

BFCCPS Computing Systems

Acceptable Use Policy

Overview of Use of the Computer Network and Internet

The Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School offers Internet access to its students at all levels. Access to the school computer network and to the Internet is a privilege not a right. The intent of this policy is to ensure that students utilize this access in a responsible manner consistent with the purpose of providing these services.

Definition:

The Internet is a vast, global network linking computers around the world. Internet use provides valuable opportunities for research and academic support. The BFCCPS computer network exists solely for educational purposes, which are defined as classroom activities and high quality self-discovery activities of an educational nature. The BFCCPS computer network is not a resource intended for use as a public forum or for any purpose that is not directly related to the delivery of educational services. BFCCPS reserves the right to place reasonable limits on materials used or accessed through its computer network.

Because of its enormous size, the Internet's potential is without boundaries. With such great possibilities for education also comes the potential for abuse. Members of the BFCCPS community are responsible for good behavior on school computer networks just as they are in a classroom or school building. General school rules for behavior and communications apply. Access to network services will be provided to those who act in a considerate and responsible manner.

BFCCPS will make every reasonable effort to minimize the risk that users will encounter objectionable material on the Internet. Through education, supervision and responsible use, BFCCPS believes that the Internet can be used safely and effectively. However, there is no absolute guarantee that this will happen.

BFCCPS believes that the benefits to students from access to information resources and the opportunity for collaboration available through the Internet exceed any potential disadvantages. However, the parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources. To that end, BFCCPS respects each family's right to decide whether or not their child will have access to the Internet at school.

In order for a member of the BFCCPS community to use the computer network, s/he must read the following guidelines and sign this User Contract.

Acceptable Use:

The use of the network must be consistent with, and directly related to, the educational objectives of BFCCPS.

Violations of the Acceptable Use Policy include, but are not limited to, the following conduct:

- a) Revealing personal information such as last names, addresses, telephone numbers, photographs, etc. that could identify the user or other students.
- b) Revealing one's password to anyone else, using anyone else's password, or pretending to be someone else when sending information over the computer network. (Passwords and IDs are provided for each user's personal use only and should not be shared with anyone.)
- c) Using profane, vulgar, threatening, defamatory, abusive, discriminatory, harassing or otherwise objectionable or criminal language in a public or private message.

- d) Violating copyright laws. (Users should assume that all materials available on the Internet are protected by copyright.)
- e) Sending "chain letters" or "broadcast" messages to lists or individuals or subscribing to "listserves" or "newsgroups" without prior permission.
- f) Seeking, accessing, or downloading material that is not relevant to assignments or course work.
- g) Using the computer network for recreational purposes or activities relating to personal hobbies. For example, accessing "chat rooms" is prohibited, and games must not be played, accessed, or downloaded.
- h) Participating in other types of use which would cause congestion of the network or interfere with the work of others.
- i) Attempting to harm, modify or destroy data of another user.
- j) Distributing or intentionally accessing materials that are obscene, explicit, or without redeeming educational value.
- k) Attempting to gain unauthorized access to system programs or computer equipment, including attempts to override any firewalls established on the network.
- l) Vandalizing school computers by causing physical damage, reconfiguring the computer system, or destroying data.
- m) Failing to log off the computer network at the request of a staff member or administrators.
- n) Using the BFCCPS technology network for commercial purposes. Users may not use network services to advertise or sell products or services and may not offer, provide, or purchase products or services through the BFCCPS network.
- o) Using the network in a manner that would violate any U.S. or state law or subject the user or BFCCPS civil or criminal action. This includes, but is not limited to, the transmission of threatening material, or spreading of computer viruses.
- p) Receiving or transmitting information pertaining to dangerous instruments such as explosive devices, weapons or other firearms.

BFCCPS is not responsible for:

- a) Any financial obligations arising out of unauthorized use of the system.
- b) Any cost, liability or damages caused by a user's violation of these guidelines.
- c) Any information or materials that are transferred through the network.
- d) The reliability of the data connection. BFCCPS not be liable for any loss or corruption of data resulting while using the network.
- e) A student's illegal distribution (pirating) of software.

If a user finds materials that are inappropriate while using the BFCCPS technology network s/he shall refrain from viewing or downloading this material and shall not share the material with other students.

Should a user, encounter any material that s/he feels may constitute a threat against the safety of fellow students, staff members or the property of BFCCPS, that user is obligated to report his/her discovery of such material to a teacher or to the administration.

You must immediately disclose to your teacher any message that you receive that you believe is inappropriate or that makes you feel uncomfortable.

Cyber bullying:

On May 23rd 2010 the Massachusetts State Legislature Passed an emergency piece of legislation, An Act Relative to Bullying in School. This law went into effect immediately. As part of this law cyber-bullying and use of technology to create a hostile environment is defined and prohibited.

Cyber bullying, as defined in M.G.L.c71, s.37O is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include but not be limited to any transfer or signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic, or photo optical system, including but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communication.

Cyber bullying also includes

- (a) the creation of a web page or blog in which their creator assumes the identity or another person;
- (b) the knowing impersonation of another person as the authors of posted content or messages, contributing to bullying or a hostile environment
- (c) the distribution by electronic means of communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic distribution or posting creates any of the conditions inclusion of the definition of bullying.

Cyber bullying may include conduct such as sending derogatory, harassing or threatening email messages, instant messages, or text messaged; creating websites that ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate others; posting on websites dissemination embarrassing or inappropriate pictures of others.

Bullying and retaliation are strictly prohibited in all forms. Bullying is not limited to instances that occur on school grounds. Any actions or behaviors that meet this description and may negatively affect the school culture and environment will lead to discipline outline in the Student and Parent Handbook.

Privacy:

Internet and email messages are public communication and are not private.

Use of electronic resources by students are the property of BFCCPS and should not be considered confidential. Copies of all information created, sent or retrieved are stored on the computer network's back-up files.

While BFCCPS does not plan to review cache files or back-up files on a regular basis, it reserves the right to access and monitor all messages and files on the computer system as it deems necessary and appropriate in the ordinary course of its business. These purposes include, but are not limited to, ensuring proper use of resources and conducting routine network maintenance.

Network storage areas will be treated like school lockers that may be inspected at anytime.

Where appropriate, communication including text and images may be disclosed to law enforcement or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or receiver.

Penalties and Violations:

A violation of the terms of this Acceptable Use Policy may result in suspension or termination of network access privileges (other than directly supervised access during classroom instruction) and may also result in other disciplinary action consistent with the disciplinary policies of BFCCPS.

BFCCPS will cooperate fully with local, state, and federal law enforcement officials in any investigation relating to any illegal activities conducted through the BFCCPS computer network.