



Cumberland School Department Policy Manual

STUDENT INSTRUCTION

I

INTERNET FILTERING POLICY

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INTERNET FILTERING POLICY

Pursuant to R.I.G.L. 16-21.6-1, the Cumberland School District (“District”) must adopt the model internet filtering policy developed by the Rhode Island Department of Education addressing the use of internet filtering measures for computer access in its schools. The Superintendent will implement protocols and administrative procedure to supplement the District’s policy.

1. Definitions

- (A) In accordance with the federal Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the District is required to have in place a filtering device on all computers with Internet access (“Filter”).
- (B) The Filter should protect minors from access to visual depictions that are obscene or constitute child pornography, or that are harmful to minors.
- (C) As defined by CIPA, “harmful to minors” means any picture, image, graphic image file, or other visual depiction that:
 - 1. taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion;
 - 2. depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and
 - 3. taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors.

2. Technology Committee

- (A) The Superintendent shall appoint a Technology Committee, which shall include designated members of the library staff, IT staff, administrators, and educators. Deciding what categories of content to filter shall be made by the Technology Committee and approved by the School Committee.
- (B) Principles of academic freedom shall be considered in deciding what categories to filter.
- (C) The Technology Committee shall prepare a document with the list of filtered categories that have been chosen and a brief explanation of the educational or legal basis for the decision to filter each category.



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(D) The Technology committee shall annually review the filtered categories and make recommendations to the Network Administrator for any adjustments.

3. Requests to Unblock Website

(A) Websites may be unblocked in certain circumstances for anyone who meets the following criteria:

1. Educational purposes – there is educational material being blocked by the filtering system. Where access to a specific site consistent with the purpose of education is blocked, the site shall be unblocked.
2. Staff related purposes – a staff member needs a website unblocked related to their job (such as purchasing, law enforcement, bona fide research).

(B) Any person requesting to have a site unblocked should submit a formal request to the Network Administrator through the online ticketing system. The request submission will include:

1. Date of the request
2. Website address to be unblocked
3. Explanation of purpose for unblocking the site (refer to criteria above)
4. Name and title of the requester
5. Electronic signature based on login credentials

(C) If deemed appropriate to the criteria mentioned above and if there is no threat to the network or resources, the site will immediately be unblocked and access granted.

4. Denied Requests

(A) If a request to unblock a website is denied, the Network Administrator will provide the specific reasons as to why the request was denied as well as the individual's right to appeal the decision.

(B) Further appeals may be made in writing to the [Superintendent/other Administrator] requesting that the denial be overturned.



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5. Reporting

- (A) The District will maintain a public record of any requests made to unblock a website and all copies of responses provided.
- (B) The District will submit annual reports to the School Committee regarding the number of requests granted and denied to unblock a site. The results of the report shall be used to review the filtering categories in place and consider modifications to them or to the administrative procedures in place.
- (C) The report shall also be used to determine whether improvements and modifications should be made to the filter itself or a different filtering software vendor should be used.

Policy Approved by Cumberland SC Policy & Procedures Sub-Committee: 9/28/2017

1st Reading Approved by Cumberland School Committee: _____

2nd Reading and Approval by Cumberland School Committee: _____