

TRUMBULL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
POLICY MANUAL

SECTION: 6000
CATEGORY: Instruction
POLICY CODE: 6141.323/Internet
Filtering

INTERNET FILTERING

Policy Statement

The Trumbull Public Schools is fortunate to have access to the Internet at all schools. This access provides increased opportunities for students and staff to conduct research and to communicate locally, nationally, and internationally.

This wonderful resource can also provide access to material unsuitable for students and which has no educational value. It is the responsibility of all District staff to ensure that the Internet, as used in District Schools, is appropriately guided and monitored. Moreover, staff also has the responsibility to conduct themselves in an appropriate private manner when using the Internet.

The Board of Education provides computers, computer systems, software, electronic access privileges, and networks for students and staff to carry out the mission of the Board in an environment that ensures access to up-to-date information, management, and communication services. Responsible use of these systems and networks is expected of all students and staff.

The computers, computer systems, software, electronic access privileges, and networks are the property of the Board of Education and are to be used only for those activities directly related to teaching, learning, and/or management by students and staff. The equipment, infrastructure, and software are not to be used for personal gain by any student or staff member.

In order to ensure that the District's Internet connection is used in the appropriate manner and that all users are protected from any inappropriate information published on the Internet, the District has implemented and is continuing to implement the following:

1. Professional development opportunities to help teachers integrate the use of the Internet into classroom teaching.
2. Use of the computers, computer systems, software electronic access privileges and networks shall be restricted to those users who have signed the District's "Acceptable Use Policy." In the case of minors, the "Acceptable Use Policy" must also be signed by the student's parent or guardian.
3. Implementation of a system developed to filter out Internet sites with content considered unacceptable for student viewing. A committee of teachers, parents, and administrators shall be used to receive appeals from users who have a specific use in mind for a filtered site.

The Internet changes rapidly, making it impossible to filter all objectionable sites. Therefore, the role of the District staff in supervising and monitoring student access to the Internet is critical. In addition, each individual has the responsibility to monitor his/her own navigation on the Internet to avoid undesirable sites.

Filtering should only be viewed as one of a number of techniques used to manage student's access to the Internet and encourage acceptable usage. It should not be viewed as a foolproof approach to preventing access to inappropriate material. Filtering should be used in conjunction with:

- Educating students to be “Net-smart”;
- Using recognized Internet gateways as searching tools and/or homepages for students, in order to facilitate access to appropriate material;
- Using “Acceptable Use Agreements”;
- Using behavior management practices for which Internet access privileges can be earned or lost; and
- Appropriate supervision, either in person and/or electronically.

The placement of filters on District computers/computer systems is viewed as an exercise of the Board's ability to determine educational suitability of all material used in the schools. Filters may be utilized with District schools to: (1) block pre-selected sites; (2) block by word; (3) block entire categories like chat and newsgroups; and (4) block through a pre-selected list of approved sites.

Additionally, the District recognizes its responsibility to educate students regarding appropriate behavior on social networking and chat room sites about cyberbullying. Therefore, students shall be provided instruction about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking sites and in chat rooms and cyberbullying awareness and response.

Adopted: 9/27/2016

References

- Public Law 94-553
- 18 U.S.C. §2256
- 18 U.S.C. §2510 *et seq.* Electronic Communications Privacy Act
- 20 U.S.C. §6777 The No Child Left Behind Act
- 47 U.S.C. §254 Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000

- Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 4118.112: Sexual Harassment
- Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 4118.5: Staff Network/Internet Use
- Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 5131: Student Standard of Conduct
- Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 5131.4: Sexual Harassment of Students
- Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 5131.91: Hazing

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- Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 5131.911: Bullying and Teen Dating Violence Prevention and Intervention
- Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 6141.321: Student Network/Internet Use
- Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 6141.328: Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) and Protocol for the Use of Technology in the Schools

Regulations

When minors are using the Internet, access to visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography or harmful to minors must be blocked or filtered. When adults are using the Internet, only material that is obscene or child pornography must be filtered or blocked.

I. Definitions

A. "Obscene" is to be determined by the following standards:

- Whether the average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find that the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest;
- Whether the work depicts sexual conduct in an offensive way; and
- Whether the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.

