

# REGULATION **MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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**Related Entries:** CNA, CNB-RA, CND, EGB-RA, EGC-RA, IPD-RA, IGT-RA, JFA-RA, KBA-RA

**Responsible Office:** Department of Communications  
Web Services

## **Educational Purposes and Administration of the MCPS Web**

### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this regulation is to provide a framework for the structure and content of the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Web. This framework shall provide accountability for information published on the MCPS Web so that the use of the Web serves the educational purposes of MCPS; establish reasonable controls to protect the privacy of MCPS staff and students in a global communications environment; and ensure that the MCPS Web incorporates best practices and meets the highest educational and quality standards.

### **II. BACKGROUND**

Montgomery County Public Schools maintains official district, school, and office Web sites to provide parents, staff, students, and the larger community with valuable information about and technical support for the academic, administrative, and operational aspects of the school system. The MCPS Web is a non-public forum. MCPS has the right, and has chosen to exercise that right, to place reasonable restrictions on the material posted on or accessed through the MCPS Web.

### **III. DEFINITION(S)**

- A. The *Directory Information Withhold List* is a list of students for whom schools must restrict disclosure of personally identifying information. To restrict the release of directory information, a parent or eligible student must notify the school principal of the specific information to be withheld, all as defined in Regulation JOA-RA: *Student Records*.
- B. *Educational purposes* are those actions directly promoting the educational, instructional, administrative, business, and support services mission of MCPS, and

related to any instruction, project, job, work assignment, task, or function for which the user is responsible.

- C. *Inappropriate content* is that which violates law or MCPS policies and/or regulations; poses a potential threat to the health and/or safety of students; might reasonably be perceived to advocate student drug and alcohol and tobacco use, violence, sex, illegal discrimination, or other illegal activities; contains language or images that are obscene, libelous, slanderous, profane, or derogatory to individuals; or causes, or might reasonably be predicted to cause, substantial disruption of or material interference with school activities; all as defined in Regulation JFA-RA: *Student Rights and Responsibilities*.
- D. The *MCPS Web* is all publicly accessible Web content for district, school, and office pages.
- E. *Site manager* is the principal or administrator of the school or office ultimately responsible for supervising the school or office Web site. The director of communications and/or his/her designee is the site manager of the MCPS Web.
- F. *Template* is a modular, structured Web page with components that are consistent on every page.
- G. *Webmaster* is the MCPS staff member responsible for creating and maintaining the Web site for his/her school or office. Web Services is the webmaster of the MCPS Web.
- H. *Web Services* is the department responsible for managing the MCPS Web, under the direction of the director of communications. The director of communications is the site manager for the MCPS Web.

#### IV. PROCEDURES

- A. Requirements
  1. Each school and office must have a Web site or at minimum one Web page with its contact information. Offices and other nonschool Web sites must be in the MCPS Web template. All sites developed by MCPS staff in the course of their job responsibilities and by students in the course of their class assignments shall reside on MCPS-managed systems.
  2. All material placed on the MCPS Web must serve the educational purposes of the school system and comply with MCPS policies, regulations, administrative procedures, and school rules.

3. Site managers, or their designee, are responsible for the following functions:
  - a) Creating and maintaining the school or office site on MCPS Web servers;
  - b) Requesting publishing privileges from Web Services for persons designated to create or maintain school or office Web sites and notifying Web Services when such are no longer designated to perform those functions;
  - c) Consulting the *Directory Information Withhold List* to confirm permission to disclose personally identifying student information;
  - d) Reviewing the site to ensure the content is appropriate, accurate, timely, and serving educational purposes;
  - e) Removing any content or links that fail to comply with requirements for educational purposes or appropriateness; and
  - f) Consulting Web Services before creating, redesigning, or adding new technologies to their sites.

