SOMERVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
NETWORK ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR STAFF

This **Network Acceptable Use Policy for Staff** (hereinafter referred to as the "Policy") shall serve as a statement on the appropriate use of the various technology resources available to all authorized staff of the Somerville Public Schools (hereinafter referred to as "SPS") including but not limited to computers, the Network, electronic mail system (e-mail), websites, Internet access, telephones, facsimile machines, printers and other peripherals, software, cellular and hand held devices.

For purposes of the Policy, "staff" refers to SPS employees, volunteers, substitutes, student teachers, interns, contractors, and any other person who is provided with email, Network or internet access by the SPS. This Policy may be updated from time to time and amended by the School Committee, upon the recommendation of the Network Administrator and the Superintendent.

PURPOSE

The SPS recognizes the important role of technology as an invaluable resource to assist staff to successfully perform the duties associated with their role in the SPS. Staff are reminded that the use of technology resources is subject to the same management oversight as other employee activities. The Network is the property of the SPS and may be used only for educational and administrative purposes that are approved by the SPS.

USER RESPONSIBILITIES

Staff members are required to read, understand and follow this **Policy** before accessing the SPS Network and must acknowledge, by electronic or written form, that the employee has read and will comply with the **Policy**. Staff will be held responsible for ensuring that their activities adhere to the **Policy** and to generally-accepted educational and professional standards as outlined in other applicable SPS policies. Staff with questions regarding the application or meaning of this **Policy** are encouraged to communicate with the Network Administrator or the Director of Operations to obtain clarification.

Responsible use of the SPS technology resources by staff includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Not interfering with the normal and proper operation of SPS computers, Network, e-mail system, website sections, or Internet access;
- Not adversely affecting the ability of others to use equipment or services unless specifically authorized;
- Not conducting oneself in ways that are harmful or deliberately offensive to others;
- Not using the technology resources for illegal purposes;
- Not changing files that do not belong to the user unless specifically authorized;
- Not storing or transferring unnecessarily large files;
- Not creating, transferring or otherwise using or accessing any text, image, movie, sound recording or electronic or digital file that contains pornography, profanity, obscenity or language that offends or tends to degrade others, especially that deemed "harmful to minors";
- Not attempting to install any software on computers;

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- Not downloading software from the Internet;
- Not sharing personal passwords or personal information;
- Not leaving personal files open or leaving computer sessions unattended;
- Using the technology resources only when authorized to do so as outlined in this **Policy**;
- Changing passwords regularly or whenever current passwords may be known to others;
- Notifying the Network Administrator if you learn that others are utilizing District technology resources for unlawful or suspicious activities.

ACCEPTABLE USE

Use of the Network is a privilege and not a right and any use of the Network must be consistent with and directly related to the educational objectives and business purposes of the Somerville Public Schools. Violation of any of the terms of this **Policy** may result in the suspension or termination of Network privileges and / or disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Violations of any provision of this **Policy** that constitute a criminal offense may also result in criminal prosecution.

The following actions violate the Policy:

- Use of the Network for personal or recreational purposes or activities.
- Sending e-mail to groups (e.g., **"**list serves") that are not job-related without permission;
- Accessing discussion groups or "chat rooms" that are not job-related;
- Use of the Network to buy, sell or advertise any goods or services;
- Use of the Network for gambling purposes;
- Use of the Network for purposes associated with political campaigning, including but not limited to attempts to influence ballot questions or to promote or oppose a candidate for public office;
- Use of the Network to transmit profane, obscene, vulgar, sexually explicit, threatening, defamatory, abusive, discriminatory, harassing, criminal or otherwise objectionable messages or materials. (Employees are also prohibited from visiting Internet sites that post such materials and downloading or displaying such materials.)
- Use of the Network for any illegal purpose or in support of illegal activities or in a manner that violates any federal or state law or statute, or an activity prohibited by any Policy of the SPS including but not limited to the use or dissemination of copyrighted materials;
- Revealing one's own password, using another person's password or pretending to be someone else when using the Network;
- Accessing, reading, altering, deleting or copying another user's messages or data without express written approval;
- Using technology resources for employee union business;
- Using technology resources for promoting, supporting or celebrating religion or religious institutions;
- Using profanity, vulgarities, obscenity or other language which tends to be offensive or tends to degrade others;
- Attempting to log-on to the Network as the system administrator;
- Using encryption or security measures to avoid monitoring or review in the ordinary course of business or routine maintenance by the system administrator;
- Using harassing, racial, sexist or discriminatory remarks and other antisocial behaviors;
- Wasting limited resources, including paper;

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- Using invasive software such as "viruses", "worms" and other detrimental activities;
- Sending "chain" type letters and unsolicited bulk mails (Spamming);
- Sending hate mail, anonymous messages or threatening messages;
- Attempting to harm, modify or destroy data of another user.
- Attempting to gain unauthorized access to the Network, including but not limited to the use of personal hardware, and attempts to override the domain policies of the Network.
- Involvement in any activity prohibited by law or school District policy.

Use of the District's technology resources for any altruistic or charitable purpose must be approved in advance by the District.

<u>If staff are not clear as to whether a specific use of the SPS Network or other technology resources is appropriate or acceptable they should seek clarification from the Network Administrator or the Director of Operations.</u>

CYBER-BULLYING

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Bill S2404, Section 5, defines Cyber-bulling as:

> *"…bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying shall also include (i) the*
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> *creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying."*

In accordance with the SPS zero-tolerance **Bullying Prevention Plan,** Cyber-bullying is prohibited on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at school-sponsored or school-related activities, functions or programs (whether on or off school grounds), at bus stops, on school busses or other vehicles owned or operated by the SPS or their contractors, or through the use of technology or electronic devices owned, leased or used by the District, regardless of whether the Cyber-bullying occurs on or off the Network.

<u>MONITORED USE</u>

All communications that are created, transmitted or retrieved via the SPS Network are the property of the Somerville Public Schools and should not be considered to be confidential. The SPS maintains data backup resources that store all electronic communications - including those that are deleted by the user. The SPS reserves the right to access and monitor all messages and information on the system, as it

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deems necessary and appropriate to identify abuse by users of the Network to ensure the proper use of resources, to conduct routine maintenance and to enforce the terms of this Policy.

As necessary, any and all electronic communications may be disclosed to law enforcement officials in response to proper requests or to other third parties in the context of proper requests in the course of litigation, without the prior consent of the sender or receiver. All users of the SPS Network are considered to have consented to such monitoring and disclosure.

Users are reminded that e-mail messages are public records, subject to disclosure under G.L. c. 66, §10. Additionally, electronic documents are subject to disclosure in litigation. Users of the SPS Network are to avoid sending documents or information containing confidential or sensitive material, such as student record and personnel information, via the Network, due to concerns relating to the security of such documents or information. Employees should not discuss litigation in e-mail messages, because such messages are not privileged and are subject to discovery in litigation against the SPS.

LIABILITY

The Somerville Public Schools assumes no responsibility or liability for:

- Any unauthorized charges or fees incurred as a result of use of the system/Network, including but not limited to telephone charges, long distance charges, per minute surcharges and/or equipment or line charges;
- Any financial obligations arising out of the unauthorized use of the Network for the purchase of products or services;
- Any user data, information, or materials stored on the Network;
- Any cost, liability or damages caused by user violation of this Policy, or any other inappropriate use of electronic resources of the SPS;
- The SPS makes no guarantee, implied or otherwise, regarding the reliability of the data connection, and shall not be liable for any loss or corruption of data resulting while using the system/Network.

Revised: November 27, 2007

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