**Digital Ethics/Acceptable Use Plan Handout**

Digital Ethics – the use of modern technology in such a way that it is appropriate and respectful of the privacy and property of the individual and others

Digital Ethics Plan – formal document that details the appropriate/acceptable use policy of the entity (such as a school or business) that supplies network/Internet access to users and which users must (generally) agree in order to gain permission to access the entities’ network. Also called Acceptable Use Policy

Some reasons that an entity might develop a digital ethics plan:

1. To prevent plagiarism
2. To prevent copyright theft/piracy
3. To protect the company/school from lawsuits involving racism/bigotry/bullying, etc.
4. To protect the users

a. In the case of publicly funded schools’ (K-12) students must be protected from

* + 1. Online predators
    2. Illicit/inappropriate material
    3. Breaking the law

**Example of a Digital Ethics/Acceptable Use Policy:**

Individuals will be given access to the electronic communication system. Using this system, individuals will be able to communicate with other individuals and businesses around the world through the Internet and other electronic information systems/networks. Individual will have access to online computer services and information all over the world. With this access/opportunity comes responsibility. It is important that you read this policy and ask questions if help is needed understanding it. Inappropriate system use will result in the loss of the privilege to use this tool and may result in other disciplinary actions as deemed appropriate.

**RULES FOR APPROPRIATE USE**

1. Individuals will be assigned an individual account and are responsible for keeping their information confidential
2. Account is to be used only for business purposes
3. Individual will be held responsible at all times for the proper use of his/her account, and usage may suspended or canceled if acceptable use policy is violated

**INAPPROPRIATE USES**

1. Using the system for illegal purposes
2. Disabling or attempting to disable Internet filtering devices/software
3. Encrypting communications to avoid security review
4. Borrowing someone’s account with or without permission
5. Posting personal information about yourself or others
6. Using copyrighted information without permission from the copyright holder
7. Intentionally introducing a virus to the system
8. Posting messages or accessing material that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another’s reputation, or illegal
9. Wasting resources through the improper use of the computer system (including social media sites, unapproved chat services)
10. Gaining unauthorized access to restricted information

**CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE USE**

1. Suspension of access to the system
2. Loss of account