

# **Zavalla Independent School District**

**Zavalla, Texas**

## **Acceptable Use Policy**

### **Information Network Access and Ethics**

#### **Introduction**

The information super highway is a reality. From your school you can travel all over the world to gather information. As more people travel this electronic highway, maps to find information and rules to keep traveling safe become vital to successfully completing the journey.

The information networks of the Zavalla Independent School District represent powerful educational resources which allow you to find information anywhere in the world. You can connect to businesses, major universities, national libraries, other schools and other students around the world.

Your school has rules for acceptable behavior. Likewise, there are correct procedures and rules that govern the use of the information networks. If you don't follow these guidelines, you may lose your privileges to access the information highway.

Before you can travel the information highway, you must complete the Network Access Orientation. After you complete the orientation, you and your parents will be asked to sign a statement acknowledging that you are aware of the proper procedures for using our information networks. This signed statement becomes your permission slip to take trips on the information highway.

#### **Information Networks**

The Zavalla Independent School District network is called Z-Net. Z-Net connects various Zavalla Independent School District offices together. This makes sharing information and communicating with District schools and offices possible. This network supports activities which have educational value for administration, teachers and students. Z-Net is one of the thousands of networks that make up the Internet.

The Internet is a collection of many worldwide networks that support the open exchange of information. The Internet provides immediate access to information anywhere in the world. You can look at (and print out) articles, documents and pictures that you can use in your classes. You can even get current facts about news, weather and sports.

## **First Steps**

It is important to your teachers, your parents and your school administrators that you understand the many consequences of the new computer connections that you wish to make using the information networks. It is important that you understand that your use of this powerful educational tool is a privilege. If you use it properly, it can provide you with countless hours of exploration. You can lose this privilege if you break any of the network access rules.

Some parts of the Internet may contain material that is not suited for students. The intent of the Zavalla Independent School District is to use connections on the Internet only for purposes consistent with out approved curriculum. Anyone who uses the network illegally or improperly will lose their use privileges. The information networks cannot be used for commercial or for-profit services. The rules defined in this document describe the proper way to use this research tool.

## **Who's On the Internet?**

The information networks are "public places." You must always remember that you are sharing this space with many other users. Millions of individuals may be interacting across the network at the same time. Your actions can be "seen" by others on the network. If you use a particular service on the network, it is likely that someone knows the connections that you are making, knows about the computer shareware that you are using and knows what you looked at while you were in the system. Because these connections are granted to you as part of the larger scope of the curriculum, the Zavalla Independent School District has the right to monitor what you do on the network to make sure that the network continues to function properly for all of its users.

## **Your Behavior**

You are expected to use the network to pursue intellectual activities, seek resources, access libraries and other types of learning activities. We want you to explore this new "space", and discover what is available there. We want you to learn new things and share your new-found knowledge with your friends, your parents and your teachers.

When you are using the computer network and communicating with others, keep the following in mind: (1) You cannot see them; (2) You cannot tell how old they are or even what sex they are; (3) They can tell you anything, and you cannot always be sure what they are telling you is true; and (4) Absolute privacy cannot be guaranteed in a network environment. So, you need to think carefully about what you say and how you say it.

For your own safety and for the safety of others, remember to exercise caution when you are communicating with people anywhere. Do not give out your home phone number or your address to anyone. If you feel there is a problem or if you feel uncomfortable with the information someone is giving you, tell your teacher or computer lab operator immediately.

On the other hand, you may not harass other users. You don't want to run the risk of breaking the law by bothering other people. If a user on the network asks that you no longer send them mail or in any other way contact them, you must stop all contact immediately. You may feel you have the right of freedom of expression, but others have the right to be free from harassment.

Because the Zavalla Independent School District information networks are used as part of a school activity, your school's code of conduct applies to network activities as well. Therefore, the Acceptable Use Policy is an extension of your school's behavior code. These rules apply to vandalism of computer equipment, unauthorized access to information, computer piracy, hacking, and any tampering with hardware or software.

These rules apply to harassing others and using abusive or obscene language on the information networks. You may not use the network to annoy, harass, or otherwise offend other people.

The rules also apply to other types of damage or information loss on the information networks that might be caused by destructive devices such as computer viruses. If you are responsible for a computer becoming infected with viruses, worms, or any other type of destructive device, you will be held liable.

## **Moral and Ethical Issues**

The Zavalla Independent School District wants to provide you with a stimulating educational environment. At the same time, we want to protect you from information that is not appropriate for you to use.

While the Zavalla Independent School District wants you to use this valuable educational tool, we do not condone the use of inappropriate information on the Internet. We acknowledge that some materials exist that are inappropriate to the instructional setting and do everything we reasonably can to prevent them from being accessed. You must clearly understand that access to such material in any form is strictly forbidden. The network is designed to achieve and support instructional goals. You should avoid any information that does not support classroom learning.

Although the actual percentage of unacceptable materials is small, it can cause concern for students and parents if a student accesses those materials while doing legitimate research. If you have a question or concern regarding any materials you find, contact your teacher or computer lab operator.

