Student Acceptable Use Policy for Technology Use at Harper’s Choice Middle School

Students at Harper’s Choice use computers and the Internet applications throughout the school year in all subjects. This policy applies to all technology devices used at school. This includes school computers, printers, interactive white boards, digital and web cameras, class response systems, and any personal technology items specifically approved for use in school.

At times throughout the year, students will be using Web-based applications including but not limited to Glogster, Edublogs, Google Docs, Edmodo, ePals, and Wikispaces. Teachers and students can communicate using these tools, but the teacher agrees to limit access to these sites in order to prevent outsiders from accessing student work. The teacher will monitor student work and delete anything considered inappropriate.

Remember, using technology is a privilege, not a right.

By signing this Acceptable Use Policy, students and parents acknowledge the expectations for use of school technology equipment and Internet applications, and agree to follow these expectations both in school and at home. In addition, students agree to keep personal digital music players (IPods, MP3 players), personal cell phones, and personal computers and tablets turned off and in their locker during the school day.

I agree to show *Respect* when using technology equipment by:

* Accessing only those applications and websites which my teacher has directed me to use.
* Listing the source of any information or images that are not my own.
* Agreeing that I will not create, access, or print anything that includes:
  + Inappropriate language, weapons, violence or gang-related activity.
  + Sexually suggestive messages or images.
  + Language or pictures that might be considered offensive to any ethnic or religious group.
  + Words or pictures that I would not use in the classroom.

I agree to be *Responsible* when using technology equipment by:

* Carrying all technology equipment with two hands to protect it from damage.
* Only changing the computer settings set by the school (display, voice-over, etc.) with permission.
* Identifying myself and others by first name or code names only. I will never use any personal information such as my last name, phone number, or address on the Internet.
* Logging into my own account only, and logging out completely before leaving class.
* Saving my work frequently, and backing up larger assignments on a memory stick.
* Never accessing any search engine (such as Google, Yahoo, etc.) without specific teacher direction. HCPSS does not allow independent searches by middle school students.

In order to build stronger *Relationships* at school I agree that I will:

* Use positive comments only when interacting with or about other students or teachers.
* Report any behavior that may be considered bullying, cyber bullying, or hurtful to others.
* Refuse to use rude, disrespectful, or hurtful language.

If I do not follow these rules, I agree to abide by these consequences:

* First violation: loss of technology equipment for the remainder of the class period.
* Second violation: Parent contact and loss of technology privileges for a one-week period. Assignments will be completed using paper, pencil, and textbooks.
* Third and continued violations: Referral to the front office.

Dear Ms. Brown,

I have attached a student Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for technology equipment use by students at Harper’s Choice. Although we have a thorough and usable Howard County document, it is not user-friendly. It is lengthy, the font is small, and I believe many students and parents sign this document without reading and completely understanding its contents.

The new document is significantly shorter in length and written at a middle school student level, increasing the likelihood that it will be read by students and parents. In addition, this policy is written with a focus of our school motto of Respect, Responsibility, and Relationships. Each of the expectations is placed under the heading of one of our Harper’s Choice 3 R’s, adding to the continuity of our school expectations for acceptable behavior of students.

In creating the new policy, I referred to the Howard County policy and tried to incorporate all the main ideas that the county policy contains. I also referred to numerous other policies in order to create a policy that would be easy to understand and follow. One distinct difference between the county policy and this policy is that it outlines distinct consequences for students who do not follow these guidelines in class. By including consequences, both teachers and students understand the steps to follow if a student should fail to abide by the current policy. Under the current policy, each teacher has their own consequences, which is confusing to both students and parents.

I believe that the new policy will create a consistency among teachers and students that is currently confusing for all. Thank you for your consideration in implementing a new Technology Use Policy at Harper’s Choice.

Janet Johnston

References

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