this network and the services it provides rely on the proper conduct of its users and strict adherence to acceptable use guidelines established in this policy.

Technology plays a vital role in assuring equitable access to a variety of resources. The New Hanover County School System provides access to network resources to help conduct the instructional, administrative, and operational business of the school district.

A part of network resources is the Internet. As a learning resource, the Internet is similar to books, magazines, audio recordings, videos, CD-ROMS, and other information media that may be used to meet educational needs. Students and educators may also use the Internet to participate in distance learning activities, ask questions and consult with experts, and communicate with other students, educators and individuals.

The Internet also provides access to material that is of no educational value. However, the value of the information found and interaction available outweighs the possibility of locating inappropriate material.

Internet access is coordinated through a complex association of government agencies, as well as regional and state networks. The smooth operation of the network relies upon the proper conduct of all users who adhere to strict guidelines. The guidelines, which call for efficient, ethical and legal utilization of the network resources, are provided here so that users are aware of the responsibilities they are about to assume. In addition, guidelines from other service providers must also be followed. **Violations of any of these provisions may result in access being suspended and/or future access being denied.**

Electronic mail (e-mail) is provided to conduct the business of the school district. Occasional and reasonable personal use is permitted, providing that this does not interfere with the performance of an individual's job assignment or the performance of the electronic mail system.

New Hanover County Schools utilizes the following security services as required by state and/or federal agencies: identification, authentication, authoring and access control, accountability, administration, and auditing.

### **Online Responsibilities**

**Acceptable Use** - The goal of providing network/Internet access for students and staff is to support education and research consistent with the educational objectives of the New Hanover County School System. Transmission of any material in violation of any federal or state regulations is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material in violation of New Hanover County Board of Education policies.

**Privileges** - The use of the network/Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in suspension of that privilege. All user accounts are property of the New Hanover County Schools. School staff or system administrators may deny access at any time that it is deemed necessary. Serious and/or repetitive infractions will be reported to school and district

administrators and handled according to school and district student discipline policy (Policy 8410).

**Network Etiquette** - While each user has the right to free speech, all are expected to abide by the New Hanover County Board of Education acceptable Code of Conduct (Policy 8410). The following are specifically not permitted:

- Accessing, producing, posting, sending, or displaying material that is offensive in nature. This includes obscene, discriminating, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, disrespectful, or sexually suggestive language or images, including images of exposed private body parts.
- Harassing, insulting, or attacking others.
- Knowingly or carelessly performing an act that will interfere with the normal operation of computers, terminals, peripherals, or networks, including vandalism and the creation, upgrading, or disseminating of computer viruses.
- Violating copyright laws. All communications and information accessible via the network are private property unless otherwise stated.
- Using another's identification, username, or password.
- Illegally using, destroying, or manipulating data in folders or work files.
- Intentionally wasting limited resources. This includes distributing mass e-mail messages, participating in chain letters, creating and participating in unauthorized newsgroups, sending large graphic files unrelated to school district operation, and storing files on file servers without proper authorization.
- Employing the network for commercial purposes.
- Using the system for political lobbying.
- Revealing or disseminating personal or family identification information (i.e. name, address, or phone number).
- Arranging or agreeing to meet with someone you have met on-line.
- Attempting to gain unauthorized access to the New Hanover County Schools network.
- Engaging in any illegal activities or accessing material advocating illegal acts or violence. This includes pornography and hate literature.
- Posting information that could be disruptive, cause damage, or endanger students or staff.
- Posting false or defamatory information about a person or organization.
- Downloading files without prior approval from supervising staff.

- Accessing chat rooms unless assigned by a teacher/administrator for a valid educational purpose.

**Security** - Security on a computer system is critical, especially when the system involves many users. Proper procedures for logging on and off the network must be followed. If a security problem is identified, the user must notify a system administrator or staff member; the problem may not be demonstrated to other users. Unauthorized use of accounts is strictly prohibited. Attempts to log on to the network as a computer system administrator will result in immediate cancellation of user privileges. Users who have a history of problems with other computer systems or who have been identified as a security risk for any other reason will be denied access to the network. Unauthorized access, including hacking, is prohibited.

#### **Access to Inappropriate Material**

New Hanover County Schools utilizes a technology protection measure that monitors and filters Internet access. The filtering service utilizes a customizable database that denies access to sites that are identified as obscene, pornographic, or harmful to minors.

#### **Inappropriate Network Usage**

Steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of the New Hanover County Schools online computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications. Activities must be related to the educational program and determined not to be harmful to minors.

#### **Education, Supervision and Monitoring**

It shall be the responsibility of all members of the New Hanover County Schools staff to educate, supervise, and monitor appropriate usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy, the Children's Internet Protection Act, the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act, and the Protecting Children in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act.

#### **Warranty**

The New Hanover County School System makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. The New Hanover County School System will not be responsible for any damage suffered. These include, but are not limited to, loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, miss-deliveries, service interruptions, or personal errors or omissions. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at the user's risk. The New Hanover County School System specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through Internet access.

#### **Sanctions**

Violations of any of the above provisions may result in access being suspended and/or future access being denied.

Disciplinary action related to inappropriate use of electronic resources will be determined in accordance with existing board policies as stated in the New Hanover County Board of Education Policy Manual. When deemed necessary, the infractions may be referred to law enforcement agencies for appropriate legal action.

## Student Agreement

**PLEASE READ THE PRECEDING DOCUMENT CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING.**

The signatures below are legally binding and indicate that the parties who have signed have read the Network and Internet Safety Policy and understand the terms and conditions and their significance.

**Network and Internet Safety Policy (7188)  
of  
New Hanover County Schools**

I understand and will abide by the Network and Internet Safety Policy of the New Hanover County School System. I further understand that any violation of the regulations is unethical and may constitute a criminal offense. Should I commit any violation, my access privileges may be revoked, school disciplinary action may be taken, and/or appropriate legal action may result.

Student's Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print)

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

## Parent or Guardian Consent

As the parent or guardian of this student, I have read and explained to my child the New Hanover County School System's Network and Internet Safety Policy (7188). I understand that this access is provided for educational purposes. I recognize it is impossible for the school district to totally restrict access to controversial materials, and I will not hold it responsible for materials acquired on the network. Further, I hereby give permission for my child to use the network, and I certify that the information contained on this form is correct.

Parent or Guardian's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print)