

ACCEPTABLE USE OF COMPUTERS AND INTERNET/INTRANET TECHNOLOGY POLICY

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1.0 RATIONALE

- 1.1 The Halifax Regional School Board (Board) is committed to providing access to a wide-range of electronic and online resources to enhance student learning, professional or career development, communications, and workplace productivity.
- 1.2 The Board supports and endorses implementation of the Nova Scotia Department of Education's *Public School Network Access and Use Policy* in all schools and workplaces.
- 1.3 The Board believes that the appropriate use of the Board's technology, Internet and Intranet is a shared responsibility among all technology users: staff, students, parents, board members, volunteers, school advisory councils, school volunteers, and community members.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy,

- 2.1 **User** means all staff, students, board members, parents, volunteers, school advisory councils who use Board technology equipment.
- 2.2 **Technology** means the Internet, infrastructure and equipment such as desktop and laptop computers, printers, and scanners.
- 2.3 **Information Technology Resources** mean digital equipment used to control, communicate and facilitate information processing, personnel to support technology, the Internet, and other electronic resources provided to support curriculum.

- 2.4 **Internet** means any electronic communications system that connects computers all over the world through the World Wide Web and which any user may retrieve or share information, including e-mail accounts and online chat.
- 2.5 **Intranet:** Means the network of computer servers that hold and share information owned by the Board that are accessible only by authorized users.
- 2.6 **Public Domain:** means software that has no copyright or fee, which means you can copy, use, and even change it.
- 2.7 **Freeware:** means copyrighted software that is given away for free by the author. Although it is available for free, the author retains the copyright, which means that a user cannot do anything with it that is not expressly allowed by the author.
- 2.8 **Shareware:** means software that you can try before you buy. Users are allowed to try it out and give copies to others, but if they want to keep using it, you must pay the registration fee.
- 2.9 **Policy:** Means the Board's Acceptable Use of Computers and Inter/Intranet Policy (B.022).
- 2.10 **Intellectual Property:** Means works to which copyright, patents, and trademarks apply.
- 2.11 **Electronic Systems:** Means websites, email, blogs, and online chat.

3.0 POLICY

- 3.1 The Board and schools shall ensure that technology resources required to deliver the *Public School Program* are available to all students and teachers.
- 3.2 Staff will promote the ethical use of Information Technology resources and will provide guidance, support, supervision, and instruction to students as they access such resources for educational purposes only.
- 3.3 All schools, in accordance with provincial policies, will comply with and ensure compliance with this Policy.
- 3.4 Schools will communicate this Policy to all technology users on an annual basis.
- 3.5 Prior to receiving access to Board Technology resources, schools will also ensure that all staff and community members, submit a signed consent form (*Appendix A*).

- 3.6 Prior to receiving a Halifax Regional School Board e-mail account, all employees will be required to read and sign the Board's E-mail Acceptable Use Protocol (*Appendix B*).
- 3.7 All users of Board Technology:
 - 3.7.1 Are prohibited from posting student work, photographs and/or video images on any website without prior written consent from the student's parent or guardian (*Appendix C*).
 - 3.7.2 Should exercise caution when releasing personal information, such as names, over electronic systems.
- 3.8 All users of Board Technology are prohibited from,
 - 3.8.1 Copying or downloading copyright and/or Intellectual Property materials such as books, letters, songs, software programs.
 - 3.8.2 Excessive use of the Internet during the school or workday for purposes unrelated to learning or work (e.g., games).
 - 3.8.3 Accessing illegal, harassing, obscene, pornographic, racist, libelous, threatening or sexually explicit resources in all of the Board's schools and workplaces.
 - 3.8.4 Using electronic mail to send obscene, anonymous, threatening, libelous, discriminatory, or inflammatory messages.
 - 3.8.5 Using email communications for the forwarding of information, jokes, or pictures that are irrelevant or unsubstantiated.
 - 3.8.6 Installing unauthorized software.
 - 3.8.7 Causing disruption of the Internet and/or Intranet.
 - 3.8.8 Using Board Technology at any location for the purposes of bullying and/or harassing.
 - 3.8.9 Posting student names and/or close-up frontal images of students on websites.
- 3.9 All users of Board Technology are expected to use appropriate language and to be polite and respectful at all times when communicating over the Internet.
- 3.10 All users of Board Technology should exercise caution when releasing personal information, such as names, over Electronic Systems.
- 3.11 Administrative and school staff will implement measures to prevent electronic access to illegal, harassing, obscene, pornographic, racist, libelous, threatening or sexually explicit resources in all of the Board's schools and workplaces.
- 3.12 Use of the Internet or Halifax Regional School Board email accounts in a manner that is not consistent with the mission of the Board, which misrepresents the

Board, or violates any of the Board's policies, is prohibited.

