

INTRODUCTION

The Westford Public Schools provide students and staff access to the district-wide school technology platform or network (hereafter referred to as “the network”), which also serves as our gateway to the internet. The network is a system of resources that includes computers (including servers, workstations and laptops), related hardware (printers, plotters, fax machines, scanners, cameras and other unique devices), software (operating systems, applications, and utilities), and Telephones, Mobile Phones, tablets and other portable devices. This network of resources provides students and staff with access to information (e.g., active and archived of student, curriculum and administrative information), enabling software, the Westford Public Schools intranet, and the outside internet. By providing easy access to information and enabling software, this network supports the District’s organizational objectives to provide an excellent education to Westford’s children efficiently.

The Superintendent or designee shall monitor technology use in the WPS and shall notify the Westford School Committee of the need for any future amendments or revisions to the policy. The Superintendent shall develop additional administrative regulations governing the day-to-day management and operations of the network which are consistent with the policy. Rules for access controls and other controls on device usage will be developed by the Superintendent or designee. Rules may vary and may be dependent upon type of user.

NO EXPECTATION OF PRIVACY

The district retains control, custody and supervision of the entirety of its network. It reserves the right to monitor all electronic activity by employees and other system users. Employees shall have no expectation of privacy in their use of network resources such as school phones, tablets, or computers; including content of e-mail messages and stored files or in the use of private devices in the school environment. Staff owned data files used on the network are subject to monitoring.

Any personal use by staff of the network must comply with this policy and all other applicable policies, procedures and rules. Failure to comply with the policy, its rules and/or established procedures or rules governing the network use may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Illegal uses of any component of the network will result in immediate suspension of user privileges and in referral to law enforcement authorities.

INFORMATION SECURITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Student information is made confidential by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. Confidential student information may be communicated to other staff members only for legitimate purposes in accordance with the law and the receiving employee’s legitimate need for such information. E-mail may be used for this purpose, only with due regard to the need to maintain confidentiality.

Westford Public Schools collects and stores information about past and current students that is defined as Personal Information by CMR 17.00. Such information must be handled with care and protected from inappropriate disclosure, as defined in the Town of Westford Information Security Policy of 2012. Personal Information identifiable to an individual such as addresses, contact numbers, sex, age, race, physical or mental health condition, school performance, schools attended, criminal record, and family

life or status, can be created, stored or accessed in the network only for legitimate and authorized job purposes.

Staff is expected to use appropriate judgment and caution in communications concerning students and staff to ensure that personally identifiable information remains confidential. Staff shall protect all such data from inappropriate disclosure and release.

The school district shall provide accounts to all regular network users and shall mandate the use of secure passwords. Passwords shall be protected by each user and shall not be shared with others, including with other staff members.

All technology devices provided to staff shall have anti-malware software installed.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

The network is the property of the Westford Public Schools and its storage systems are therefore subject to inspection by the administration at any time. System users shall have a no privacy expectation for the contents of any files on the network.

Routine maintenance and monitoring of the system may lead to discovery that a user has violated or is violating this policy, network usage regulations, or the law. An investigation will be conducted if there is suspicion of such a violation. The nature of this investigation will be in the context of the type of alleged violation, but may involve law enforcement if criminal conduct is suspected.

ACCESS

The district has the right to access, remove, replace, or modify any computer owned by the district at any time, including the right to view or copy any file or executable residing on any district-owned system.

The school district shall conduct regularly scheduled backups of network data. The district cannot guarantee that all information can be recovered in the event of a catastrophic failure.

Responsibility for backing up data on any mobile device issued to a school district user falls upon the user. The district is not responsible for backing up these devices.

Only personnel affiliated with the technology department may be granted administrative privileges on any device, unless such privileges are specifically authorized by the Coordinator of Instructional Technology.

References:

Federal Law: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974

MGL 71:34D – Student Records; Regulations

MGL 71:37H – Publication of School Committee Rules and Regulations Relative to the Conduct of Teachers and Students

CMR 17.00 – Standards for the Protection of Personal Information

P4110 – Confidentiality

P6301 – District Computing Environment

P6302 – Acceptable Use of District-Wide Computing Environment

Town of Westford Information Security Policy of 2012

Policy Adopted: June 17, 2013

Policy Revised: June 17, 2013

WESTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Westford, Massachusetts 01886