## **Electronic Libraries**

Guidelines for access to information have already been established in the Library Bill of Rights of 1980. These principles can be applied to the Internet as well. This document states that "attempts to restrict access to library materials violate the basic tenets of the Library Bill of Rights;" however, school librarians are required to devise collections that

are "consistent with the philosophy, goals, and objectives of the school district." This means that students have the right to information, but the school has the right to restrict any information that does not apply to the approved curriculum.

Materials on the Internet can be considered part of a vast digital library. Electronic database and information search tools to access the Internet are becoming part of school media centers and libraries, and many public libraries offer some type of Internet access as part of their services.

## **Using Resources**

Information networks have limited capacities. The more users there are on the network, the more congested the network becomes and access to information will take longer. The following guidelines will help ease the congestion:

- Do not tie up the network with idle activities.
- Do not play games on the network or on the Internet. Networks are not designed for computer games.
- Do not download huge files unless directed to do so.
- Download only the information you need.
- Use your access time efficiently. Remember, there are many students who need to use the network.

## **Virtual Field Trips**

The information networks offer many opportunities for "virtual field trips" to distant locations. Zavalla Independent School District considers all connections to remote locations as field trips. The rules that apply to student conduct on field trips apply to these virtual electronic field trips as well. It is important that you realize that you represent your school and the school district when you use the information networks and be on your best behavior.

## **Legal Issues**

It is also a felony to maliciously access, alter, delete, damage or destroy any computer system, computer network, computer program, or data. Penalties include fines up to \$5000 and/or imprisonment in the state prison for up to three years or the county jail for up to one year. Anyone committing acts of this kind will face disciplinary action by the school and legal action by the authorities. The person will be punished to the full extent of the law.

Some examples of offenses are changing or deleting another user's account, changing the password of another user, using an unauthorized account, damaging any files, altering the system, or using the system to make money illegally. You cannot cause damage to any school or District property. This includes the information networks.

## **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is "taking ideas or writings from another person and offering them as your own." Credit should always be given to the person who created the article or the idea. The student who leads readers to believe that what they are reading is the student's original work when it is not is guilty of plagiarism.

Be careful when you are using the information networks. Cutting and pasting ideas into your own document is very easy to do. When using someone else's work, be sure that you give credit to the author. When you do this, your teacher will know which ideas are yours, and you won't be guilty of plagiarism.

## **Copyright**

According to the Copyright Act of 1976, "Fair Use" means that you may freely use any information that you legally find on the information networks as long as you do so only for scholarly purposes. You may not plagiarize or sell what you find.

For example, if you find a copy of Microsoft Works or any other commercial copyrighted or licensed software on the Internet, you cannot legally copy it. These software packages must be purchased or licensed before you can legally use them. If, however, you find an article about the use of Microsoft Works on the Internet, you can legally copy it as long as you give credit to the author and do not sell the article for profit.

## **Acceptable Use Policy**

The Zavalla Independent School District recognizes that computers are used to support learning and to enhance instruction. Computer information networks allow people to interact with many other computers and networks. It is a general policy that all computers are to be used in a responsible, efficient, ethical and legal manner.

The Zavalla Independent School District declares unethical and unacceptable behavior as just cause for taking disciplinary action, revoking information network access privileges, and/or initiating legal action for any activity through which an individual:

Uses the information networks for illegal, inappropriate, or obscene purposes, or in support of such activities. Illegal activities shall be defined as those which violate local, state, and/or federal laws. Inappropriate use shall be defined as a violation of the intended use of the network, and/or purpose and goal. Obscene activities shall be defined as a violation of generally accepted social standards for use of a publicly-owned and operated communication vehicle;

Uses the information networks for any illegal activity, including violation of copyrights or other contracts violating such matters as institutional or third party copyright, license agreements and other contracts;

- Intentionally disrupts information network traffic or crashes the network and connected systems;
- Degrades or disrupts equipment or system performance;
- Uses Zavalla Independent School District computing resources for commercial or financial gain or fraud;
- Steals data, equipment, or intellectual property;
- Gains unauthorized access to the files of others, or vandalizes the data or files of another user;
- Gains or seeks to gain unauthorized access to resources or entities;
- Forges electronic mail messages, or uses an account owned by another user;
- Invades the privacy of individuals;
- Posts anonymous messages; or
- Possesses any data which might be considered a violation of these rules in paper, magnetic (disk), or any other form.

#### A. Consequences of Violations

Consequences of violations include but are not limited to:

Suspension of information network access;  
Revocation of information network access;  
Suspension of network privileges;  
Revocation of network privileges;  
Suspension of computer access;  
Revocation of computer access;  
School suspension;  
School expulsion; and  
Legal action and prosecution by the authorities.

#### B. Remedies and Recourses

Anyone accused of any of the violations has all of the rights that would normally apply if such person were accused of school vandalism or any other illegal activity.

The District has the right to restrict or terminate information network access at any time for any reason. The District further has the right to monitor network activity in any form that it sees fit to maintain the integrity of the information network.