- 3.13 All Board Technology resources used at the Halifax Regional School Board are owned by the Board and are therefore its property. This gives the Halifax Regional School Board the right to monitor any and all activity on its system.
- 3.14 Allegations of unacceptable use of Board Technology will be addressed according to established policies and procedures. Discipline for inappropriate use may include, but are not limited to one or more of the following:
 - 3.14.1 Temporary or permanent revocation of access to some or all computing and networking resources and facilities;
 - 3.14.2 Disciplinary action according to applicable Board policies (*D.006 Progressive Discipline for Board Employees* and *B.013 Regional Code of Conduct*)
 - 3.14.3 Legal action according to applicable laws and contractual agreements.
- 3.15 Under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPOP)*, all electronic documents are subject to a FOIPOP request.
- 3.16 At no time will Board Technology be used for individual commercial purposes or personal financial gain: the Halifax Regional School Board retains ownership, control and copyright over anything created, composed or otherwise developed using Board Technology resources unless specifically waived or transferred in writing. All requests for waivers or transfer of ownership should be made through an employee's immediate supervisor who will then forward the request to the appropriate Director for approval.
- 3.17 The Board assumes no liability for any direct or indirect damages arising from the user's connection to the Internet. The Board is not responsible for the accuracy of information found on the Internet and only facilitates access and dissemination of information through its systems.

4.0 REFERENCES

- 4.1 Nova Scotia Department of Education, *Public School Network Access and Use Policy*. This policy can be found at:
<http://www.ednet.ns.ca/pdfdocs/libraries/cap.pdf>
- 4.2 Halifax Regional School Board, *Policy B.013 – Regional Code of Conduct*.
- 4.3 Halifax Regional School Board, *Policy B.006 – Progressive Discipline for Board Employees*.

HRSB Acceptable E-Mail Use Protocol and Consent Form

E-mail is an important mechanism for communication at the Halifax Regional School Board. However, use of Halifax Regional School Board's electronic mail systems and services are a privilege, not a right, and therefore must be used with respect and in accordance with the goals and policies of the Halifax Regional School Board.

The objectives of this policy are to outline appropriate and inappropriate use of the Halifax Regional School Board's e-mail systems and services in order to minimize disruptions to services and activities, as well as comply with applicable policies and laws.

Scope

This policy applies to all e-mail systems and services owned by the Halifax Regional School Board, all e-mail account users/holders at the Halifax Regional School Board (both temporary and permanent), and all company e-mail records.

Account Activation/Termination

Access to e-mail accounts at the Halifax Regional School Board is controlled through individual accounts and passwords. Each user of the Board's e-mail system will be required to read and sign a copy of this E-Mail Acceptable Use Protocol prior to receiving an e-mail access account and password.

It is the responsibility of the employee to protect the confidentiality of their account and password information.

All employees of the Halifax Regional School Board are entitled to an e-mail account. E-mail accounts will be granted to third party non-employees on a case-by-case basis. Possible non-employees that may be eligible for access include:

- Contractors.
- Term employees.

Applications for these temporary accounts must be submitted in writing to the Coordinator, Information Technology by the Director of the department.

E-mail access will be terminated when the employee or third party terminates their association with the Halifax Regional School Board, unless other arrangements are made. The Halifax Regional School Board is under no obligation to store or forward the contents of an individual's e-mail inbox/outbox after the term of their employment has ceased.

General Expectations of HRSB staff

Important official communications are often delivered via e-mail. As a result, employees of the Halifax Regional School Board with e-mail accounts are expected to check their e-mail in a consistent and timely manner during regular business hours (8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) so that they are aware of important announcements and updates, as well as for fulfilling business- and role-oriented tasks.

