

Comfort Independent School District

327 High Street, Comfort, Texas 78013

(830) 995-6400

EMPLOYEE ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

Comfort Independent School District offers a wide variety of technological resources to students and staff for the purpose of achieving its educational mission. These resources are provided and maintained at the District's—and therefore, the public's—expense, and members of the school community are to dutifully use them as good stewards to whom they were entrusted.

With this opportunity comes responsibility. It is important that users read and understand the Comfort Independent School District policy, administrative regulations, and agreement form and seek guidance if items are unclear.

The Internet is a network of many types of communication and information. It is possible that you may run across some material you might find objectionable. While the Comfort Independent School District will take reasonable steps to restrict access to such material, it is not possible to prevent such access completely. It will be the user's responsibility to follow the guidelines of appropriate use.

Comfort Independent School District and Educational Service Center XIII have network, internet, and email filtering devices in place that meet the Board, State, and Federal policies. All network usage, internet usage, and email are monitored and logged by one or more devices located both at ESC13 and the Comfort Independent School District Technology Department. All email from outside the District is filtered and logged through a Barracuda Email Filter. All internet traffic into and out of the District is routed through a DeepNines Security Device. Firewalls are installed at ESC13 and in the District technology department that provides intelligent threat defense and secure communications services that stop attacks before they impact business continuity.

The guidelines for appropriate use that follow detail appropriate and inappropriate use of District technology. These guidelines in no way attempt to articulate all required or proscribed behavior by users. Utilizing District technology and the District network requires that all users conduct themselves in a professional, responsible, decent, ethical, and polite manner at all times. Inappropriate system use will result in the loss of the privilege of using this educational and administrative tool and may result in civil or criminal penalties.

GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE USE

The District expects everyone to exercise good judgment and use computer equipment, peripherals, and the network in a professional manner. Your use of the equipment is expected to relate to educational, instructional and administrative purposes. However, the District does recognize that some personal use is inevitable and that incidental and occasional personal use is permitted so long as it occurs on personal time, and:

- Imposes no tangible cost to Comfort Independent School District;
- Does not unduly burden Comfort Independent School District's computer or network resources;
- Does not interfere with the prompt and efficient performance of an employee's job responsibilities;
- Assures that students completing required course work on the system will have first priority for use of Comfort Independent School District equipment during and outside of school hours;
- Is consistent with this policy and any Comfort Independent School District guidelines and regulations governing appropriate use of the system; and
- Is not used for commercial for profit purposes or political purposes

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Security and/or technical problems in the system must be communicated to the Director of Technology immediately.

All electronic communication from you as a Comfort Independent School District employee to community members, students, parents, and other colleagues should represent the highest standard of quality, professionalism, and good judgment. Comfort Independent School District expects efficient, ethical, professional, and legal utilization of the network.

District Software: District Software is licensed to Comfort Independent School District by a large number of vendors and may have specific license restrictions regarding copying or using a particular program. Users of Comfort Independent School District software must obtain permission through proper District channels prior to copying or loading District software onto any computer, whether the computer is privately owned or is a District computer. Do not assume that if it is permissible to copy one software program, then it is permissible to copy any others. Users are not to delete or add software to the Comfort Independent School computers without District approval.

INAPPROPRIATE USE

- **Commercial Use:** Using the Comfort Independent School District's computers, network, or resources for personal or private gain, personal business, or commercial advantage/profit is prohibited.
- **Account borrowing:** Borrowing someone's account or sending messages from someone else's e-mail account is prohibited. Employees are responsible for their own access rights to District computers, the network and resources. Sharing access rights with others, including students, is prohibited. Violations that occur under the employee's access rights, as a result of consent or negligence, are the sole responsibility of the employee.
- **Political Use:** Using the Comfort Independent School District's computers, network, or resources for political purposes in violation of federal, state, or local laws is prohibited. This prohibition includes using Comfort Independent School District's computers, network or resources to send (or forward) e-mails containing political advertisements supporting or opposing a candidate for public office, a political party, a public officer or a particular piece of legislation. In addition to being a violation of CISD's Acceptable Use Policy, such an offense is a violation of the Texas Election Code and may be considered a Class A misdemeanor. If you should receive any e-mails of this type, do not forward them. You cannot be held liable for political e-mails that are sent to you - only ones that you send to others. This prohibition also includes using Comfort Independent School District's computers, network and resources for the expression of personal political opinions to elected officials. Only those staff authorized by the Superintendent may express the District's position on pending legislation or other policy matters.
- **Illegal or Indecent Use:** Using Comfort Independent School District's computers, network or resources for illegal, harassing, vandalizing, inappropriate, or indecent purposes (including accessing, storing, or viewing pornographic, indecent, or otherwise inappropriate and questionable material), or in support of such activities is prohibited.
 - Illegal activities include any violations of federal, state, or local laws (for example, copyright infringement, publishing defamatory information, or committing fraud).
 - Harassment includes slurs, comments, jokes, innuendoes, unwelcome compliments, cartoons, pranks, or verbal conduct relating to an individual that:
 - have the purpose or effect of creating and intimidating, a hostile or offensive environment;
 - have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or school performance;
 - interfere with school operations; or
 - could damage an individual's reputation.
 - Vandalism is any attempt to harm or destroy the operating system, application software, or data.

