

BELMONT PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Student Network and Device Acceptable Use Policy Grades K-12

I. Introduction

The Belmont Public Schools offers Network access to its students, faculty, and staff. Access to the school Network and the Internet is a privilege, not a right. The intent of this policy is to ensure that students utilize this access in a manner consistent with the purpose of providing this service. The Belmont Public Schools reserves the right to amend this policy.

II. Purpose

The primary purpose of the Belmont Public Schools Computer Network and Devices (“the Network”) is to support the educational objectives of the Belmont Public Schools and Belmont’s educational community in general. Network use provides valuable opportunities for research, curriculum support, and career development. The Network is defined to include students’ use of a district-owned device, a district-issued Network account, district-provided Internet and/or through systems and programs hosted by others on behalf of the district, regardless of time of day, or location; including but not limited to use from home, use on private devices, and/or use from other non-district devices and locations. The Network is not a public forum, and the Belmont Public School system reserves the right to place reasonable limits on materials posted or accessed through this Network.

The Belmont Public Schools will take reasonable precautions to filter out inappropriate material; however, it is impossible to monitor all content.

Additionally, this policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of students in a digital world through the norms of appropriate, responsible behavior with regard to technology use called Digital Citizenship. The themes of Digital Citizenship are: etiquette, communication, literacy, access, commerce, law, rights and responsibilities, health and wellness, and security¹.

To use the Network, students must take full responsibility for their own actions. While the Network’s possibilities are tremendous, it also has potential for abuse. The Belmont Public Schools shall not be liable for the actions of anyone accessing the Network. Students assume full responsibility for any costs, liabilities, or damages arising from the way the student chooses to use their access to the Network. The Belmont Public Schools assumes no responsibility for the reliability of the Network. The Belmont Public Schools shall not be liable for any loss or corruption of data resulting from a student’s use of the Network.

A student’s use of the Network constitutes their agreement to abide by this policy as set forth below, or as modified in the future.

¹ Ribble, Mike. “Nine Elements of Digital Citizenship.” *Digital Citizenship; Using Technology Appropriately*. 2010. Web. 5 April 2010

III. Network Usage Guidelines

Use of the Network must be consistent with its purpose as stated in Section II. This policy outlines acceptable use of the Network. However, it does not attempt to articulate all required or proscribed behaviors by students of the Network. Students are expected to conform their actions with the purpose, spirit, and examples set forth in this policy and to abide by the rules of acceptable use, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. It is the policy of Belmont Public Schools to maintain a school environment free of harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sex, sexual orientation, disability, genetic information, active military or veteran status, disability or any other characteristic protected by law. Students shall observe this policy in the use of the Network. Employ digital etiquette by using appropriate, non-abusive language, refrain from making defamatory remarks or racial slurs, bullying, and from the use obscene or profane language.
2. When using the Network, students shall identify themselves by their first names only. Do not reveal personal information such as last names, addresses, phone numbers, photos, etc. that could identify yourself, another student, or a staff member, except when required by a teacher to complete school-related work, or in order to participate in other approved school activities. You must immediately disclose to a teacher or other school staff, any message you receive that you believe is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.
3. Network IDs and passwords are provided for each user's personal use only. Passwords should not be shared with anyone, except with the student's parent or guardian. Students must not use another person's password. If you suspect that someone has discovered your password, you must have it changed immediately.
4. Any use for, or in support of, illegal purposes or activities is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, gaining unauthorized access to other systems, arranging for the sale or purchase of drugs or alcohol, participating in criminal gang activity, threatening others, transferring obscene material, or attempting to do any of the above.
5. Any use for commercial purposes is prohibited. Students may not use the Network to advertise or sell products or services and may not offer, provide, or purchase products or services through the Network, except for those products or services authorized by school administration.
6. Any use for political purposes is prohibited except for using the Network to communicate with elected officials.
7. Students should assume that most material available on the Internet is protected by copyright. Unauthorized copying of copyrighted materials is prohibited. Additionally, any material obtained from the Internet and included in one's own work must be properly cited regardless of copyright status.
8. Not all material accessible through the Internet is of educational value. Students are expected to refrain from seeking, accessing, uploading, downloading, transmitting, or distributing material that is not relevant to their assignments or course work, or other approved school activities. No student may upload or download material to or from Internet sites without permission from their teacher.

