



Esperanza Cyber  
Charter School

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**Acceptable Use and Internet Policy  
2023-2024**



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## Overview

Using technological and electronic resources is central to delivering Esperanza Cyber Charter School's (ECCS) educational program. There is a clear expectation that all equipment and resources shall be used exclusively for acceptable, educational use. ECCS's policy is to maintain an environment that promotes ethical and responsible conduct in all electronic resource activities. This privilege and extraordinary opportunity to explore resources are linked responsibilities for both the parent/guardian and the student.

When signing the Student/Parent Laptop Agreement, all parties acknowledge that they understand and accept the information contained in this document.

ECCS students and families must understand that:

1. All students are allowed access to electronic resources unless the parent/guardian in writing notifies the school.
2. All ECCS network and equipment users must comply with the policies listed in the [Parent & Student Handbook](#) and this Acceptable Use and Internet Policy.
3. Laptops are on loan to students and remain the property of ECCS.
4. All users are accountable to all school, district, local, state, and federal laws.
5. All use of the laptop and network must support education.
6. Students and families must follow all guidelines outlined in this document and by ECCS staff.
7. All rules and guidelines are in effect before, during, and after school hours, for all ECCS computers, independent of location.
8. All files stored on ECCS equipment are property of the district and may be subject to review and monitoring.
9. "Equipment" or "technology" refers to laptops, batteries, power cords/chargers, and mice. Each piece of equipment is issued as an educational resource. The equipment's conditions can be equated to a textbook or a school-issued calculator.
10. Students are expected to keep the laptops in good condition. Failure to do so may result in charges for repair or replacement.
11. The district's price for the laptop includes laptop, battery, charger, and 1-year hardware warranty.
12. The laptop warranty (provided by the school) may cover hardware malfunction, not damage to the keyboard or display.
13. Students are expected to report any damage to their computer to the Technology Help Desk as soon as it happens (i.e., no more than 24 hours later).
14. Students who identify or know about a security problem are expected to convey the details to the Technology Help Desk without discussing it with other students.

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15. Students are expected to notify a staff member immediately if they come across information, images, or messages that are inappropriate, dangerous, threatening, or make them feel uncomfortable.
  16. All users must follow existing copyright laws and educational fair use policies.
  17. Students may only log in under their assigned username. Students may not share their passwords with other students.
  18. Students may not loan laptop components to other students for any reason. Students who do so are responsible for any loss of components.
  19. Any failure to comply with this handbook may result in disciplinary action. ECCS may confiscate a user's laptop without notice, given reasonable suspicion.

## Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Esperanza Cyber Charter School makes every effort to equip parents/guardians with the necessary tools and information to use laptops in the home safely. There are several responsibilities assumed by the parent/guardian. These are outlined below.

### Sign the Student/Parent Laptop Agreement

For students to be issued an ECCS laptop, a student and their parent/guardian must sign the ECCS Summary of Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and Summary of Internet Safety Policy (ISP), found at the end of this handbook.

### Accept Liability

The parent/guardian/student is responsible for the cost of repair or replacement at the date of the loss if the property or the equipment is:

- Not returned.
- Damaged (either intentional or due to negligence).
- Lost because of negligence.
- Stolen but not reported to the school and/or police promptly.

### Monitor Student Use

The parent/guardian must agree to monitor student use at home, and anywhere the student is completing schoolwork. The best way to keep students safe and on-task is to have a parent/guardian always present and involved.

Cyber schooling requires much time on computer surfing, researching, web conferencing, and other education-related activities. For your child to succeed at home, these suggestions should be implemented to help eliminate distractions from the computer and the Internet (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube).

### **Suggestions:**

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- Investigate and apply parental controls available through your Internet service provider and/or your wireless router.
  - Develop a set of rules/expectations for laptop use at home. Some websites provide parent/child agreements for you to sign.
  - Only allow laptop use in standard home rooms (e.g., living room or kitchen) and not in bedrooms.
  - Demonstrate a genuine interest in what your student is doing on the laptop. Ask questions and request that they show you their work often.

