

# ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

## What is an AUP (Acceptable Use Policy)?

An Acceptable Use Policy is a written agreement signed by The Nottingham School (TNS) users, parents/guardian and students (grades K-8) that describes the terms and conditions for the use of technology available to all persons during TNS sponsored activities. This agreement outlines the rules of acceptable behavior during online Internet/offline Intranet sessions and the consequences for misbehavior. This agreement delineates published usage of student photographs and student work on the Internet/Intranet.

**TNS Technology:** With the use of electronic networks, including both, Internet and Intranet, TNS is expanding technology access for students, parents, staff and community users. With this access comes the responsibility for appropriate use. Students, parent, staff and community users are expected to maintain Christian ethics in making appropriate decisions regarding their technology use provided by resources. Thus, the following principles will be applied:

1. The signatures required in accordance with the AUP are legally binding and indicate the parties who signed have read the terms and conditions carefully, understand their significance, and agree to abide by them.
2. Failure of users to abide by the AUP guidelines may cause the elimination of a user account at any time as required.
3. In accordance with the AUP guidelines, the TNS administration in its sole discretion will deem what is inappropriate use and all such decisions by the administration are final.
4. Additionally, if TNS incurs a financial cost due to user misuse or intentional malicious action, the user will bear the sole responsibility for the financial cost incurred.

**TNS Network Users:** The electronic networks are “public places” and user actions are visible to other users on the network. TNS has the right to monitor network use to ensure that the network continues to function properly for all of its users.

All TNS existing policies and regulations apply to the use of technology. Community Users and students are expected to comply with the following procedures when using the TNS networks or accessing any resource via the Internet.

1. Users will follow TNS Acceptable Use Policy.
2. No user is allowed to use any material that is not preloaded onto the computers or approved by TNS network administrators.
3. Hate mail, harassment, discriminatory remarks, threatening, and other antisocial, non-Christian behaviors are prohibited.
4. The use of the computer to Users of TNS technology shall promote efficient use of the networks to reduce congestion of the networks and interference with the work of others using the networks. Such interference or disruption includes, but is not limited to the following:
  - a. Altering the computer system’s operating perimeters such as screensavers, desktops, sounds, or other appearance aspects of the computer.
  - b. Propagation of computer worms or viruses
  - c. Using the network to make unauthorized entry into other computational, informational, or communications devices or resources.
  - d. Access of files belonging to anyone else on the network without express consent.
5. Networks or equipment shall not be used to transmit any communication where the meaning of the message, or its transmission or distribution would violate any applicable law or regulation or would likely be offensive to the recipient(s).

## TNS Internet Users

Use of Internet activities must be in support of ministry, education and research that is consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the TNS entity. There is a wealth of information on the Internet. TNS network users will have the opportunity to access that wealth and will be required to use the Internet responsibly. The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of that privilege. Prior to participation, a user will receive information pertaining to the proper use of the Internet and sign the AUP user agreement.

TNS has taken reasonable precautions to restrict access to controversial materials. However, on a global network such as the Internet, it is impossible to control all available materials. We firmly believe that the valuable information and interaction available on the Internet far outweigh the possibility that users may procure material that is not consistent with

the goals of TNS. It is the user who controls the material accessed. With this in mind, we believe that it is imperative to teach our community members to make Christian choices about the type of material they access.

**E-mail and the Internet do not replace face-to-face communication. Following the Biblical principles stressed in Matthew 18 is the appropriate procedure used to resolve personal conflicts.** Matthew 18: 15-16 states how we should first attempt to resolve conflicts one-on-one (between the two parties involved) before other people become involved in attempting to resolve the conflict.

### **Internet Etiquette**

Users are required to abide by the accepted rules of network etiquette. These include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. Be polite. Do not get abusive in your messages to others. Use appropriate language. Do not swear, use vulgarities, or other inappropriate language. Try to resolve conflicts in person following Matthew chapter 18.
2. Illegal activities including but not limited to downloading computer worms or viruses; any action for the sole purpose of plagiarizing any image, object or document; viewing pornography, violent materials, or any other information generally considered inappropriate in a Christ-centered learning environment; is strictly forbidden.

*In addition, these rules apply for our youth.*

1. Do not reveal your personal information (i.e. name, address, phone number) online.
2. If a youth accidentally finds anything inappropriate on a website, they are to turn off their monitor and notify a teacher or adult immediately.
3. Youth are not allowed to download documents or software from the Internet.
4. TNS students will use the Internet for educational purposes only.
5. A teacher or adult must be present at all times while a youth is using the Internet. The student must ask for and receive permission to access the Internet from that teacher or adult.

### **Electronic Mail**

Electronic mail (e-mail) is not permitted at TNS.

