Subject: **Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Use**
Effective: July 16, 1996
Revised: *September 7, 2004*

1.0   PURPOSE

This policy defines standards for appropriate use of information and communication technologies in the public school system.

2.0   APPLICATION

The *Information and Communication Technologies Use* policy applies to the use of ICT by persons in the public school system. This includes school personnel, students, volunteers, and others involved in labs and activities at schools such as clubs. The policy also applies to Community Access Centres located in schools with certain exceptions which are stated in the policy. The policy applies 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Exemptions:
Members of the public using ICT in public-school libraries are not subject to this policy. In this case, the New Brunswick Public Library Service (NBPLS) Policy 1073 – *Internet Access* applies.

Part I employees of the Department of Education, including New Brunswick Public Libraries staff are subject to the Government of New Brunswick's *Administration Manual System* Policy AD-7108 – *Internet Access, Use and Posting*.

3.0   DEFINITIONS

ICT refers to network services provided or managed by the New Brunswick Department of Education for use in the public school system. This includes Internet and e-mail access.   It extends to any networks accessed while using these services, as well as any other networking technology or computer equipment, which may be provided, presently or in the future. Access to these services may be through use of Department provided/managed equipment or involve remote access (e.g. from a home computer). ICT also refers to any non-networked computer provided or managed by the Department of Education for use in the public school system.

Personal information as defined in the *Protection of Personal Information Act* means information about an identifiable individual, recorded in any form. An individual is identifiable for the purposes of this Act if

   (a) information includes his or her name,
   (b) information makes his or her identity obvious, or
   (c) information does not itself include the name of the individual or make his or her identity obvious but is likely in the circumstances to be combined with other information that does.

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Public-designated computer refers to computers in public-school libraries which can be configured to provide unfiltered Internet access for members of the public.

School-designated computer refers to computers in public-school libraries which must provide managed/filtered Internet access at all times.

School personnel, as defined in the *Education Act*, refers to the superintendent, director of education and other administrative and supervisory personnel; school bus drivers; building maintenance personnel including custodians; secretaries and clerks; teachers; persons other than teachers engaged to assist in the delivery of programs and services to students; and other persons engaged in support areas such as social services, health services, psychology and guidance.

4.0   LEGAL AUTHORITY

Education Act

The Minister

6 (a)   shall establish educational goals and standards and service goals and standards

6(b.2)   may establish provincial policies and guidelines related to public education within the scope of this Act …

31.1   Non-professional Conduct

5.0   GOALS / PRINCIPLES

5.1   Information and communication technologies are provided within the public education system:

- for use as a pedagogical aid, supporting student learning;

- as a resource for personnel to facilitate and advance the performance of their assigned duties, to enhance their competence in the use of ICT, and to foster lifelong learning;

- as an avenue to explore and promote the dual linguistic and cultural heritage of the Province; and

- as a vehicle for presenting information about the public education system to its stakeholders and to a global audience.

5.2   The public education system is reliant on ICT for many critical functions. Given this, and the Department's ICT infrastructure capacity limits, the Department must take reasonable measures to prevent activities which jeopardize the smooth delivery of ICT services or the integrity of electronic information.

5.3   Conditions for Internet use in public–school libraries have been created to meet co-existing requirements. The public school system must fulfill its duty of care towards students, while the public library has a duty to provide services to its patrons that are equal to those offered in public libraries that are not located in schools.

In order to meet these requirements, public-designated computers in public-school libraries are configured not to provide Internet access during instructional hours, other than when Internet access is requested by a member of the public. During instructional hours, students may use either a school-designated computer (which provides only filtered Internet access at all times), or a public-designated computer that is configured not to provide access to the Internet. After instructional hours, the public-school library assumes the status of a public library. At that time, unfiltered Internet access via public-designated computers is available to all persons, within the constraints of the New Brunswick Public Library Service policies.

6.0   POLICY AND STANDARDS

6.1   School District Responsibilities

Superintendents shall ensure:

6.1.1   that information and communication technologies are planned and implemented on the basis of their pedagogical value and the equitable distribution of resources;

6.1.2   students and personnel in French language schools use ICT in French unless the use of another language is a course requirement. Members of the public accessing ICT through Access Centers are not subject to this requirement;

6.1.3   all ICT users are aware of applicable rules governing their ICT use, including federal legislation and provincial legislation and policies, and are provided with sufficient information to enable them to use ICT safely;

6.1.4   procedures are in place for adequate supervision by teachers of student ICT use;