9. Students shall not access, upload, download, transmit, or distribute material that is pornographic, obscene, sexually explicit, threatening, discriminatory, intimidating, abusive, harassing, offensive or a violation of Belmont Public Schools policies, procedures, or the Student Handbook.
10. Students shall refrain from seeking, accessing, posting, messaging, downloading or otherwise engaging with content that is not directly related to their academic work, or other approved school activities, including but not limited to chat rooms, social media, or gaming platforms.
11. Students shall neither download nor install software onto Network drives or devices that is not directly related to their academic work, or other approved school activities.
12. Students shall not access, receive, upload, download, transmit, or distribute information pertaining to dangerous instruments such as bombs or other explosive devices, automatic weapons or other firearms, or other weaponry.
13. If you find content that is inappropriate, or may constitute a threat against the safety of fellow students, staff members or property of Belmont Public Schools while using the Network, you shall refrain from downloading the content, shall not share the content with any other student(s), and are obligated to report the content to a teacher or school administrator immediately.
14. Students shall not vandalize school networks by causing physical damage, reconfiguring the computer system, or destroying data.
15. Students must cease use of the Network if at the request of a staff member.
16. Students must not attempt to gain unauthorized access to any systems or data in the Belmont Public Schools system, outside file servers or data, or go beyond the user's authorized access. This includes logging in through another person's account and/or accessing another person's files. Students shall not seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, other data, or passwords belonging to any other user.

IV. Device Use and Care

Each family agrees that district-issued equipment is only a loan and must be returned in working condition to the Belmont Public Schools when asked to do so by the district, or when the student is no longer enrolled. Lost devices must be reported to the Technology Department immediately (studentsupport@belmontschools.net). Families will be billed the replacement cost for lost or stolen devices and chargers.

Families are responsible for caring for the device assigned to them. Although Chromebooks and iPads are relatively durable, they do have glass screens and other parts which can be damaged. Student devices which are damaged accidentally will be repaired or replaced by the district at no cost to the family. However, devices which are intentionally damaged or damaged through negligence will be billed for the replacement cost to the family. Intentional damage also includes reconfiguring the computer system, or introducing malicious programs (for example, computer viruses or malware). The Director of Technology, or designee, shall determine if a system has been damaged accidentally, intentionally, or through negligence.

- Devices must not be exposed to extreme temperatures, direct sunlight, or ultraviolet light for extended periods of time; nor should they be left unattended.
- To prevent damage, care must be taken when inserting and removing cords/cables.
- Take care not to drop the device or put it on a surface area from which it can be easily pushed off.
- Device keyboards and outer cases (not screens) can be periodically cleaned by using a disinfectant wipe or damp cloth, which does not contain bleach. Do not use baby wipes. Turn off the device before cleaning. Be sure to wring out the wipe to remove excess moisture before applying to the device. Wipe gently. After wiping the device, dry with a soft, clean cloth. Do not use paper towels or napkins. Screens should be cleaned only with a soft, dry cloth.

V. Privacy

Students should not have an expectation of privacy or confidentiality in the content of electronic communications or other computer files sent and received and/or stored on the school computer Network or devices. Students should be aware that the data they create, receive, or send on the Network is the property of the Belmont Public School system, and that the data may be recovered and reviewed, even after it has been deleted. The Belmont Public School system also reserves the right to monitor use of the Network and to examine all data stored on district systems and devices.

All communications, regardless of content, purpose, device location, or time of day are public and are not private. To the extent appropriate pursuant to student confidentiality and other applicable laws and regulations, all communication including text and images may be disclosed to law enforcement or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or the receiver. Network administrators may review communications and disable accounts, without prior notification, to maintain integrity system-wide and ensure that students are using the system in a responsible manner.

District-owned devices and district-issued accounts may be protected by software which provides district staff with an individual device's location and usage information, even when the device is being accessed from outside the district or outside school hours.

All Network activities are logged. To the extent appropriate pursuant to student confidentiality and other applicable laws and regulations, these logs may be disclosed to law enforcement or other third parties.

VI. Violations

The Belmont Public Schools reserves the right to deny, revoke or suspend, without prior notification, specific Network user privileges. The Belmont Public Schools reserves the right to take other disciplinary action, including but not limited to suspension, or in limited circumstances, expulsion, consistent with the disciplinary due process policies and procedures of the Belmont Public School as set forth in the Student Handbook. Additionally, all handbook regulations apply to use of the Network. In the event that there is a claim that a student has violated any of the guidelines in this policy, they will be provided an opportunity to be heard. The district will advise appropriate law enforcement agencies of illegal activities conducted through the Network. The Belmont Public School system also will cooperate fully with local, state, and/or federal officials in any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through the Network.

VII. Acceptance

Notice of this policy is provided to students and families by reference in each Belmont Public Schools Student Handbook. A student's use of the Network constitutes their, and parental/guardian agreement to abide by this policy.

Adopted by the Belmont School Committee, May 4, 2010

Revised form adopted by the Belmont School Committee, January 18, 2011

Revised form adopted by the Belmont School Committee, March 21, 2023