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- Inappropriate use includes any violation of the purpose and goal of the network.
- Indecent activities include violations of generally accepted social standards for use of publicly owned and operated equipment.
- Posting or transmitting personal, confidential information about a student or employee of the District without permission.
- Knowingly bringing prohibited materials into the school's electronic environment.
- Gaining unauthorized access to restricted information or resources.
- **Non-District Employee Use:** Comfort District computers, network and resources may only be used by Comfort District staff and students, and others expressly authorized by the District to use its equipment.
- **Disruptive Use:** Comfort Independent School District technology, network, and resources may not be used to interfere with or disrupt other users, services or equipment. Examples of such disruptive use would include, but not be limited to the following:
 - Distribution of large quantities of information that may overwhelm the system (mass mailings, non-educational chain letters, Internet hoaxes, network games, business solicitations, broadcast messages, or other similar material).
 - Waste of school resources through improper use of the electronic system such as excessive printing (paper, toner, etc.).
 - Distribution of unsolicited advertising ("spam").
 - Propagation of computer viruses.
 - Any other unauthorized access to or destruction of Comfort computers or other resources accessible through the District's computer network ("cracking" or "hacking").
- ***Students will not be allowed to use teacher/staff computers.*** Computers assigned to teachers/staff have access to District network resources that contain confidential information ([txGradebook](#) and other administrative software) that students are not authorized to use.

PRIVACY

District Computers, the Internet and use of the communications system are not inherently secure or private. E-mails and all of their content are similar in purpose to an official memo or letter rather than a telephone conversation. Records of e-mail content may be preserved by the sender, recipient, any parties that the communication was forwarded or replied to, or by the e-mail system itself. Because of this, it is imperative to remember that once an e-mail message is sent, the sender has no control over where it will be forwarded. E-mail records are maintained by the CISD Technology Department. Users are urged to be caretakers of their own privacy and to not store sensitive or personal information on District computers.

According to Texas Government Code 552.001, "it is the policy of this state that each person is entitled, unless otherwise expressly provided by the law, at all times to complete information about the affairs of government and the official acts of public officials and employees." This is known as the Public Information Act. E-mails are considered public information. This includes:

- E-mails to and from co-workers/employees
- E-mails to and from parents
- E-mails to and from students
- Lists of sites visited on a public employee's computer

While the Comfort Independent School District respects the privacy of its employees, the Comfort Independent School District monitors and reviews information in order to analyze the use of systems or compliance with policies, conduct audits, review performance or conduct, obtain information, or for other reasons. The District reserves the right to disclose any electronic message to law enforcement officials, and under some circumstances, may be required to disclose information to law enforcement officials, the public, or other third parties, for example, in response to a document production request made in a lawsuit involving the District or by a third party against the user or pursuant to a public records disclosure request.

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DISCIPLINE

The guidelines for appropriate use are applicable to all use of Comfort Independent District computers and refer to all information resources, whether individually controlled, shared, stand alone, or networked. Disciplinary action for students, staff, and other users shall be consistent with the District's policies and administrative regulations. Violations may result in:

- Suspension of access to the District computers, network and resources.
- Revocation of access privileges/account.
- Other school disciplinary or legal action, in accordance with the Comfort Independent School District's policies and applicable laws.

Specific disciplinary measures will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

STUDENT DATA

Comfort Independent School District administrators, principals, counselors, teachers, or other appointed personnel may be given access to student performance data to aggregate and disaggregate by ethnicity, sex, grade level, subject area, campus, and District. The evaluation of individual student performance data is imperative for the purposes of instructional decisions that will increase the opportunity for student success. With this data comes the understanding and responsibility of maintaining confidentiality and professional ethics at all times. Results of individual student performance on academic skills assessment instruments administered are confidential.

Disclaimer

The District's system is provided on an "as is, as available" basis. The District does not make any warranties, whether express or implied, including, without limitation, those of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose with respect to any services provided by the system and any information or software contained therein. The District does not warrant that the functions or services performed by, or that the information or software contained on the system will meet the system user's requirements, or that the system will be uninterrupted or error free, or that defects will be corrected.

Opinions, advice, services, and all other information expressed by system users, information providers, service providers, or other third-party individuals in the system are those of the providers and not the District.

The District will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to misuse of the District's electronic communications system.

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EMPLOYEE AGREEMENT FOR ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

I understand that my computer use is not private and that the Comfort Independent School District will monitor my activity on the computer system.

I have read Comfort Independent School District's electronic communications system policy and administrative regulations and agree to abide by their provisions. In consideration for the privilege of using the Comfort Independent School District's electronic communications system and in consideration for having access to the public networks, I hereby release the Comfort Independent School District, its operators, and any institutions with which they are affiliated from any and all claims and damages of any nature arising from my use of, or inability to use, the system, including, without limitation, the type of damages identified in the Comfort Independent School District's policy and administrative regulations.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____

Campus _____

Position/Title _____

Date _____