



To: Parents and Students

Subject: Internet Use Policy

We are pleased and excited to be able to offer our students access to the Internet. The Internet is a powerful tool, connecting students to a rich, diverse and stimulating interchange of ideas and information. Users can survey on-line documents from government agencies or legislators. They can access research and other files posted by universities and libraries, consult college catalogs, or find the latest occupational and career information. From computers in our lab and library, students can take a "virtual tour" of the Smithsonian or Louvre museums, explore the history and culture of other countries, or even converse with their peers in foreign countries. The Internet is truly a gateway to the world.

However, like many of the best-planned excursions, often the most provocative and rewarding experiences are those that arise unexpectedly -- the unforeseen side-trips and detours. So it is with the Internet. While we recognize this opens students to the chance of encountering material that is profane, explicit, inciteful, or otherwise controversial, we firmly believe the value obtained through the experience of Internet searching and global communication far outweighs any negative possibilities.

As a public educational institution, we have an obligation to ensure, as far as possible, the integrity of our use of the Internet. We also want to teach and encourage our students to become discriminating users of information. It is reasonable then for us to expect students to use the Internet in a responsible manner, consistent with school and district policy.

It is the intent of this document to clarify Vallejo City Unified School District's standards of conduct and define our disciplinary measures for any breach of policy. The signatures of both a parent or guardian and the student indicates this document has been read and understood, and the signers agree the student, and not the school, is held accountable for his/her actions, and agrees to the terms and conditions of Internet use described more fully below.

## **Terms and Conditions of Internet Use Issues of Concern**

### **1. General Conduct**

Internet capabilities are provided to students to support learning and to enhance instruction, and to give access to a vast exchange of information. The student is expected to follow all guidelines stated below as well as those given orally by the staff. It is expected that all computers and network services are to be used in an appropriate, efficient, ethical and legal manner.

Inappropriate use is defined as a violation of the intended educational purposes, and shall include use of the Internet for accessing, posting, submitting, publishing or displaying harmful matter or material that is threatening, obscene, disruptive or sexually explicit, or that could be construed as harassment or disparagement of others based on their race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion or political beliefs.

Harmful matter includes matter, taken as a whole, which to the average person (applying contemporary statewide standards) appeals to the prurient interest and is matter which depicts or describes in a patently offensive way sexual conduct and which lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value for minors (Penal Code 313). Users shall not use the system to encourage the use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco, nor shall they promote unethical practices or any activity prohibited by law or district policy.

Students are expected to exit immediately from any inappropriate files they may inadvertently encounter. Because on-line networks are used as part of a school activity, the Internet Use Policy is an extension of the school's behavior code, and normal disciplinary measures adopted by the school will be pursued for any infringement.

### **2. Legal Issues & Security**

Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users. It is a violation of California State Law to access any computer system or network for the purpose of fraud, or to maliciously access, alter, delete, damage, or destroy any computer system, program or data. Anyone who commits acts of this kind will face disciplinary action by the school and legal authorities.

Some examples of offenses are: tampering with another person's account or password, damaging files or data, attempting to log-on as a system administrator or another user, altering or degrading the system, maliciously uploading or downloading or creating computer viruses, theft of data, equipment, or intellectual property, the transmission of obscene or threatening material, or using the system for monetary gain.

Students who violate these standards will be denied access to the Internet and will invoke school disciplinary measures.

### **3. Copyright**

Copyright laws exist to protect the intellectual property rights of program and file originators, as well as various music, literary, performing and visual artists. Computer software protected under

copyright must not be transmitted via the network, nor downloaded, nor installed or stored on any school computers without express, written, permission of the copyright holder. For example, commercial copyrighted software, e.g. Microsoft Word, can not be legally copied, but must be purchased with a legal license.

#### **4. Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is presenting as your own the ideas or writings from another person, in speech or in writing. Students who use excerpts from on-line files and materials for use in their own documents must give credit to the author.

#### **5."Chat Lines"**

Numerous sites exist on the Internet to provide an open, public forum for on-line communication. Users who post messages anonymously may not realize that each computer has an address, and that someone else could trace connections made through network services. Because privacy can not be guaranteed, and unsupervised use is often ill-advised and unguarded, students will not be allowed to access any chat line service, except under close supervision of a teacher. (For example, a foreign language class communicates with native speakers in another country). Students are not allowed to give out home phone numbers and addresses.

When communicating on-line as a class activity, students are representative of the school and district and are expected to conform to general standards of etiquette with respectful, appropriate conduct. The network must not be used to annoy, harass, or otherwise offend people. Abusive or obscene language will not be tolerated. Parents, teachers and administration have the right to investigate the contents of a student's email files at any time. Parents have the right to request the termination of their child(ren)'s individual account at any time.

#### **6. School Resources**

Our network server has a limited capacity to handle user traffic and can become congested. To reduce "gridlock", students are expected to avoid:

- tying up the network with idle activities and games
- being wasteful with paper and supplies and,
- downloading huge files from across the globe

Please respect the fact that there are many students who need to use the Internet, and use access time efficiently.