

## Internet Filters

### Purpose

Filtering or blocking of Internet sites on the Bellevue School District (BSD) network will be implemented for three reasons:

1. To meet federal requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA which a law that requires schools to protect students from inappropriate content on the Internet. Failure to comply with CIPA risks the district's ERATE funding from the federal government.
2. To comply with federal laws COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act), which deals with protecting children's online information for those 13 years and younger; and FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act), which protects students educational data.
3. To address in-district concerns regarding network security, use of bandwidth, copyright law, and support of district educational goals and curriculum.

Based on these three reasons, certain Internet sites may not be accessed through the BSD network. Some categories of sites may be completely filtered or blocked; others may be selectively blocked out, depending on their educational or curricular application and the role of user.

### Scope

To the extent practical, technology protection measures or "Internet filters" shall be used to block or filter Internet, or other forms of electronic communications, access to: Obscene material, materials that depict sexual exploitation of minors, material inappropriate or deemed harmful to minors, or other information that is determined to be in violation of district policy.

The following guiding principles shall be used to determine allowable Internet access and site filtering:

1. Access to materials that will enrich and support the curriculum and educational needs of the users, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, learning styles, maturity levels, socioeconomic, and ethnic backgrounds.
2. Access to materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge and ethical standards and that will develop literacy, culture and aesthetic appreciation.
3. Provide a background of information that enables students to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.
4. Access to materials which realistically represent our pluralistic society and reflect the contributions made by all groups and individuals to our American and global heritage.
5. Does not violate federal laws and guidelines.

## Definitions

Obscene: is defined in section 1460 of title 18, United States Code as

1. Harmful to minors: any picture, image, graphic image file, or other depiction (text, audio, or video) that:
  - a. Appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion;
  - b. Depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact defined in section 2246 of title 18, United States Code, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts; or a lewd exhibition of the genitals;
  - c. Lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors; or
  - d. Would endorse or promote the following: abusive or threatening material, alcohol, tobacco, and drug use or abuse, gambling, hate/discrimination materials, murder/suicide material, and racially offensive material, school cheating information, violence, and weapons.

## Blocking of sites

Federal and state law, as well as board policy requires that schools take responsibility for guarding the safety of children who are using the Internet at school. Blocking sites will be done very carefully, selectively, and will take into account material appropriate at different grade levels.

The following guiding principles shall determine sites that will be blocked:

### A. Completely blocked:

1. All Staff and Students:
  - a. Sites containing pornography (as defined by federal law) – these are inappropriate for use at school.
  - b. Gambling sites – currently, there is no educational or curriculum application. Disruptive to the educational process.
  - c. Proxy avoidance sites – the use of these sites violates district Acceptable Use Procedure (AUP) because they allow the proxy filter to be bypassed.
  - d. Hacking sites – Hacking, refers to breaking into computer systems, violates the AUP and District’s Electronic Resources Policy.
2. For Students
  - a. Non-district sponsored chat rooms, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications – currently, there is no curriculum application and the school is unable to assure the safety of students using these services. Some of these services are disruptive of educational process when school is in session.

- b. Public social networking and open blog sites encourage students to share personal information (which violates district policy), may also contain inappropriate images.
- c. Sites advocating violence or hate against any person or group of people
- d. Sites explaining how to construct and use weapons
- e. Sites that explain how to obtain, manufacture, or use illegal drugs
- f. Download sites

**B. Selectively Blocked:**

- 1. Game sites – Educational games offer unique ways for students to learn about and experiment with complex concepts. Staff and students are encouraged to use these sites both in and out of the classroom. Non-educational games are inappropriate for use at school and may be blocked.
- 2. Sites that do not meet BSD materials selection policy guidelines

**Review Process**

The technology of Internet filtering software is not perfect. Both “over blocking” and “under blocking” can occur. Some sites can get blocked even though they do not violate either federal laws/guidelines or the District’s Acceptable Use Policy. Students and staff may need access to sites that deal with controversial issues for legitimate research and educational purposes. For example, a breast cancer site might be blocked because it contains the word “breast.” On the other hand, sites that do violate the policies may slip through the filter process.

**A. Process to request unblock of inappropriate site:**

- 1. Staff should make students aware of their responsibility to report inappropriate sites to a staff member.
- 2. Staff will submit requests for blocking sites by submitting request to the technology department using the SharePoint Technology request form. This request needs to include the complete URL of the site and a brief reason why it should be unblocked or blocked. URLs for Instructional purpose must first be approved by the Curriculum Department. The Request form will be routed to Curriculum, then to Technology. Both departments will need to approve instructional URLs. The Technology department will approve all others.

**B. Process to request a block:**

- 1. Same as A.2.

**C. Yearly Review:**

Filtering procedures/site categories will be reviewed yearly by District executive staff.

**Date: 9.14**