Unless an employee is away from the office for an extended period of time, every effort will be made to acknowledge or respond to incoming e-mail within one or two working days.

E-mail users are responsible for mailbox management, including organization and cleaning. If a user subscribes to a mailing list, he or she must also be aware of how to un-subscribe their e-mail address from the list, and is responsible for doing so in the event that their e-mail address changes.

E-mail users are also expected to comply with normal standards of professional and personal courtesy and conduct. E-mail use at the Halifax Regional School Board will comply with all applicable laws, all the Halifax Regional School Board policies, and all the Halifax Regional School Board contracts.

Appropriate Uses of e-mail include:

- Communicating with fellow employees, schools, business partners of the Halifax Regional School Board, and clients within the context of an individual's assigned responsibilities.
- Acquiring or sharing information necessary or related to the performance of an individual's assigned responsibilities.
- Participating in educational or professional development activities.

In addition to requirements defined through the Board's *Acceptable Use Policy*, inappropriate uses of e-mail include:

- Viewing, copying, altering, or deletion of e-mail accounts or files belonging to the Halifax Regional School Board or another individual without authorized permission.
- Sending of unreasonably large e-mail attachments. The total size of an individual e-mail message sent (including attachment) should be 2mb's or less.
- Opening e-mail attachments from unknown or unsigned sources. Attachments are the primary source of computer viruses and should be treated with utmost caution.

- Sharing e-mail account passwords with another person, or attempting to obtain another person's e-mail account password. E-mail accounts are only to be used by the registered user.
- Excessive personal use of the Halifax Regional School Board e-mail resources. The Halifax Regional School Board allows limited personal use for communication with family and friends, independent learning, and public service so long as it does not interfere with staff productivity, pre-empt any business activity, or consume more than a trivial amount of resources. The Halifax Regional School Board prohibits personal use of its e-mail systems and services for unsolicited mass mailings, non-Halifax Regional School Board commercial activity, political campaigning, dissemination of chain letters, and use by non-employees.

Monitoring and Confidentiality

The e-mail systems and services used at the Halifax Regional School Board are owned by Board, and are therefore its property. This gives the Halifax Regional School Board the right to monitor any and all e-mail traffic passing through its e-mail system. Staff will not actively read end-user e-mail. However, e-mail messages may be inadvertently read by IT staff during the normal course of managing the e-mail system.

In addition, backup copies of e-mail messages may exist, despite end-user deletion, in compliance with the Halifax Regional School Board's records retention policy¹. The goals of these backup and archiving procedures are to ensure system reliability and prevent business data loss.

Use extreme caution when communicating confidential or sensitive information via e-mail. Keep in mind that all e-mail messages sent outside of the Halifax Regional School Board become the property of the receiver. A good rule is to not communicate anything that you wouldn't feel comfortable being made public. Under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* all electronic communications are subject to FOIPOP requests.

Reporting Misuse

Any allegations of misuse should be promptly reported to Coordinator, Information Technology. If you receive an offensive e-mail, do not forward, delete, or reply to the message. Instead, report it directly to the individual named above.

¹ currently under development

Disclaimer

The Halifax Regional School Board assumes no liability for direct and/or indirect damages arising from the user's use of the Halifax Regional School Board's e-mail system and services. Users are solely responsible for the content they disseminate. The Halifax Regional School Board is not responsible for any third-party claim, demand, or damage arising out of using the Halifax Regional School Board's e-mail systems or services.

Failure to Comply

Violations of this policy will be treated like other allegations of wrongdoing at the Halifax Regional School Board. Allegations of misconduct will be adjudicated according to established procedures. Sanctions for inappropriate use on the Halifax Regional School Board's e-mail systems and services may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

1. Temporary or permanent revocation of e-mail access;
2. Disciplinary action according to applicable the Halifax Regional School Board policies;
3. Termination of employment; and/or
4. Legal action according to applicable laws and contractual agreements.

E-Mail User Agreement

I have read and understand the E-Mail Acceptable Use Protocol. I understand if I violate the rules explained herein, I may face legal or disciplinary action according to applicable policies of the Halifax Regional School Board or laws.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____