6.1.5   students access the Internet only through channels which are routed through the Department of Education's communications infrastructure (i.e. filtered Internet access only). This standard applies during instructional hours, or at any time students are under the supervision of a member of the school personnel;

6.1.6   websites created by/for the district and individual schools are adequately monitored to remove dead and inappropriate links and inappropriate materials;

6.1.7   that, in schools with a public-school library:

- parents are informed that
  - during instructional hours, students are permitted only filtered Internet access,
  - students using public-designated computers in the library after instructional hours may gain unfiltered access to the Internet;

- parents are informed of the hours during which the public-school library will operate as a public library; and

- members of the public are entitled to unfiltered Internet access via public-designated computers at any time;

6.1.8   compliance with the reporting requirements under this policy (Appendix A); and

6.1.9   written consent is obtained when personal information is to be made available to be accessed electronically outside of the public school system, or accessed within the public school system for reasons that would not be anticipated and/or likely approved of by the individual/guardian. Electronic access includes: e-mail or e-mail attachment, video recording, digital image, digital audio and posting on a website. This requirement does not apply when transmission of personal information is necessary to prevent harm to a person, when needed to pursue a legitimate investigation, or is part of a routine service to students or their families of which they should reasonably be aware.

Consent must be obtained from the guardian if the student is under 19 years of age and from the guardian and student if the student is 16 or older. (See Appendix B for a consent form template.)

6.2   User Responsibilities

6.2.1 Ethical Use

Users shall:

- use ICT for respectful communications, respecting the principles of Policy 703-*Positive Learning Environment*.

Users shall not:

- create, access, store, publish, send or print text, images, sound or any other files which are generally considered to be unlawful, obscene, pornographic, erotic, abusive, discriminatory, hate-motivated, seditious, harassing, counter to a positive learning environment, demeaning or otherwise objectionable;

- alter the content of electronic documents (e.g. e-mails, digital images, websites) for the purpose of falsification or distortion, or forward information which the originator would reasonably expect to be kept private; or

- make use of ICT for personal monetary gain. This includes solicitation of funds and selling goods and/or services of any type.

This paragraph does not apply to Community Access Center users.

ICT use is permitted for activities sanctioned by the school/district which are done for the benefit of the school system (e.g. fundraising).

6.2.2 System and Data Security/Integrity

Users shall not:

- harm or attempt to harm data or services not belonging to the user;

- obtain, by any means, access to any system, service, privilege or electronic material to which the user is not entitled (e.g. hacking);

- access network/Internet services anonymously. All network/Internet access must be traceable to the user;

- use free e-mail (i.e. commercial, advertiser-sponsored service such as Hotmail). This restriction does not apply to Community Access Centres on weekdays after instructional hours, on holidays, during summer break or on weekends;

- use unprotected chat sites or instant messaging due to their anonymous nature and to the disproportionate investment of resources with limited return for the Department. This restriction does not apply to Community Access Centres on weekdays after instructional hours, on holidays, during summer break or on weekends;

- use Internet/network resources to access/store/install games or other large files (e.g. graphics or music files) for recreational purposes. High-volume transmissions which are likely to place the stability of the infrastructure at risk are prohibited. These restrictions are imposed due to limited server storage space and to capacity limitations governing the volume of data transmitted. The restriction concerning games does not apply to Community Access Centres on weekdays after instructional hours, on holidays, during summer break or on weekends; or

- transmit unsolicited bulk information (SPAM). This includes: junk mail, advertising, jokes, solicitation, chain letters, virus alerts not originating from the system administrator and announcements of social or sporting events/information not pertaining to the public school system. Large volume e-mail distribution should be of appropriate relevance to learning/work and to its recipients to justify the associated cost.

6.2.3 Personal Security

Users shall not:

- compromise his/her personal safety by revealing personal contact information such as school location, home phone number, e-mail address or physical address or agreeing to meet with unknown persons contacted through the Internet without parental consent, if the user is a minor; or

- compromise the safety or privacy of others.

6.2.4 Reputation of the Public Education System

Users shall not:

- register a domain name without the prior approval of the director of the Information Systems Services branch of the Department of Education; or

- use ICT in a manner that calls into question the suitability of school personnel for working with children. Standards for appropriate behaviour of adults towards students in the public education system are stated in Policy 701 - *Policy for the Protection of Students in the Public Education System from Non-Professional Conduct*.