B. "Child pornography," as defined in 18 U.S.C. 2256, means any visual depiction, including any photograph, film, video, picture, computer or computer-generated image or picture, whether made or produced by electronic, mechanical, or other means, of sexually explicit conduct, where:

- the production of such visual depiction involves the use of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct;
- such visual depiction is, or appears to be, of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct;
- such visual depiction has been created, adapted, or modified to appear that an identifiable minor is engaging in sexually explicit conduct; or
- such visual depiction is advertised, promoted, presented, described, or distributed in such a manner that conveys the impression that the material is or contains a visual depiction of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct.

C. Material "harmful to minors" is any picture, graphic image file, or other visual depiction that

- taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion;
- depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable to minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual conduct, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and
- taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value to minors.

II. Criteria for Filtering of Objectionable Sites

Anything that falls under at least one of the categories below shall/may be blocked/filtered. This list may and will be updated/modified as required.

A. Nudity/Pornography

- Prevailing U.S. standards for nudity (e.g., genitalia, female breasts)
- Provocative semi-nudity (e.g., lingerie models)
- Sites that contain pornography or links to pornographic sites
- Potential exceptions: Classical nudity (e.g., Michelangelo), swimsuit models

B. Sexuality

- Sites that contain material of a mature level for elementary and middle school audiences
- Images or descriptions of sexual aids
- Descriptions of sexual acts or techniques
- Sites that contain inappropriate personal ads

C. Violence

- Sites that promote violence
- Images or description of graphically violent acts (e.g., rape, dismemberment, torture, etc.)
- Graphic autopsy or crime-scene images

D. Crime

- Information related to performing criminal acts (e.g., drug- or bomb-making, computer “hacking”)
- Illegal file archives (e.g., software piracy)

E. Drug Use

- Sites that promote the use of illegal drugs
- Material advocating the use of illegal drugs (e.g., marijuana, LSD) or the abuse of any drug (e.g., drinking-game rules)
- Potential exceptions: Material with valid educational use (e.g., drug-use statistics)

F. Tastelessness

- Images or description of excretory acts (e.g., vomiting, urinating)
- Graphic medical images outside of a medical context
- Potential exceptions: Graphic medical images within a medical context

G. Language/Profanity

- Words/passages too coarse to be softened by the word filter
- Profanity within images/sounds/multimedia files
- Adult humor (i.e., inappropriate for the age/grade level of the person(s) accessing the material)
- Note: The focus is American English, but profanity in other languages or dialects will be blocked if brought to the District's attention.

H. Discrimination/Intolerance

- Material advocating discrimination (e.g., forms of intolerance and/or bigotry such as racial, gender, sexual orientation, disability, national origin, color, or religious discrimination)
- Sites that promote intolerance, hate, or discrimination

I. Interactive Mail/Chat

- Sites that contain or allow inappropriate e-mail correspondence
- Sites that contain or allow inappropriate chat areas

J. Inappropriate Banner Ads

- Advertisements containing inappropriate images

K. Gambling

- Sites that allow or promote online gambling

L. Weapons

- Sites that promote illegal weapons
- Sites that promote the use of illegal weapons

M. Other Inappropriate Material

- Body modification: tattooing, branding, cutting, etc.

N. Judgment Calls

- Whether a page is likely to have more questionable material in the future (e.g., sites under construction whose names indicate questionable material)

III. Procedures for Requesting Filtering of Objectionable Sites

If a District staff member observes a site that he/she believes to contain inappropriate material according to the criteria provided herein, he/she will request that the site be blocked via a request to the Director of Digital Learning, the District Technology Manager, or other member of the District technology staff. District technology staff will

review the site for inappropriateness. If the site meets the criteria for filtering, steps will be taken to block the site.

IV. Procedures for Requesting Unblocking of Filtered Sites

There are no exceptions to the requirement that Internet access be blocked/filtered at all times for minors. If material has been wrongly blocked, it must be unblocked by the company providing the software, after a request has been made by the District.

The technology protection measures used to block or filter a site may be disabled by the District during the Internet's use by an adult to enable access to bona fide research or other lawful purpose. This decision will be made on a case-by-case basis by the Director of Digital Learning in response to a specific written request by a staff member.