



PERSONNEL: Conduct

Telecommunications Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks

- A. Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) provides equipment with telecommunications capabilities to access electronic networks for educational purposes only.
 - 1. Educational purposes are defined as those tasks performed by employees and approved non-employees who are directly affiliated with the BCPS' positions, job responsibilities, mission, and goals. No personal use of any kind is permitted.
 - 2. Telecommunications refers to any electronic device that uses, stores, manages, carries, or supports audio, video, text, or data and includes, but is not limited to, information transmitted or is received via radio, television, cable, microwave, telephone, computer systems, networks, copiers, scanners, and fax machines.
- B. The BCPS' telecommunications network is a "closed forum" for system use only and to transmit information to the public. BCPS reserves the right to exercise editorial control over all electronic publications and communications on all BCPS' telecommunications equipment and services.
- C. The BCPS Web team shall manage the school system Web development by providing Web content standards, quality control measures, support to school/office Web masters, and compliance with BCPS telecommunications policies and rules.
- D. Employees and approved non-employees who represent the school system through the Web publishing medium shall post official school or office Web sites on the BCPS network server. No commercial hosting of official school or office Web sites is permitted.
- E. The Telecommunications Acceptable Use Policy for Employees and Approved Non-Employees form (Rule 4104, Form A) must be signed by all employees and approved non-employees prior to their use of

telecommunications in BCPS. This signed document is an agreement by the employee to comply with the terms and conditions of appropriate and safe use of telecommunications. It is a legal, binding contract that is kept on file as a part of the employee's personnel record.

1. The Department of Human Resources will retain the Acceptable Use Policy for Employees and approved non-employees form (Rule 4104, Form A) for all centrally hired employees and approved non-employees.
 2. The principal/office head will retain the Acceptable Use Policy for Employees and approved non-employees form (Rule 4104, Form A) for all locally hired employees and approved non-employees.
- F. Employees and approved non-employees who use telecommunications in BCPS without having a signed Telecommunications Acceptable Use Policy for Employees and Approved Non-Employees form (Rule 4104, Form A) on file are in violation of Board policy and subject to disciplinary action. Principals/office heads are responsible for determining when part-time or temporary employees and approved non-employees shall have access to telecommunications and for assuring that said employees and approved non-employees have satisfied the BCPS compliance.
- G. Employees and approved non-employees designated as Webmaster to coordinate and monitor electronic publications, such as a school or office Web sites, shall comply with the Webmaster Roles and Responsibilities form (Rule 4104, Form B) and indicate their understanding of the terms and conditions by signing the Webmaster Agreement form (Rule 4104, Form B).
- H. BCPS will employ processes which attempt to ensure that the Internet, and digital media, inclusive of but not limited to, interactive collaborative environments, learning management systems, and systemically approved Web-based applications are an effective, safe, and accessible instructional resource as follows:
1. The system level Web team will provide guidance and support to office/school Webmasters in the design, content, and development of school or office Web sites that comply with Board Policies and Superintendent's Rules.

2. The Office of Library and Information Services will provide access to electronic resources that support the BCPS' Essential Curriculum through the Online: The Librarians' Network for the Essential Curriculum Web portal of Commercial Digital Content and evaluated Web resources.
 3. The Department of Technology, the Office of Library Information Services, and the Office of Instructional Technology shall provide an effective, safe, and accessible learning environment through standard and selection criteria for telecommunications, presentation, and instructional hardware and software.
 4. Employees shall supervise students when using telecommunications in BCPS.
 5. Employees shall instruct students in the appropriate, legal, ethical, and safe use of telecommunications.
 6. In order to comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), computer software/hardware which attempts to filter abusive, libelous, obscene, offensive, profane, threatening, sexually explicit, pornographic, or illegal material must be accessible on all employee computer networks with telecommunications capability before use by employees and approved non-employees.
- I. All school or system level Web sites shall contain or link to the following disclaimer:

The BCPS does not guarantee the accuracy or quality of information located on the telecommunications networks. We have made every reasonable attempt to ensure that our school system's Web sites are educationally sound and do not contain links to any questionable material or anything that can be deemed in violation of the BCPS telecommunications policy. The linked sites are not under the control of the BCPS Web sites are provided as a convenience and do not imply an endorsement of the linked Web site.

