**Networking Infrastructure**

The College District desires to ensure that its information technology networking infrastructure is secure, reliable, and efficient. To that end, it is necessary to coordinate this infrastructure with the College District's local and wide area networks. The Chancellor is authorized to promulgate regulations to implement this policy.

**Purpose of Computer Use Policy**

The College District is committed to providing an educational and work climate that is conducive to the personal and professional development of each individual. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, the College District encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality, diversity, pluralism, and the uniqueness of the individual within the state, nation, and world. The College District also strives to protect the rights and to enhance the self-esteem of all its members. Faculty, staff, and students should be aware that any form of illegal harassment or discrimination against any individual is inconsistent with the values and ideals of the College District community.

As an institution of higher education, the College District encourages, supports, and protects First Amendment rights and an open environment to pursue scholarly inquiry and to share information. Access to networked computer information in general and to the internet in particular supports the academic community by providing a link to electronic information in a variety of formats and covering all academic disciplines. As with any resource, it is possible to misuse computing resources and facilities and to abuse access to the internet. The following statements address, in general terms, the College District's policies concerning computer use.

The Chancellor is authorized to promulgate policies and procedures to implement this policy. [Refer to the Business Procedures Manual for additional information.]

**Use of College District Resources**

Use of College District computing resources and facilities requires that individual users act in compliance with College District policies and procedures, and failure to comply may result in restriction or revocation of access to College District resources. Computing "resources and facilities" include, but are not limited to, College District-owned host computer systems, networks, peripheral equipment (such as modems, terminals, and printers), computers and workstations, software, data sets, storage devices (such as CD-ROMS, hard and soft disks, and the like), and all computer communications controlled, administered, or accessed directly or indirectly by the College District or by any user.

The College District provides users with an account that permits use of the computing resources and facilities within policies and procedures established by the College District. Any person who uses College District computing resources and facilities through

College District-owned equipment (such as public access computers at the libraries and computer labs) is also a user and is permitted to use the computing resources and facilities within policies and procedures established by the College District.

Users must respect the integrity of computing resources and facilities, respect the rights of other users, and comply with all relevant laws (local, state, federal, and international), College District policies and procedures, and contractual agreements. Employees who use College District computers or facilities must comply with the Texas Public Information Act and the Local Government Records Act as described in CR(REGULATION). The College District reserves the right to limit, restrict, or deny computing resources and facilities for those who violate College District policies, procedures, or local, state, or federal laws.

**Freedom of Expression**

Censorship is not compatible with the goals of the College District. The College District shall not limit adult users' voluntary access to any information due to its content when it meets the standard of legality. A minor's parent may permit a minor user to have voluntary access to any information that meets the standard of legality.

**Privacy**

The general right to privacy is extended to the electronic environment to the extent possible. Users have a lessened expectation of privacy when using computer resources and facilities owned by public institutions such as the College District. Issuance of a password or other means of access is to ensure appropriate confidentiality of College District files and information. It is neither a guarantee of privacy nor a license for abuse or improper use of the College District's computing resources and facilities. Privacy is mitigated by the Texas Public Information Act, administrative review, computer system administration, audits, and the nature of the electronic medium itself. Contents of electronic files will be examined or disclosed only when authorized by the user, approved by designated College District officials, or required by law.

**Intellectual Property**

All users should be aware that property laws apply to the electronic environment. Users must abide by all software licenses, College District copyright and software policies and procedures, and applicable federal and state law. Users should assume that works communicated through a network are subject to copyright unless specifically stated otherwise. Unless permission of the author is obtained, use of any electronically transmitted information must comply with the "fair use" principle found in federal copyright law and CR(REGULATION).

**Criminal and Illegal Acts**

Computing resources of the College District, which include the hardware, software, and network environment, shall not be used for illegal activities. Any illegal use of these resources will be dealt

with by the appropriate College District authorities and/or other legal and law enforcement agencies. Criminal and illegal use may involve, but is not limited to: unauthorized access, intentional corruption or misuse of computing resources, theft, defamation, obscenity, child pornography, and harassment based upon race, ethnicity, national origin, disability, age, religion, or sex.

