

NHMCCD BOARD POLICY ON USE OF DISTRICT COMPUTERS

The NHMCCD Board of Trustees reconfirms its commitment to the free and unfettered exchange of ideas that is the hallmark of an institution of higher education and the rights of the faculty and students to access, debate, disagree and discuss all educational materials without respect to the popularity or controversial nature of the ideas conveyed.

DISTRICT PROPERTY: The District provides computing and network resources for the use of students, employees and others affiliated with the District for educational or District-related activities and to facilitate the efficient exchange of useful information. Affiliation with the District includes all university students, faculty, staff, and administrators associated with or enrolled in programs delivered by partner universities at The University Center. Students, employees and District affiliates are encouraged to use the computers, software packages, electronic mail (e-mail), or District network and software. However, the equipment, software and network capacities provided through the District computer services are and remain the property of the District. District users are expected to conduct themselves in compliance with all policies of the District and relevant laws of the United States and Texas and to demonstrate the same high ethical and professional manner when communicating using computing resources as is required in face-to-face or written communications.

PUBLIC ACCESS COMPUTER TERMINALS: All NHMCCD public access terminals are provided to support the teaching, research and educational functions of the community college. Members of the public who are not enrolled in academic and technical college-level courses will be permitted to use such facilities for research purposes only when the use does not deny a student or employee access. Any member of the public whose use is not in accord with this policy may be asked to cease use of the computer, leave the facility, and forfeit rights to utilize District computers. Minors who are not enrolled in NHMCCD academic and technical college-level courses shall only be permitted to utilize a computer that has been installed with a filtering device. Parental or guardian permission is required for all minors who wish to enroll in academic and technical college-level courses. Such permission acknowledges that college level course work might contain materials or subject matter considered to be adult in nature.

EMAIL PRIVILEGES: Access to the District's E-mail and similar electronic communication systems is a privilege that is extended to current employees, students and affiliates that are in good standing. The privilege of access ends with the termination of employment or the failure to reenroll in an NHMCCD educational program.

CONFIDENTIALITY: The District can not guarantee the privacy or confidentiality of electronic documents and any messages that are confidential, as a matter of law should not be communicated over the E-mail. The District reserves the right to access E-mail to engage in routine computer maintenance and housekeeping, to carry out internal investigations, to prepare responses to requests for public records or to disclose messages, data or files to law enforcement authorities.

RECORDS: Messages sent as electronic mail should meet the same standards for distribution or display as if they were tangible documents or instruments. As with all records maintained by the District and to the extent required by law, files saved in the District's information system, including E-mail, may be subject to release with a public records disclosure request.

LOSS OF COMPUTING PRIVILEGES: Use of the equipment and networks is to comport with the policies and procedures of the District, and access may be denied to any student, employee, person affiliated with the District, or member of the public who fails to comply with the District's policies and procedures regarding appropriate computer use.

PROHIBITED USE: The following conduct by computer users will be treated as a violation of this policy and may subject the user to discipline, including loss of computing privileges, up to and including termination for an NHMCCD employee and dismissal for a student:

1. Anonymous or forged e-mail messages.
2. Unauthorized attempts to access another person's e-mail or similar electronic communications or to use another's name, E-mail or computer address or workstation to send E-mail or similar electronic communications.
3. Use of District E-mail or other network resources for commercial purposes or for personal financial gain.
4. Access to a restricted computing resource without authorization or use for purposes beyond the authorization.
5. The transmission of copyrighted materials without the written permission of the author or creator through District e-mail or other network resources in violation of U.S. copyright law (See EDD).
6. Computing resources used in a manner that disrupts the work or educational environment.
7. Intentional use of District computing resources to store, download, upload, display, print or e-mail computer images that constitute "obscene materials" as defined by Section 43.21 of the Texas Penal Code that are not directly related to or required for a specific educational course or research directly related to an educational program.
8. The display or transmission of messages, images, cartoons or other messages or images that are sexually explicit or that demean a person on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, national origin, disability, and religion may constitute prohibited harassment under Board Policies AHB and DAB.
9. The uploading or downloading of unauthorized materials to any District server.
10. The sharing of an account, password or other authentication device that was provided to permit access to restricted computing resources.