

# **TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT (UPDATED 2023-2024)**

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The creation of a large & varied technology environment demands that technology usage be conducted in legally & ethically appropriate ways. We recognize that the use of technology always requires attempts to balance the benefits against the possibilities of danger, security problems, & abuse. Rapid changes in technology & growth in the range of content available makes this a constant challenge. Thus, it is the intention of the Colbert County School System that all technology resources will be used in accordance with any & all school system policies & procedures as well as local, state, & federal laws. All Colbert County students & staff must acknowledge & adhere to this Agreement.

To ensure that students receive quality education & that employees are able to work in a professional & intellectually stimulating environment, it is the intention of Colbert County Schools to provide all students & employees with access to a variety of technology resources that will support the educational & instructional needs of students & teachers throughout the district. Use of any & all resources should be considered a privilege & not a right.

Technology users include anyone (employees, students, or guests) that utilizes any technology equipment, service, or resource provided by Colbert County Schools including, but not limited to:

- Computers, both wired & wireless networks (including the Wide Area Network), Internet, email, chat rooms, phones & other forms of technology services & products.
- Equipment includes smartphones, IOS devices, desktop computers, tablets, laptops, Chromebooks, & any portable storage device.

Some of these procedures pertain to technology equipment personally owned by school employees & students & are brought into school facilities. All personal technologies used on any CCS campus are subject to this agreement & may be used only if such use is in compliance with all school system policies, procedures, & guidelines as well as local, state, & federal laws. This also includes any external storage medium including Dropbox, Google Docs, Microsoft OneDrive, or similar online storage.

Employees are prohibited from emailing outside the school system or storing/saving on external storage devices or portable devices that do not remain on campus, electronic copies of student or staff personal information. This information includes, but is not limited to data containing social security numbers, information protected by FERPA, & any other sensitive &/or protected information. Exceptions are made for employees carrying out their assigned job responsibilities. In the event that this type of information is stored on a portable or external device & said device is lost or stolen, the Executive Director of Technology should be notified immediately.

Any questions about this agreement, its interpretation, or specific circumstances shall be directed to the Executive Director of Technology before proceeding. Violations of this agreement will be handled in a manner consistent with comparable situations requiring disciplinary &/or legal action.

## **I. Access**

- A. The use of all Colbert County Schools technology resources is a privilege, not a right, & inappropriate or suspected inappropriate use can result in cancellation of those privileges, pending investigation. Moreover, users of Colbert County Schools' technology must be aware that Colbert County Schools cannot assume any liability arising from the illegal or inappropriate use of technology resources. The Executive Director of Technology, district Technology staff, &/or school system administrators will determine when inappropriate use has occurred, & have the right to deny, revoke, or suspend specific user accounts.

- B. Individuals may only use accounts, files, software, &/or other technology resources that are assigned to, provided, or approved for him/her.
- C. Individuals identified as a real or suspected security risk can be denied access.
- D. Any use of technology resources that reduces the efficiency of use for others can be considered a violation of this Agreement.
- E. Personal technology-related devices (if connected to the CCS network) such as, but not limited to, laptops, mobile devices, etc. used on school grounds are subject to all items covered in this Agreement & other applicable published guideline.

## **II. Privacy**

- A. To maintain network integrity & ensure that the network is being used responsibly, designated technology staff & administration reserve the right to inspect any & all data, including data stored by individual users on individual school or personal devices (if connected to the CCS network). Users should be aware that activities might be monitored at any time, without notice.
- B. Users should not have any expectation that their use of technology resources, including files stored by them on the Colbert County Schools network, will be private & will be secure from access by others. Reasonable steps will be taken to maintain the security of technology resources, but no assurance can be given that penetration of such security will not occur. Because communications on the Internet are public in nature, all users should be careful to maintain appropriate & responsible communications. Colbert County Schools cannot guarantee the privacy, security, or confidentiality of any information sent or received via the Internet, email correspondence, telephone, etc.
- C. Users are encouraged to avoid storing personal &/or private information on technology devices or network resources owned by the district &/or school.

## **III. Data Security**

- A. Students & staff are expected to follow all local, state, & federal laws in addition to this acceptable use agreement regarding the protection of student & staff confidential data.
- B. Individuals may not attempt to log into the network using any network account &/or password other than the login(s) assigned to him/her. Individuals may not allow someone to use his/her network account &/or password to access the network, email, or the Internet. The Technology Department is exempt from this to allow them to troubleshoot & provide support to employees & students on issues related to their network accounts & passwords. In case of emergency or authorized personnel absence, an individual's manager or supervisor may request temporary access to the network account &/or password for a designated period. The Technology Department must approve these requests.
- C. In emergency situations, student pictures or other personally identifiable information can be shared with outside agencies in accordance with this signed "Colbert County Schools Acceptable Use Agreement" & in accordance with FERPA guidelines.
- D. District or school data, such as but not limited to student information systems (PowerSchool) data, accessed through school system technology resources may not be used for any private business activity. The system-wide technology staff does perform routine backups in an effort to assure continuity of business. There can be no assurance, however, that technology resources will be available within a particular time frame following an outage. There is no guarantee that information that existed prior to an outage,

malfunction, or deletion, can be recovered. Users are expected to maintain & back up their critical files & data.

