

## ACCEPTABLE COMPUTER SYSTEM USE

All use of the Covington City School Division's computer system shall be consistent with the School Board's goal of promoting educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation and communication. The term computer system includes, but is not limited to, hardware, software, data, communication lines and devices, terminals, printers, CD-ROM devices, tape or flash drives, servers, mainframe and personal computers, tablets, cellular phones, smart phones, the internet and any other internal or external network.

### **Computer System Use-Terms and Conditions:**

1. **Acceptable Use.** Access to the Division's computer system shall be (1) for the purposes of education or research and be consistent with the educational objectives of the Division or (2) for legitimate school business.
2. **Privilege.** The use of the Division's computer system is a privilege, not a right.
3. **Unacceptable Use.** Each user is responsible for his or her actions on the computer system. Prohibited conduct includes but is not limited to:
  - using the network for any illegal or unauthorized activity, including violation of copyright or contracts, or transmitting any material in violation of any federal, state, or local law.
  - sending, receiving, viewing or downloading illegal material via the computer system.
  - unauthorized downloading of software.
  - using the computer system for private financial or commercial purposes.
  - wastefully using resources, such as file space.
  - gaining unauthorized access to resources or entities.
  - posting material created by another without his or her consent.
  - submitting, posting, publishing, or displaying any obscene, profane, threatening, illegal, or other inappropriate material.
  - using the computer system while access privileges are suspended or revoked.
  - vandalizing the computer system, including destroying data by creating or spreading viruses or by other means.
  - intimidating, harassing, bullying, or coercing others.
  - threatening illegal or immoral acts.
4. **Network Etiquette.** Each user is expected to abide by generally accepted rules of etiquette, including the following:

- be polite.
  - users shall not forge, intercept or interfere with electronic mail messages.
  - use appropriate language. The use of obscene, lewd, profane, lascivious, threatening or disrespectful language is prohibited.
  - users shall not post personal information other than directory information as defined in Policy JO Student Records about themselves or others.
  - users shall respect the computer system's resource limits.
  - users shall not post chain letters or download large files.
  - users shall not use the computer system to disrupt others.
  - users shall not modify or delete data owned by others.
5. **Liability.** The School Board makes no warranties for the computer system it provides. The School Board shall not be responsible for any damages to the user from use of the computer system, including loss of data, non-delivery or missed delivery of information, or service interruptions. The School Division denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through the computer system. The user agrees to indemnify the School Board for any losses, costs, or damages incurred by the School Board relating to or arising out of any violation of these procedures.
6. **Security.** Computer system security is a high priority for the school division. If any user identifies a security problem, the user shall notify the building principal or system administrator immediately. All users shall keep their passwords confidential and shall follow computer virus protection procedures.
7. **Vandalism.** Intentional destruction of or interference with any part of the computer system through creating or downloading computer viruses or by any other means is prohibited.
8. **Charges.** The School Division assumes no responsibility for any unauthorized charges or fees as a result of using the computer system, including telephone, **data**, or long-distance charges.
9. **Electronic Mail.** The School Division's electronic mail system is owned and controlled by the School Division. The School Division may provide electronic mail to aid students and staff in fulfilling their duties and as an education tool. Electronic mail is not private. Students' electronic mail will be monitored. The electronic mail of staff may be monitored and accessed by the School Division. All electronic mail may be archived. Unauthorized access to an electronic mail account by any student or employee is prohibited. Users may be held responsible and personally liable for

the content of any electronic message they create or that is created under their account or password. Downloading any file attached to an electronic message is prohibited unless the user is certain of that message's authenticity and the nature of the file.

10. **Enforcement.** Software will be installed on the division's computers having Internet access to filter or block internet access through such computers to child pornography and obscenity. The online activities of users may also be monitored manually. **Any violation of these regulations shall result in loss of computer system privileges and may also result in appropriate disciplinary action, as determined by School Board policy, or legal action.**
11. **Social Media.** "Social Media" refers to forms of electronic communication, such as Web sites for social networking and microblogging, through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content, such as videos. Social media includes, but is not limited to, sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace.

School division employees are prohibited from using personal devices to post to social media for personal reasons during work hours. Also, the School division's computer system shall not be used to access, post to, view, or otherwise use social media, which includes, but is not limited to Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace, for personal reasons.

When using social media outside of work hours, school division employees should be aware that such use or postings, even if personal or seemingly private, may be viewed by students, parents, colleagues and others and that offensive or inappropriate content could result in professional repercussions.

