

Cathedral High School Policy on Student Use of the Internet and Other Media

Cathedral High School appreciates that freedom of expression is a fundamental right. Freedom of expression encompasses the right to freedom of speech and the corollary right to receive information. One means by which Cathedral facilitates the exercise of this right by our students is to provide a computer system that permits students to access and use the wealth of information available on the Internet. Our separately-published *Computer Use Policy while at Cathedral High School* describes the School's policy in regard to the use of School computers and how we maintain the integrity of our system and ensure that it is used properly. This *Policy on Student Use of the Internet and Other Media* has been established to supplement our *Computer Use Policy while at Cathedral High School*.

Outside of School, Cathedral parents and guardians bear responsibility for the same guidance regarding Internet use as they exercise with information sources such as television, telephones, movies, and other media. We have no way to monitor how our students use the Internet at home or how they use other communications or electronic media, nor does the School have any interest in monitoring such use. However, we do expect that in using the Internet and other media, both at home and at School, students will act lawfully (for example, use of illegal gambling sites is not acceptable). Additionally, we expect that students shall, at all times both at home and at School, act responsibly and exercise good judgment and a high degree of personal ethics, consistent with our Code of Conduct. This is particularly important in regard to information and data that may be placed on the Internet or communicated via other media relating to students, faculty members, staff, and in regard to Cathedral High School itself.

Each individual student must exercise his/her own discretion and judgment as to whether he/she creates or participates in an Internet blog or chat room, or whether he/she uploads any video or other content. The same holds true in regard to a student's decision to access the Internet to create a personal profile or to comment on any other individual or the School. On the other hand, information placed on the Internet and data sent via other communications media (i.e., email) can easily end up in the public domain. We assume that every individual using the Internet knows that the absolute privacy of information and data placed on the Internet and sent electronically can not be guaranteed. Undoubtedly, if a student fails to act responsibly in that regard the information and content placed on the Internet or communicated via other media can have a seriously harmful effect on others.

There is no practical way for us to predict every future technological advance that will affect and change the Internet. Indeed, the Internet as we know it today may bear no resemblance to what it is even five years from now. What we can assume is that the opportunities to access and use the Internet and other communications media will be ever-expanding and made easier for everyone.

While we can not and have no desire to monitor any individual's non-School use of the Internet and other communications media, we do have an appropriate interest in ensuring that all individuals associated with the School are treated with respect and dignity at all times (again, consistent with our Code of Conduct). This is a serious responsibility that each student accepted upon his/her enrollment at Cathedral. It is a responsibility that students owe to their peers, faculty members, and staff members. As all students are aware, the School cares just as much about how students behave at off-campus and non-School related events and functions as we do regarding their School-related conduct.

In view of the School's expectation that students will adhere to our Code of Conduct and act responsibly at all times, we want to make it clear that the Code of Conduct is applicable to the use of the Internet and other communications media outside of School. Accordingly, the following standards should be adhered to by

students in connection with the use of the Internet and other media and in regard to content placed on the Internet and other media regarding a student's peers, faculty or staff members, or the School:

- a. Content may not be pornographic, obscene, or lewd, nor may it contain sexual innuendo or sexually-explicit material;
- b. Content may not be potentially or actually defamatory, inflammatory, abusive, threatening, harassing, invasive of privacy, or injurious;
- c. Content should be free of racist, sexist, prejudicial, or otherwise objectionable material, including personal attacks against others;
- d. Content may not be of a kind that may cause or does result in harm, injury, embarrassment, or disruption to the School;
- e. Content may not include personal contact information (i.e., address, telephone) regarding any other person without the prior authorization of that person;
- f. No person may access another individual's information or files without permission (unless such information and files have been made available voluntarily);
- g. Content and the use of the Internet and other media may not be in violation of any local, state, or federal law. When deemed appropriate by the School, we will notify law enforcement agencies if necessary to protect members of the Cathedral community; and
- h. All content must be in compliance with the School's Code of Conduct.

Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the School, up to and including expulsion. We also rely on all students to take reasonable steps to ensure that no violation by any of their peers occurs.

Our assumption, in establishing this policy, is that the overwhelming majority of students use the Internet and other communications media in an appropriate manner. Moreover, they do so without regard to whether the School has established any policy relating to such use. Instead, they understand that freedom of expression carries with it certain important responsibilities that should be adhered to as a matter of personal ethics. Our hope is that we never have to investigate or take action in response to a violation of the above policy.

If any student has any questions about this policy, he/she may contact David L. Worland, Principal. Similarly, if a student has any concern regarding whether certain content should be placed on the Internet or other media, he/she is encouraged to consult with Kathy Saum, Assistant Principal for Student Conduct, prior to doing so in order to avoid any future issue.