#### **IV. Copyright & Plagiarism**

The United States Copyright Law must be followed at all times. Students may not illegally copy text, music, software, pictures, videos or graphics from any Internet, online or software source. The "Fair Use" clause does give students some leniency for using some pictures, music, graphics, text, etc. for academic purposes only, & the student's teacher or media specialist will instruct him/her about the legalities & use of this clause when necessary & appropriate. To avoid allegations of plagiarism, students should always request permission from the creator/owner of material or sites & should cite the digital resource where he/she obtains information or materials.

#### **V. Email**

Colbert County Schools provide access to email accounts for most employees & students. This agreement addresses each user. Email accounts may be granted for school-related organizations or classes with designated employee sponsors. Technical support is provided for Colbert County Schools email accounts used to conduct educational &/or instructional business.

- A. Personal use of email is permitted as long as it does not violate this Colbert County Schools' Acceptable Use Agreement &/or adversely affect others or the speed of the network.
- B. Use of Colbert County Schools email accounts for harassing or threatening is strictly prohibited.
- C. Colbert County Schools' email accounts may not be used for political activity, personal gain, commercial purposes, or profit.
- D. SPAM- Colbert County Schools' email accounts may not be used for attempting to send or sending anonymous messages. Colbert County Schools' email accounts may not be used for sending mass emails unless to parent lists or for other educational purposes.
- E. Colbert County Schools' email accounts may not be used for posting or forwarding another user's personal communication without the author's consent.
- F. Because email is not securely transmitted, discretion must be used when sending, or encouraging the receipt of email containing sensitive information about students, families, school system employees, or any individuals. There can be no assurance that email will be confidential &/or private.
- G. Incoming & outgoing email is filtered by the district for inappropriate content. However, no filtering system is foolproof, & material deemed inappropriate by individual users may be transmitted in spite of filtering. Colbert County Schools cannot assume any liability for such breaches of the filter.
- H. At the discretion of the Executive Director of Technology, email accounts may be locked without notice.

#### **VI. Internet Use**

The intent of the Colbert County Schools is to provide access to resources available via the Internet with the understanding that staff & students will access & use information that is appropriate for their various curricula. All school rules & guidelines for appropriate technology usage, as well as local, state, & federal laws apply to usage of the Internet. Teachers should always screen all Internet resources before projecting them in the classroom.

- A. The acceptable use agreement is not transferable, & therefore, may not be shared.

- B. Existing acceptable use agreements are valid until new forms are received.
- C. Internet activity can & will be monitored, along with other aspects of technology usage.
- D. Internet access for all users is filtered, through one central point, by URL (web address) & by IP address & may be filtered by keyword. URLs (web addresses) & IP addresses may be added to or deleted from the filtered list by the Executive Director of Technology & his or her designee. Staff members may request to review filtered categories.
- E. Users requesting sites for blocking or unblocking must list specific URLs. Successful or unsuccessful attempts to bypass the Internet filter by using proxies or other resources (VPNs) are a violation of this agreement.

## **VII. Social Media Recommendations**

Social media can be a valuable tool for both personal & professional use. However, as with any tool, it must be used with skill & care. The guidelines below have been developed to help protect students & employees from charges of inappropriate use. Although many of the items below specifically reference Facebook or Twitter, the guidelines & cautions apply to all social networking venues. It is strongly recommended that teachers do not "friend" current students &/or students under 18 years of age. There may be exceptions, such as a relative, a friend's child, etc.; however, as a general rule, it is recommended that teachers do not "friend" students, & they assume personal responsibility if they choose to do so.

- A. A potential danger exists when employees communicate directly with students or instruct students to communicate directly to each other or the general public on social media sites that Colbert County Schools do not host. District-sponsored & approved teacher websites, including email, Remind, GroupMe, & ClassDojo, along with the PowerSchool parent portal should be the primary means for electronic parent communication. Remember, once something is posted on a social networking site, it may be available forever.
- B. Please avoid posting comments that discuss or criticize others.
- C. Only post what could be shared in a face-to-face meeting with the public. No confidential student information.
- D. Make sure posts & pictures are presented in a professional role or manner.

## **VIII. Examples of Inappropriate Use of Resources:**

This list is not all-inclusive but is intended to provide general guidance. Anything that would be considered inappropriate in "paper form" is also considered inappropriate in electronic form. The following are examples of inappropriate activities when using any Colbert County Schools' network, email system, hardware, software, technology service, &/or Internet access:

- A. Using another user's password or attempting to discover another user's password
- B. Sharing passwords
- C. Unauthorized access of another user's files, folders, home directory, or work
- D. Saving information on any network drive or directory other than your personal home directory or a teacher-specified & approved location
- E. Downloading, installing, or copying software of any kind onto a workstation, laptop, or any network drive without permission.
- F. Harassing, insulting, embarrassing, or attacking others via technology resources
- G. Damaging any technology resources, including, but not limited to, printers, telephones, computers, computer systems, or computer networks.
- H. Placing irresponsible demands on limited resources such as Internet bandwidth, disk space & printing capacity

- I. Accessing inappropriate material from web sites or attempting to bypass the Internet filter to access web sites that have been blocked.
- J. Sending, displaying, or downloading offensive messages or pictures
- K. Using obscene, racist, profane, discriminatory, threatening, or inflammatory language in a document, email, etc.
- L. Using a digital camera, camera phone, or any other device capable of storing a still or video image to take inappropriate &/or embarrassing pictures
- M. Editing or modifying digital pictures with the intent to embarrass, harass or bully
- N. Posting any false or damaging information about other people, the school system, or other organizations
- O. Using images or text from an online source without appropriate reference (i.e., plagiarism)
- P. Use of technology resources to create illegal materials (i.e., counterfeit money, fake identification, etc.)