

Internet Safety and Ethical Use Policy 09-095

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(Aligned to the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) [Pub. L. No 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)])

Effective Date: 04/01/2025

Last Updated: 04/01/2025

I. Purpose

The Eastern North Carolina School for the Deaf (ENCSD) is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and secure online environment for all students. This policy establishes guidelines for internet safety, ethical digital behavior, and measures to prevent and respond to cyberbullying and harassment in compliance with federal and state laws, including NC DPI guidelines for the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

II. Definitions

- **Cyberbullying:** The use of electronic communication to harass, intimidate, or harm an individual.
- **Inappropriate Material:** Content that is obscene, depicts child pornography, or is harmful to minors as defined by the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).
- **Unauthorized Access:** Any attempt to access restricted data, systems, or networks without permission.
- **Deepfakes:** Digitally altered media, including images, audio, and videos, that manipulate reality in a misleading or deceptive manner, often using artificial intelligence.

III. Policy Requirements

A. Internet Safety Measures

ENCSD shall:

1. Prevent access to or transmission of inappropriate material via Internet, email, or other electronic communications in compliance with CIPA.
2. Prohibit unauthorized access, hacking, and other unlawful online activity.
3. Prohibit the unauthorized disclosure or use of minors' personal identification information in compliance with FERPA.
4. Implement technology protection measures to block inappropriate material, including content deemed obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors.
5. Provide supervision and monitoring of student Internet use by ENCSD staff.
6. Conduct public notice and at least one public hearing before adopting or making significant changes to this policy, per CIPA requirements.
7. Store this policy in both digital and physical formats for easy access by stakeholders.
8. Implement guidelines to educate students and staff on the dangers of deepfake technology, ensuring awareness of manipulated media and how to verify authenticity.
9. Align monitoring and filtering systems with SL 2024-37's (NC House Bill 591) expanded definitions and requirements for student online protection.

B. Internet Safety Education

ENCSD shall provide age-appropriate internet safety training, including:

- Safe internet practices
- Cyberbullying awareness and response
- Responsible use of social networking sites and chat rooms
- Compliance with CIPA's E-rate requirements
- Education on online privacy and safe interactions
- Awareness of deepfakes, misinformation, and media literacy to help students critically evaluate online content
- Ensuring students understand new risks and regulations related to online threats and data security

IV. Bullying and Harassment Prevention

A. Definition

Bullying and harassment involve repeated verbal, written, electronic, or physical behavior that:

- Causes fear of harm to a student or employee.
- Creates a hostile environment that interferes with a student's education.

Bullying may be motivated by characteristics such as race, gender, disability, or socioeconomic status.

B. Prohibited Conduct

The following behaviors are prohibited:

- Threats, intimidation, and abusive language
- Spreading false rumors
- Cyberbullying via text, social media, or email
- Use of deepfake technology to spread false or misleading information about students or staff
- Physical aggression (e.g., hitting, shoving, spitting)

V. Reporting and Investigation

1. Any student who experiences cyberbullying or harassment should report the incident to a teacher, counselor, or administrator. Anonymous reporting is available.
2. Employees who witness violations must report them immediately.
3. All reports shall be investigated within 24 hours by school administration.
4. Disciplinary actions will follow the ENCSD Code of Conduct and may include counseling, parental notification, and suspension.
5. Retaliation against individuals who report bullying is strictly prohibited.

VI. Compliance and Review

1. All ENCSD employees, students, and volunteers shall receive annual training on Internet safety and cyberbullying prevention.
2. ENCSD shall conduct annual policy reviews to ensure compliance with evolving state and federal laws, including NC DPI guidelines.
3. ENCSD shall maintain documentation of compliance with CIPA, including records of public notices, hearings, and technology protection measures.
4. The LAN Manager or designated representatives shall be responsible for implementing and managing technology protection measures.

5. This policy shall be incorporated into employee training materials, student codes of conduct, and school handbooks.

VII. Contact Information

For questions regarding this policy, please contact the ENCSD Administration Office.

Approval & Adoption: This policy is adopted in accordance with federal and state regulations and will be enforced across ENCSD.

Statutory References:

- [Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act](#)
- Children's Internet Protection Act ([CIPA](#)) [[Pub. L. No 106-554](#) and [47 USC 254\(h\)](#)]
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ([FERPA](#))
- [G.S. 115C-407.5](#)
- North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI) CIPA Compliance Guidelines
- SL 2024-37 ([NC House Bill 591](#))

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