School division employees should also be aware that personal communications with students via social media may be construed as inappropriate. It is recommended that school division employees refrain from engaging in personal communications with students via social media or personal e-mail accounts.

## General Concerns

The Covington City Public School Division recognizes the proliferation and, in some instances, usefulness, of online conversation between teachers and students and/or their parents or guardians. However, due to the nature of social networking sites, there exists a risk, without care and planning, that the lines between one's professional life and personal life will be blurred. Staff should always be mindful of how they present themselves to the

world, online and otherwise, should an educator “friend” a student on Facebook, subscribe to a student’s “twitter” account, regularly engage in email “chat” with a student, exchange text messages with students or engage in other electronic communication. The school district is concerned, and the educator should be concerned, that such activities may undermine the educator’s authority to maintain discipline, encourage inappropriate behaviors and compromise the educator’s ability to remain truly objective with his or her students.

In addition, any online communication using one’s own personal resources, as opposed to school district resources, compromises the teacher’s, as well as the school district’s, ability to retain public records in accordance with the requirements of the Commonwealth’s public records laws. The law requires public employees who send, receive or maintain records in their capacity as public employees, to retain, disclose and dispose of such records in compliance with strict provisions of the public records law. This law applies whether or not the record is in the form of a paper document or an electronic communication. When staff members communicate through school-based resources, such as staff email or school sponsored web pages, such records are retained and archived through the school’s information technology department. If, however, a teacher communicates outside of these resources, such information is not retained. The burden falls on the teacher to comply with public records laws when using personal email or social network accounts to communicate with students and/or parents and guardians.

### **Expectations of Staff Using Technology**

The Covington City Public School Board acknowledges that electronic communication (including social media and text messaging) are effective communication tools used by staff, parents, and students. Covington City Public Schools staff members will be directed to follow the following guidelines.

- Personal communication, including personal email accounts, social media and texting with students of Covington City Public Schools may be construed as inappropriate.
- Do not post obscenities, slurs or personal attacks that can damage the reputation of Covington City Public Schools.
- Covington City Public Schools’ employees have no right of privacy in data stored on or communicated sent via school-owned computers, devices, or networks.
- School employees will identify themselves and their positions truthfully and conduct themselves professionally.
- It is prohibited to create situations that jeopardize employee effectiveness or undermine professional standing.

- It is prohibited to post confidential information regarding students, parents and other school division employees on social media. Posting of pictures of Covington City students on social media sites is also prohibited.
- Employees of Covington City Public Schools should be aware that they are responsible for the content they post and that information, even if deleted, has a digital footprint forever.
- Do not infringe on copyrights or trademarks. Illegal use of copyrighted material is prohibited.
- Do not post on social media sites during the school day using your personal telephone or other forms of technology.
- Remember: the school division has the right to monitor an employee's use of social media that is public.
- On-line activity, even if personal or seemingly private, may be viewed by students, parents, colleagues and others as offensive or inappropriate content and could result in professional repercussions.
- It is prohibited to use the school division seal, logo, or mascot via social media.
- Behavior inconsistent with school division nondiscrimination and harassment policies and confidentiality policies is forbidden.
- It is prohibited to interact with students in a secretive or unprofessional manner.
- It is prohibited to display immoral or morally questionable content.
- Teachers, coaches, club sponsors and other staff members who elect to use social media and text communications are expected to inform parents and immediate supervisors in advance that they intend to use electronic communication methods, how these tools will be used, and how parents may also access or receive copies of communications.
- Social media and text communications should be used almost exclusively to provide multiple recipients with information related to school, athletic, and/or extracurricular activities. (Examples of "multiple recipients" include groups of involved students, parents who have requested copies of electronic communications, and immediate supervisors when appropriate); and answer school-related questions in a timely and professional manner.

Adopted: June 8, 2009

Revised: June 29, 2010

Revised: June 10, 2013

Revised: August 10, 2015

Legal Refs: 18 U.S.C. §§ 1460, 2256.  
47 U.S.C. § 254.

Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 18.2-372, 18.2-374.1:1, 18.2-390,  
22.1-70.2 and 22.1-78.

Guidelines and Resources for Internet Safety in Schools, Virginia Department  
of Education (Second Edition October 2007)

Cross Refs:	GCPD	Professional Staff Discipline
	JFC	Student Conduct
	JFC-R	Standards of Student Conduct