**Authorized Use**

Computing resources are provided by the College District to accomplish tasks related to the College District's mission. Some computers may be dedicated to specific enterprises or teaching missions that limit their use. Incidental personal use of computing resources is acceptable if the use:

1.   Imposes no measurable cost on the College District;

2.   Is not harmful to the College District;

3.   Is not a hindrance to the daily operations of the College District; and

4.   Has no adverse effect upon an individual's job or educational performance.

**Unauthorized Use**

Unauthorized use of the College District's computing resources and facilities includes but is not limited to:

- Illegal activities;

- Failure to comply with laws, license agreements, and contracts governing network software and hardware use;

- Abuse of communal resources;

- Use of computing resources for unauthorized commercial purposes or personal gain;

- Failure to protect the user's password or use of the user's account;

- Breach of computer security, harmful access, or invasion of privacy;

- Use of computing resources for anonymous or identity-masked messages to other College District users; or

- Unauthorized encryption. [Refer to the Business Procedures Manual for additional information.]

**Individual Responsibility for Use of Computing Resources and Facilities**

All users must use these resources and facilities in accordance with College District policies and procedures as well as all laws. Failure to fulfill these responsibilities may lead to the cancellation of computer access, other disciplinary action by the College District, and/or referral to legal and law enforcement agencies, in accord with existing College District policies and procedures. Individuals using the College District's computing resources or facilities shall:

1. Use College District computing resources and facilities in accord with this policy and respect the rights of other computer users by complying with laws, license agreements, and contracts.

2. Use communal resources with respect for others. Disruptive mailings and print jobs, tying up work stations, and other disproportionate use of computing facilities prevent others from using these resources.

3. Use of College District computing accounts must be limited to authorized purposes. Use of College District-owned resources and facilities shall be limited to College District-related business or incidental personal use as defined in this policy. Use of computing resources for unauthorized commercial purposes or personal gain is prohibited.

4. Protect the individual's password and use of the individual's account. The user shall not use another person's identification, account, or password. Confidential information contained on various computers shall not be shared with others except when those persons are authorized to receive the information. Users shall not intentionally seek, read, provide, remove, reconfigure, or modify information in or obtain copies of any files, accounts, software, hardware, programs, or passwords belonging to other computer users or the College District without the permission of those other computer users or the College District. A user must obtain written permission from the owner of a file to alter or copy a file if the file does not belong to the user or the file has not been sent to the user by the owner.

5. Report improper use of computer resources and facilities, which may include:

   a. Breach of computer security.

   b. Unauthorized access to computing resources.

   c. Release of password or other confidential information on computer security.

    d.    Harmful access.

    e.    Alteration, damage, or destruction of data.

    f.    Injection of a destructive computer virus.

    g.    Invasion of privacy.

    h.    Reading files without authorization.

    i.    Criminal and illegal acts.

6.    Comply with requests concerning computing from the system operator.

7.    Report any incidents of harassment and/or discrimination using College District computing resources and facilities in accord with the College District's policy. It may be harassment if the behavior:

    a.    Is unwelcome;

    b.    Interferes with the user's ability, or the ability of others, to work or study; or

    c.    Creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Alternatively, users may file a grievance through appropriate channels.

8.    Respect the forum (talk groups, bulletin boards, public computing facilities) when communicating ideas to others via College District computing facilities and resources (includes access to external networks). All communications should reflect high ethical standards and mutual respect and civility. Users may use external network (e.g., BITNET, internet) links solely for the purposes permitted in these policies and in the external network guidelines. Users are responsible for obtaining and adhering to all of the policies published by the external networks they use. The ability to connect to external systems through the College District systems does not imply the right to connect to these systems or to make use of these systems unless properly authorized by the owners of those systems.

**Computer Software and Copyright Law**

The College District respects the copyrights of others. With very few exceptions, all computer software and documentation is protected by federal copyright law. [See CR(REGULATION)]  The unauthorized or unlicensed use, duplication, or copying of computer software or documentation is contrary to College District policy and

is a violation of the law. Violators of any copyright are subject to both civil and criminal penalties and/or disciplinary action. College District regulations and procedures will establish guidelines for the use of computer resources and local area networks.

**Access by Individuals with Disabilities**

The Chancellor or designee shall develop procedures to ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to the College District's information and communication technology (ICT) resources similar to individuals without disabilities.

Compliance

The College District's ICT resources shall comply with the most recent version of or successor standards for accessibility as established by law and/or the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) or their content and functionality made available to College District users on request in an equally effective and accessible alternative manner.

The Office of Institutional Equity shall oversee compliance with this policy.

Applicability

This policy shall apply to the development, procurement, implementation, and continued maintenance of all ICT resources (including web-based resources used in College District courses) published, hosted, or used (including remotely hosted sites and software) by the College District to conduct College District business or College District-sponsored activities.

**Drones**

The flying of drones over or from sites on College District property or as part of the College District's academic or research program is permitted only in accordance with law and College District regulations.