### **Chat Rooms**

Use of chat rooms are not permitted at TNS unless authorized and supervised by an adult.

### **Consequences**

Interpretation, application, and possible modification of these policies shall be within the sole discretion of the TNS Administration and Technology Committee. Violation of these policies will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the TNS administration and appropriate action taken if necessary.

The TNS Administration may at any time make determinations that particular uses are or are not consistent with the purposes of the network and computer resources. Furthermore, the Network Administrators reserve the right to discontinue access to the computing equipment and network at any time for any and all users.

Depending on the severity of the infraction and the judgment of the administration, any of the following consequences may be imposed upon student and community users:

1. Disciplinary action as described in the Parent Handbook.
2. Individual access privileges may be suspended.
3. Individual access privileges may be revoked.

Automatic notification will be made to the parent/guardian of the student involved in any violation of this Acceptable Use Policy. Violations include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Internet Abuse including but not limited to choosing to visit inappropriate websites; downloading controversial material; abusive language.
2. Hardware Abuse including but not limited to malicious mistreatment of any piece of technology hardware.
3. Software Abuse including but not limited to amending program instructions; initiating to illegally copy media.
4. Network Abuse including but not limited to illegal/inappropriate use of username and password; accessing non-authorized files; misuse of network resources.

**Personal Technology Devices:** Personal technology devices-including but not limited to cell phones, PDAs, laptops, and notebooks are to be used under the direction and in compliance with directives set by the classroom teacher and TNS administration. Personal technology devices are the sole responsibility of the owner, thus TNS is not responsible for any damaged, lost or stolen device.

## **During school hours, cell phones are not to be in the possession of students at TNS School.**

**STUDENT USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA:** We are a society that is reliant on our cell phones, the Internet, and the need to be in constant contact with our family and friends. Our students are no different. The vast majority of our upper grade students has a cell phone and belongs to one or more social media websites. It is our hope that our St. John Family is using these avenues of communication in positive ways.

Because of these communication tools, a major issue across our country that our schools are dealing with is Cyber Bullying. It is defined as a student using the Internet, cell phone, or other technology to harass, embarrass, or threaten another student. We pray that this and other inappropriate texts/posts don't happen here at St. John. But we want to let families and students know that we will address these incidents if they occur.

*“Let the words of my mouth (my text messages and Facebook posts) and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.” Psalm 19:14*

Portions of that verse are not in the original translation! However, it is a reminder that what we say or do should always make the good Lord smile. We are responsible for our words and actions no matter where we are even if we type those words instead of saying them aloud for people to hear.

The following guidelines apply to our St. John Family and share how we will handle situations that are not acceptable in His sight.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

- Facebook and other social media sites are not to be accessed by students at anytime using computers owned by St. John.
- Always keep in mind that you are representing yourself, your family, your school, and most importantly your Lord when you are posting messages online.
- No inappropriate comments should be made about teachers, parents, or other students of TNS. You will be held accountable for your texts/posts.

### **INAPPROPRIATE TEXTS / POSTS**

- Inappropriate texts/posts are determined the same way we treat the words that come out of our mouths. At TNS we use three simple questions – Is it True? Is it Constructive? Is it Kind? If you cannot say yes to all three, you've done something wrong.
- Texts/Posts referring to a teacher, parent, or student in our TNS Family that are deemed inappropriate need to be shared with the principal.
- The Principal will only address instances where there is documented proof of the text/post. It is simple; save it, and show him. He will not handle situations where there is no evidence of such a text/post.
- No matter when or where an inappropriate text/post is written about someone in our TNS Family, the school has the right to get involved and give consequences when necessary.

## **A NOTE FOR PARENTS**

Be nosy! Know what is going on in your child's life. Even if they cry and complain, Elementary students have a limited right to privacy when it comes to the parent/child relationship. You should know their Facebook password so you can monitor their account. Review their cell phone once in a while and check to see if you approve of their text messages. Cell phones and Facebook are a license to sin. It is incredibly easy to text or post something you know you would never say to someone face to face. For a twelve and thirteen year old, this is a temptation that is extremely difficult to overcome. They are going to mess-up. But it is our job as parents to use those incidents as teachable moments to talk about what it means to *live for Christ* and most importantly to be *forgiven by Christ*.

**Community Users and Student Photographs and Work:** TNS maintains an informative website ([www.thenottinghamschool.org](http://www.thenottinghamschool.org)) designed to highlight various church and school schedules, personnel and activities. It is a desire of TNS to publish photographs, with expressed, signed consent, (without community user/student names indicated) of TNS life and works including but not limited to class programs, field trips, and athletic/academic/childcare/church adventures.