

# **Policy Regarding the Legal and Ethical Use of Technology Resources, Electronic Mail, and the Internet**

## **INTRODUCTION**

To ensure that students receive a quality education and that employees are able to work in a professional and intellectually stimulating environment, it is the policy of Gadsden City Schools to provide all students and employees with the opportunities to access a variety of technology resources.

The creation of a large and varied technology environment demands that technology usage be conducted in legally and ethically appropriate ways, consistent with the instructional goals of the Gadsden City Schools.

Thus, it is the intention of the Gadsden City Schools that all technology resources will be used in accordance with any and all school system policies and procedures, as well as local, state and federal laws and/or guidelines governing the usage of technology and its component parts. Additionally, it is implied that all students and employees of the Gadsden City Schools will use the provided technology resources so as not to waste them, abuse them, interfere with or cause harm to other individuals, institutions, or companies. Gadsden City School technologies may not be utilized for personal gain.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

The primary goal of the technology environment is to support the educational and instructional endeavors of the students and employees of the Gadsden City Schools.

Individuals may only use accounts, files, software, and computer resources that are assigned to those individuals under their password.

Individuals must take all reasonable precautions to prevent unauthorized access to accounts and data and any other unauthorized usage within and outside The Gadsden City Schools.

Duplication of any copyrighted software is prohibited unless specifically allowed for in the license agreement.

According to the license agreement, a backup copy of all purchased software programs should be made and, thus, become the working copy.

All original copies of software programs, including those purchased with departmental funds, and hardware will be stored in a secure place. For security and insurance purposes, access to original software shall be limited to the building principal and/or his designee. System wide software will be housed at the Board of Education.

If a single copy of a software program is purchased, it may only be used in one computer at a time. Multiple loading or down-loading the contents of one disk into multiple computers, (1987 Statement on Software Copyright) is NOT allowed. Individuals are not authorized to make copies of any software or data without the knowledge of the building principal and/or his designee. Any questions about copyright provisions should be directed to the System Technology Coordinator.

Illegal copies of software may not be created or used on school equipment.

Individuals are expected to report any violations of this policy and/or problems with the security of any technology resources to the Principal or the System Technology Coordinator.

Any use of technology resources that reduces the efficiency of use for others will be considered a violation of this policy.

Students and employees of the Gadsden City Schools must not attempt to modify technology resources, utilities and/or configurations, or change the restrictions associated with their accounts, or attempt to breach any technology resources security system, including internet content filtering, either with or without malicious intent.

Network access shall not be used to affect individual computers or the network in any of the above ways.

The Principal of each school will be responsible for establishing specific practices to enforce this policy at individual schools.

The legal and ethical practices of software and hardware usage will be taught to all students and employees in the system (i.e. during computer lab orientation, faculty meetings, etc.).

This policy will be prominently displayed in all rooms throughout the system that contain one or more computers

All Gadsden City Schools technology resources, regardless of purchase date or location, are subject to this policy.

Any questions about this policy, its interpretation, or specific circumstances shall be directed to the System Technology Coordinator. Violations of this policy will be handled in a manner consistent with comparable situations requiring disciplinary action, including, but not limited to: (1) loss of access; (2) additional disciplinary action to be determined at the individual school in line with the Code of Student Conduct for the Gadsden City Schools or other board policy; and (3) legal action, when applicable.

### **ELECTRONIC MAIL**

The Gadsden City School System provides access to electronic mail for many of its employees and some student classes. That access is for their use in any educational and instructional business that they may conduct. Staff personal use of electronic mail is permitted as long as it does not violate Gadsden City School policy or adversely affect others. All contents and usage of electronic mail shall be the property of the Gadsden City School System.

### **INTERNET**

Information from electronic sources alters the educational environment by opening unlimited resources. The intent of the Gadsden City Schools is to provide access to resources available via the Internet with the understanding that faculty, staff, and students will access and use information that is appropriate for their various curricula. The Gadsden City Schools have taken precautions to restrict access to controversial materials. However, on a global network it is impossible to control all materials. We believe that the valuable information and interaction available on this world-wide network far outweighs the possibility that users may procure material that is not consistent with the educational goals of the District. Internet access is provided to allow students to conduct research and to communicate with others. Students will gain access to the Internet by agreeing to conduct themselves in a considerate and responsible manner and by providing the written permission of parents.

