

Frequently Asked Questions

Board of Education Policy 7220, Purpose and Use of Computer and Network Resources

General Information Regarding Section B – Purpose of the District’s Computer and Network Resources

Employees are concerned that Section B prohibits all personal uses. The intent of Section B is to identify why the network was established and the guiding reasons that computer resources are available.

Philosophically, if our employees are using the Internet for personal uses, their fluency will cross over into more efficient use of the Internet for work purposes, benefiting all of us. It is clear in the policy, however, that personal use must not interfere with the employee’s assigned duties.

You can think of personal use of the Internet as a similar situation to personal use of a school telephone or personal reading of a school library book. The libraries purchase books for pleasure reading as well as for research.

There are many questions regarding whether a user may access a certain type of website. The overarching rules are:

1. You cannot access sites that are pornographic, contain pornographic images, or illegal content.
2. You cannot do personal business during your assigned duty time. Teachers may access the Internet or use email for personal reasons during preparation periods, but not during classes when they are assigned to work with students. Support staff may use the Internet or email for personal reasons during times when they are not on duty. Supervisors are responsible for making sure that all employees fulfill the requirements of their jobs. The technology staff is not responsible for policing employees’ personal use of the district’s Internet connection or email system.

In the tables below, we have provided answers to many of the questions you submitted concerning the policies.

General

Why is there an update to the Purpose and Use of Computer and Network Resources policy now?	The district is required to adopt a policy addressing inappropriate Internet content in order to comply with the Children’s Internet Protection Act. Unless we have a CIPA policy, we cannot receive substantial funding available through federal and state grants. CIPA requires that every computer on the network must go through the content filter. Thus, the policy applies to all computers and users.
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Email

What if I open an email from a friend and it's not appropriate?	You would promptly delete the email and possibly ask the friend to send personal communications to your home account instead of your school account.
During the last year I have started to receive numerous, unwanted emails. What if I accidentally open one? What is the district doing to stop these unwanted emails from entering our system?	<p>Many junk emails are the result of viruses. The district has purchased software to catch viruses transmitted within emails, but the product has not yet been installed. If you receive an email from an unknown or suspicious source, delete it right away. You could select the email and view its properties to get more information about the contents. If the email has an attachment ending in “.exe”, you should delete it immediately.</p> <p>We plan to upgrade to GroupWise 6.5 during this year. The new version has some spam control built-in. We are also testing other utility software that could help block spam.</p> <p>The best defense against spam is to <u>not</u> enter your Glenbrook email address on websites that you visit. You may enter your address in order to receive information on a particular topic, but in fact, the vendor sells the email list to other companies.</p>
Can I access my yahoo or other personal email account before or after school or during lunch?	Yes.

Monitoring Usage

How will the district monitor usage of computers?	We will periodically run reports that summarize websites visited by our users. The purpose of the monitoring system is to identify patterns of abuse, such as repeated attempts to access sites on the pornography filter list, or interactive gaming sites, or illegal downloads, etc. The software can tie website access to individual user login names. The monitoring software is not a system that captures all the keystrokes a person types, or a remote viewing system that allows someone to electronically watch over your shoulder. Remote viewing is only done with the permission of the user when technical support is requested. Our monitoring software will analyze websites accessed by district users.
If someone is found violating conditions, are they reprimanded and warned or just dismissed?	The extent of the discipline will depend upon the violation. If the user has violated a law, for example, has viewed child pornography, then the incident must be reported to legal authorities.

Software and Settings

Can we have a different home page?	All Glenbrook machines will be initially set up with a Glenbrook website as the home page (either the district site, or one of the school home pages). You may change the setting on adult computers, but not on student computers.
Can we have a different browser?	The district standard is Internet Explorer version 6. However, we also use Netscape in certain areas due to web-based curriculum that requires that browser. Safari works best on Macs with OS X, and the libraries have used a modified browser that can be configured to greatly restrict access. If your school computer is a laptop and you want to use it to login to your own Internet service from home, you will probably need that company's software installed. School technicians will need to install the software for you due to security settings on the PC's. The main problem with using other browsers is AOL's software. It causes many conflicts when installed on school computers. Also, GroupWise Web Access does not function within AOL's browser. If you have an AOL account at home, connect to AOL, then minimize the AOL browser screen. Then open Internet Explorer (or Safari on Mac OS X) and connect to GroupWise Web Access.
Can we save our favorites websites to the Favorites list?	Yes.
Can we run a better calendar program?	GroupWise provides a very powerful calendar program and is the district's standard. However, many of the calendar features are not available in the Macintosh client. A new Mac client is predicted for next year. If you need a different type of calendar software for your job, make the request of your building technology coordinator. The software must be analyzed for compatibility with our systems, and then a legal copy must be purchased.
Can we run software that we may have picked up at conference to see if it will work for the classroom? Can we run shareware/freeware software?	Contact your building technology coordinator in this situation. First, we must analyze whether the software is compatible with our systems and network. Then if you find that the software benefits your instruction, it must be approved and purchased by your department.