B. Guidelines for appropriate content

1. Web site content must have a clear educational purpose and meet the standards for appropriateness, as defined in Section III. All material placed on the Web site must comply with all MCPS policies and regulations, including IGT-RA: *User Responsibilities for Computer Systems and Network Security*, and JFA-RA: *Student Rights and Responsibilities*.
2. All material placed on the Web site must be current and meet academic standards for proper spelling, grammar, content, and accuracy.
  - a. Operational and time-sensitive information, such as address, school hours, calendar items, staff directory, and opening of school information, must be maintained as current.
  - b. Unfinished sites and Web pages should not be published until the material is complete.
  - c. Files not intended for public view, particularly those marked private and confidential, should not be stored on Web servers.

3. Web Services will publish on its Web site information and guidelines regarding the requirements for Web sites. Such requirements will include required links and appropriate notification or disclosure language.
4. Public chat rooms, forums, bulletin boards, discussion groups, and other similar forms of interactive communication are not permitted on the MCPS Web.
5. Sites created and maintained by students should be labeled as student work.
6. Copyright
  - a. MCPS webmasters should not copy material from other Web sites or resources and publish that content on the MCPS Web without obtaining permission from the webmaster, creator, owner, or publisher of the material, unless the material is clearly stated to be in the public domain or the owner gives permission or license for reuse.
  - b. School and office Web sites should not use a trademark, service mark, or logo of the owner without the owner's written consent.
  - c. Web pages on the MCPS Web are the property of MCPS, unless they display student work or material of others displayed with permission. Requests to reuse content from an MCPS Web site should be directed to the site manager.

**C. Links to external sites**

1. Links to non-MCPS Web sites must support the educational purposes of MCPS, as defined in Section III above.
2. Web pages with links to non-MCPS sites will include the disclaimer, "This Web page may contain links to one or more pages that are outside MCPS. MCPS does not control the content or relevancy of these pages." A link on the MCPS Web to a non-MCPS site does not represent MCPS sponsorship of the linked entity.

**D. Advertising and Public Service Announcements**

1. The MCPS Web does not accept paid advertising or sponsorship from commercial entities and does not promote commercial entities. An individual school or office Web page may contain the name, logo, or icon of a business

that has been identified as a partner in education and has given permission for its use; however, the Web site may only link to the business partner's Web site if it serves an educational purpose.

2. Content or Web tools provided at no cost by a third party are permitted on school or office Web sites on a case-by-case basis. The content should serve the educational purposes of MCPS; be used with permission; and be credited to the publisher, author, or owner. The site manager must approve third-party content or tools, and Web Services should be notified before they are added to the Web site. The following disclaimer should appear near the third-party content—"This material is provided free of charge and does not indicate MCPS endorsement or sponsorship."

E. Confidentiality of student information

1. The Web site shall be in compliance with all applicable confidentiality laws and regulations.
2. The *Directory Information Withhold List* shall be the primary resource for consent to use personally identifying information on the Web site. At no time shall any student's home address, telephone number, e-mail address, birth date, social security number, or information made confidential by state or federal law appear on the Web site. The Web site will not include any information that provides the physical location of students at a particular time.

F. Responsibilities of Web Services

1. Web Services, reporting to the director of communications, shall be responsible for implementing this regulation, maintaining and developing the MCPS Web, managing access to school and office sites, and monitoring all Web site activities for compliance with Board of Education policies, applicable laws and regulations, and this regulation.
2. MCPS will provide technical requirements, support, and training for developing and publishing material on Web sites.
3. If the director of Web Services and/or the director of communications identify problematic content on a district, school, or office Web site, the site manager shall be contacted and requested to modify the problematic content or remove it in order to comply with this regulation.

4. MCPS reserves the right to edit, delete, or modify any Web page content as it sees fit in order to comply with the intended purposes of the Web site and these regulations.
5. Violations of this regulation, Regulation IGT-RA: *User Responsibilities for Computer Systems and Network Security*, or Regulation JFA-RA: *Student Rights and Responsibilities*, may result in loss of publishing privileges or disciplinary action, as defined in IGT-RA, Section IV.F.

**Regulation History:** New Regulation, September 11, 2006.