All school rules and guidelines for appropriate technology usage shall apply to usage of the Internet. Because communications on the Internet are, often, public in nature, all users should be careful to maintain appropriate and responsible communications.

To maintain system integrity and to insure that the system is being used responsibly, the Gadsden City Schools reserve the right to review files and network communications. Users should not expect that files stored on the Gadsden City Schools servers will always be private.

All home pages (starting point for a group or individual directory of Internet sites and/or other information) will be reviewed by the System Technology Coordinator for approval before being publicly posted.

Students will be allowed to conduct independent research and communicate on the Internet upon the receipt of the appropriate permission forms. Permission is not transferable, and therefore, may not be shared.

Internet access is a privilege, not a right. All Internet users are expected to act in a considerate and responsible manner.

The following are not permitted on any Gadsden City Schools Network or the Internet:

1. sending, displaying, or downloading offensive messages or pictures
2. using obscene language
3. harassing, insulting, or attacking others
4. damaging computers, computer systems, or computer networks (this includes changing workstation and printer configurations)
5. violating copyright laws
6. using other user passwords
7. trespassing in other user files, folders, or work,
8. intentionally wasting limited resources, or
9. plagiarizing.

### **PLAGIARISM**

Definition: To steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own use (another's production) without crediting the source.

(n.d.) Retrieved Dec. 15, 2005, from Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary Web site: <http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary?book=Dictionary&va=plagiarized>.

Plagiarism is expressly prohibited by students and staff of the Gadsden City Schools.

### **INTERNET SAFETY**

1. Students are not to access inappropriate matter on the Internet and World Wide Web.
2. Students are not to use school system equipment or resources to electronically communicate with individuals for non- instructional purposes. This includes e-mail correspondence, chat rooms, instant/real time messenger services, or any other form of electronic direct communication. Such contacts may only be made with the approval and supervision of school system personnel and be conducted solely for instructional purposes.
3. Students are prohibited from participating in any unauthorized access ('hacking') of computer systems or any other unlawful technological activities.
4. Students and school system employees are prohibited from the unauthorized electronic disclosure of personal student information such as name, home address, phone number, age, or race.
5. The Gadsden City Schools have taken filtering and supervisory precautions to restrict intentional or accidental access to inappropriate sites on the internet.

Ref: TITLE XVII--Children's Internet Protection Act.

# TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES AGREEMENT

I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the above policies of the Gadsden City Schools regarding the Legal and Ethical Use of Technology Resources, Electronic Mail, and the Internet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
School

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES AGREEMENT

**STUDENT NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SCHOOL:** \_\_\_\_\_

The Gadsden City School System provides access to electronic mail for many of its employees and some student classes. That access is for their use in any educational and instructional business that they may conduct. Staff personal use of electronic mail is permitted as long as it does not violate Gadsden City Schools policy or adversely affect others. All contents and usage of electronic mail shall be the property of the Gadsden City School System.

I understand that Internet access is provided for educational purposes. The Gadsden City Schools have taken precautions to eliminate controversial material. However, I also recognize it is impossible to restrict access to all controversial materials and I will not hold them responsible for materials acquired on the network. I understand, that as an Internet user, I am responsible for my actions and that I am responsible for acting considerately and appropriately, in accordance with the following rules. When using any Gadsden City Schools Technology Resources, including the Internet, I will not:

1. send, display, or download offensive messages or pictures
2. use obscene language
3. harass, insult, or attack others
4. damage computers, computer systems, or computer networks (this includes changing workstation and printer configurations)
5. violate copyright laws
6. use other user passwords
7. trespass in other user files, folders, or work,
8. intentionally waste limited resources, or
9. plagiarize.

I understand that any or all of the following sanctions could be imposed if I violate any of the policies and procedures regarding the use of Gadsden City Schools Technology Resources, including the Internet.

1. Loss of access
2. Additional disciplinary action to be determined at the individual school in line with existing practice regarding inappropriate language or behavior.
3. Legal action, when applicable.

**PARENT NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PARENT SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_