Website Access

<p>If we are allowed to use the Internet for personal use on our own time (e.g. lunchtime), how will the district determine if I was on a non-school related website during my lunchtime taking into consideration that people do not go to lunch at the same time everyday.</p> <p>Who will be determining if a website I visit is "work related" and what will that determination be based on?</p>	<p>Each individual's supervisor would determine if an employee was accessing the Internet during time when the employee should be on duty. This is not the duty of the district technology staff.</p>
<p>Can we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ...download a recipe for tonight's dinner? ...book personal airline tickets? ...check on "wellness" issues, such as diseases and/or symptoms of such? ...read online newspapers? ...look up 'help' for new software? ...do online banking? ...check the weather? ...view The Onion? ...search for lawn care information? ...search real estate listings? ...look up reviews for concerts? ...use MapQuest for personal needs? ...search for personal phone numbers? 	<p>Yes, remembering that personal use of the Internet or email should be done outside of your assigned duty times.</p> <p>Glenbrook employees are encouraged to use websites to obtain directory assistance as a cost-saving measure.</p>
<p>How can we keep pop-ups off our computers that might violate this policy?</p>	<p>Pop-ups are annoying, and currently we have no special software to eliminate them. All you can do is close each window, or in extreme cases, close the browser and start again.</p>
<p>Can I listen to music through the Internet while working?</p>	<p>No, limited Internet bandwidth may be an issue and could slow network response. Almost every district computer has a CD-ROM player that is capable of playing music if it is needed. Also, we have blocked downloading of music from some file sharing sites due to abuse by students.</p>
<p>Are we permitted to use the Internet to purchase items such as books and gifts, or purchase stocks from an online broker?</p>	<p>Yes. One area of concern: Glenbrook employees should not use school email addresses to sell or advertise items on eBay or similar sites. You should not post a school address to an outside site for personal business.</p>
<p>When my children come to school with me on the weekend, will they be able to play games on nick.com and other children's sites?</p>	<p>Yes. We currently block some interactive game sites that were being abused by students, but we do not block all games sites.</p>

<p>May I use school email to inform colleagues/friends that I am participating in a charity event and ask them to sponsor me?</p>	<p>This type of announcement should be directed to specific individuals and not to the “All” groups within our email system. It should be advertised through the AD email account instead.</p>
<p>Will teachers be allowed to view the filter list to see the list of sites to be blocked?</p>	<p>No. We will not have this capability. Teachers who plan a lesson using websites that could be related to sexual issues should preview the sites from a school computer and make sure our filter does not block them.</p>
<p>Will GEA members be included on the District Technology Advisory Committee to review categories on the filter list?</p>	<p>5 teachers were invited to participate in the initial committee work to develop a filtering policy. We anticipate having 2 teachers and a representative from our support staff from each building continue to serve on the committee.</p>
<p>Can the GSA sponsors access gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender websites?</p>	<p>Any teacher that needs to research sexually related websites should preview the sites to make sure our pornography filter does not block them. One problem with any filtering solution is that legitimate material can be blocked by mistake. If the material is valid for educational purposes, access is permitted. The Instructional Supervisor may be consulted if the websites being requested for access are of concern.</p>
<p>Will the filter block sites like “terrorism”, “suicide”, “nukes”, “anarchy”, “sedition”, “pornography”, etc.?</p>	<p>Section H of the policy outlines the filtering to be done on our network. There are dozens of categories of information that popular filtering software services identify. We have chosen NOT to filter categories other than pornography, illegal sites, and <u>non-educational</u> sites that seriously degrade the performance of our network, such as interactive game sites. We currently block some MP3 sites that were being abused by students.</p>