- J. Electronic publications, such as employee personal Web sites or resumes, shall not be linked to or included as part of any school or system level Web site.
- K. School or system level Web sites shall not include nor imply endorsement of advertisements, business or products unless as an established school-sponsored business partnership.
- L. Technology-based instructional products, such as instructional software, online resources, and computer-based equipment, used for telecommunications shall comply with accessibility standards in order to ensure students with disabilities equivalent access unless doing so would: (1) Fundamentally alter the nature of the instructional activity; (2) Result in undue financial and administrative burdens; or (3) not meet other specifications. BCPS' Web publications shall attempt to employ accessibility design standards.
- M. All communications and publications which are representative of the BCPS shall comply with Board policies and rules and employ the conventions of standard English or other languages.
- N. Only BCPS account managers or designees or the Office of Purchasing and designated staff are authorized to make financial commitments on behalf of the BCPS. Unauthorized financial commitments made through the use of telecommunications computer networks are not the responsibility of BCPS.
- O. The privacy of employee communications, data, and files is neither expressed nor implied. The BCPS' system network administrator, Web team, principal, and/or office or school Webmaster may review employee communications, data, and files to maintain system integrity and to monitor appropriate use of the network. Illegal activities will be reported to the appropriate authorities as set forth in the BCPS Critical Response and School Emergency Safety Management Guide.
- P. BCPS reserves the right to exercise editorial control, set limits on a user's file size storage space, and remove files if the user fails to maintain assigned storage space properly.
- Q. BCPS will not be responsible for any information that may be lost, damaged, or unavailable due to technical or other difficulties.

- R. Employees and approved non-employees shall be responsible for ethical behavior when using telecommunications in BCPS. Acceptable and safe uses of telecommunications are delineated in the Telecommunications Acceptable Use Policy for Employees and Approved Non-Employees form. The terms and conditions are as follows:
1. Employees and approved non-employees shall:
 - a. Use telecommunications for educational purposes only as set forth above in Section A.
 - b. Communicate with others in a courteous and professional manner.
 - c. Comply with privacy rights of all persons.
 - d. Comply with copyright laws and intellectual property rights of others.
 - e. Comply with related Board Policies and Superintendent's Rules as set forth above in Section E.
 - f. Report to the office head/principal or designee receipt of electronic messages which threaten to endanger the safety of students, employees, or other persons.
 - g. Agree to the review of employee communications, data, text, and files by the system network administrator, Web team, principal, and/or office or school Webmaster.
 - h. Report to the office head/principal or designee any suspected violations of Board of Education Policies and Superintendent's Rules 4104 and 6202, *Telecommunications Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks*
 - i. Safeguard confidential information available to them.
 2. Employees and approved non-employees shall not:

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- a. Use the BCPS telecommunications network for personal reasons.
 - b. Bypass the school system's filtering proxy server.
 - c. Access or distribute abusive, harassing, bullying, libelous, obscene, offensive, profane, pornographic, threatening, sexually explicit, or illegal material.
 - d. Use telecommunications for lobbying, commercial, or illegal purposes.
 - e. Knowingly enter unauthorized computer networks or software to tamper or destroy data.
 - f. Install unauthorized software on computers.
 - g. Incur unauthorized financial obligation to the BCPS.
 - h. Share passwords to access BCPS computer networks, services, and/or information resources.
 - i. Use telecommunications in any other manner that would violate Board policy and rules.
- S. Employees and approved non-employees shall comply with the terms and conditions of the Telecommunications Acceptable Use Policy for Employees and Approved Non-Employees form. Failure to comply shall result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- T. All employees and approved non-employees will receive a copy of this Rule and comply commensurate with their level of telecommunications access. These are:
- 1. Level 1: Access to the Internet

Employees and approved non-employees shall document compliance by receipt and review of the Acceptable Use Policy for Employees and Approved Non-Employees form (Rule 4104, Form A). Refer to item "E" in this Rule for filing instructions.

2. Level 2: Access to E-mail

Employees and approved non-employees shall document compliance by receipt and review of the BCPS Electronic Mail Application Form (Rule 4104, Form C). The Department of Technology shall retain all signed application forms.

3. Level 3: Access to Web Posting/Publishing

Employees and approved non-employees shall document compliance by receipt and review of the BCPS Webmaster Roles and Responsibilities (Rule 4104, Form B). The Department of Technology shall retain all signed forms. School- and office-based Webmaster shall attend annual informational meetings conducted by the BCPS Web team.

U. BCPS employees shall work with Office of Investigations and Records Management to support the identification, termination, and prosecution of telecommunications violations suspected/committed by students and staff.

V. Employees shall respond to the procedures as set forth in the *BCPS Critical Response and School Emergency Safety Management Guide*.

Legal References: 18 U.S.C. §§2701-2711, *Electronic Communications Privacy Act*
20 U.S.C. §794d, *Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973*
47 U.S.C. §254(h), *Children's Internet Protection Act*
COMAR 13A.05.02.13H, *Local Public Agency Administration*
COMAR 13A.05.04.01, *Public School Library Programs*
COMAR 13A.08.01.11, *Disciplinary Action*
COMAR 13A.08.01.14, *Searches*

Related Policies: Board of Education Policy 1100, *Communication with the Public*

Board of Education Policy 1110, *Media, Public Relations and Publications, Events, Television and Web site*
Board of Education Policy 4002, *Obligations of Employees of the Board of Education of Baltimore County*
Board of Education Policy 4100, *Employee Conduct and Responsibilities*
Board of Education Policy 8363, *Conflict of Interest*

Rule		Superintendent of Schools
Adopted:	06/09/97	
Revised:	03/11/03	
Revised:	04/22/08	
Edited:	07/01/11	