6.2.5 Legal Requirements

Users shall:

- refrain from infringing on a person's or organization's copy-right. This illegal activity includes, but is not limited to, un-authorized duplication of copyrighted software (software pirating) and using text, sound or visual material without permission;

- give references and credit when creating, using or altering electronic information with the understanding that rules regarding plagiarism for printed documents also apply to electronic resources;

- be aware that e-mail and electronic files pertaining to government business are subject to the *Right to Information Act*; and

- maintain information contained in e-mail and electronic files pertaining to government business in an appropriate format, in accordance with the *Provincial Archives Act*. A "record" under this Act includes correspondence, memoranda, forms and other papers and books as well as all other documentary materials regardless of physical form or characteristics.

7.0   GUIDELINES

DECs/school districts may wish to include the following information when developing rules for appropriate ICT use.

7.1   School District Responsibilities

- Written approval of the superintendent (or designate) is required prior to special monitoring of electronic activities, including checking e-mail or proxy logs, or reading files or e-mail of personnel, should this become necessary due to suspected misuse of ICT services. Such investigations may be undertaken without notification of the individual when appropriate.

- Mechanisms should be in place to ensure responsible use of ICT services. It is suggested that students who are provided with access to the Internet through the issuance of a personal ID account, sign an agreement of appropriate use (see Appendix C for agreement template).

- Responsibility should be assigned for reviewing any material stored in any manner (text, images, sound, video, web pages), and editing or removing material which may be deemed to be in violation of the *Information and Communication Technologies Use Policy*.

- It is recommended that, unless a person is assigned to monitor the content of a web page, the web page should be removed.

- A person or persons who will be the point of contact at the district office regarding questions and complaints related to ICT use should be designated and their name(s) be communicated to the director of the Information Systems Services Branch of the Department of Education. These person(s) will be responsible for reporting infractions to the superintendent and the director of the Information Systems Services Branch of the Department of Education.

- The purpose of using any individual's name, photograph or other identifying information on the Internet should be carefully weighed against the risks. The posting of personal information on home pages is not recommended.

- In public-school libraries, it is recommended that public-designated and school-designated computers not be located in proximity, when possible.

7.2 User Responsibilities

- All users of ICT are responsible for using these services/resources in an appropriate, legal and efficient manner and will be held accountable for misuse.

- Within the constraints of this policy and in keeping with the Department's role in supporting lifelong learning, school personnel are permitted occasional, limited, appropriate personal use of ICT. This includes occasional personal correspondence, personal record-keeping and appropriate personal research. It is expected that activities which are not related to assigned duties, will generally be conducted outside work hours.

- Violation of the standards set out in this policy may result in immediate termination of Internet and e-mail access without notice and any other disciplinary measures which may apply.

7.2.1   System and Data Security/Integrity

Users shall:

- take reasonable precautions to prevent unauthorized access to e-mail, network and Internet services including: keeping login identifiers and passwords confidential, changing passwords regularly and locking computers when computers are left unattended;

- report inappropriate messages, or messages which make the recipient feel uncomfortable, to the district designate who will notify the superintendent and the director of the Information Systems Services Branch of the Department of Education; and

- report to the school district designate, any material received or stored in any manner (text, images, sound) on devices or equipment provided/managed by the Department which appears to be in violation of this policy. (Nuisance bulk mail should simply be deleted without reply.)

8.0   DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL POLICYMAKING

District Education Councils may develop policies regarding ICT use, not inconsistent with provincial policies and legislation.

9.0   REFERENCES

ICT use must comply with the following statutes, regulations and policies of the Province of New Brunswick:

- Appendix A – *Reporting Requirements*
- Appendix B – *Posting and Release of Student Information*
- Appendix C – *Acceptable Computer Use Agreement*
- *Archives Act*
- *Conflict of Interest Policy* (AD-2915*)*
- *Financial Administration Act*, section 5(1)
- *Education Act*
- *Internet Access, Use and Posting* (AD-7108)
- *Microcomputer System Security Guidelines* (AD-7107)
- Policy 126 – *Provision of Legal Advice to School Districts*
- Policy 701 – *Policy for the Protection of Students in the Public Education System from Non-Professional Conduct*
- Policy 703 – *Positive Learning Environment*
- Policy 802 – *Information Technology and Data Standards*
- Policy 1073 - *Internet Access; New Brunswick Public Library Service Policy*

- ▪ *Protection of Personal Information Act*
- ▪ *Public Records Act*
- ▪ *Records Management Policy* (AD-1508)
- ▪ *Right to Information Act*
- ▪ *Workplace Harassment Policy* (AD-2913)

10.0   CONTACTS FOR MORE INFORMATION

Department of Education   Policy and Planning Branch – (506) 453-3090
                               Information Systems Services – (506) 453-7158

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