## Support Student Safety

Student safety is always a high priority for schools and parents/guardians alike. The precautions described in this section are intended to help students be safe on the path to and from public locations (outside of the residence) where they may be carrying their laptops to complete schoolwork. Student safety always comes first.

### **Please review the following safety tips with your student:**

- Walk to and from home in groups of two or more.
- Be aware of your surroundings, including people, vehicles, and wheeled devices.
- Let someone know when you leave and when you arrive home.
- Follow the safest route to your destination. Use main streets; avoid dimly lit areas, alleys, and shortcuts.
- If someone follows you on foot, get away from them as quickly as possible.
- If someone follows you in a car, turn around and go in the other direction.
- Always tell a parent/guardian, school official, or trusted adult in the event of an altercation.
- Turn the embroidered side of the case toward your body.
- If someone demands your laptop, give it to the person.

## Laptop Rules and Guidelines

The rules and regulations are provided here so that students and parents/guardians know the responsibilities students accept when using an ECCS-owned computer. This requires efficient, ethical, and legal utilization of all technology resources. Violations of these rules and guidelines will result in disciplinary action. Students receive laptop-related training during the first weeks of school. Below, you will find a summary of the main points of each training topic.

## Electronic Resource Policy and Acceptable Use Procedures

### **All use of technology must:**

- Support learning.
- Follow local, state, and federal laws.
- Be school appropriate.

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### **Security Reminders:**

- Do not share logins or passwords.  
*Exception: students are asked to share passwords with parents or guardians*
- Do not develop programs to harass others, hack, bring in viruses, or change others' files.
- Follow Internet safety guidelines.

### **All files must be school appropriate.**

#### **Inappropriate materials include explicit or implicit references to:**

- Alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.
- Gangs.
- Violence (against self or others).
- Obscene language or nudity.
- Bullying or harassment.
- Discriminatory or prejudicial behavior.
- Plagiarism/ Academic dishonesty.

### **Auxiliary storage:**

- All ECCS rules and guidelines apply to any external drives (i.e., thumb drive/USB drive) that may be plugged into an ECCS laptop.
- Students are encouraged to back up school work through Google Drive to avoid losing meaningful work if the laptop is damaged.

## Laptop Care and Appropriate Use

### **Care of Laptop at Home:**

- Charge the laptop fully each night.
- Store the laptop on a desk or table - never on the floor!
- Protect the laptop from:
  - ❖ Extreme heat or cold
  - ❖ Food and drinks
  - ❖ Small children
  - ❖ Pets

### **Habits While Working:**

- Center the laptop on the desk.
- Make sure there is nothing on the keyboard, and then close the laptop's lid before standing up.
- Lock the computer before walking away from it.

### **Traveling With the Laptop:**

- Completely shut down the laptop before traveling.
- Do not leave the computer in a vehicle.
- Use your backpack or carry the case by the handle or shoulder strap.
- If ever in a situation when someone is threatening you for your laptop, give it to them and tell a staff member/adult as soon as possible.

### **Prohibited Actions:**

- Put stickers or additional markings on the laptops, batteries, or power cord/chargers.
- Defacing ECCS-issued equipment in any way. This includes but is not limited to marking, painting, drawing, or damaging any surface of the laptops.

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- If any such action occurs, the student will be billed the cost of repair or replacement.

## Troubleshooting and Swap

1. Student attempts to fix the problem.
  - Always try restarting the laptop as the first step in troubleshooting.
  - If an error message appears on the screen, write the message down or take a screenshot to send to the Technology Help Desk.
  - Students are reminded not to waste too much time trying to resolve the issue, as it will take time away from their course work. Always ask if you need help!
2. If unable to resolve the issue, students should immediately Google chat/email the Technology Help Desk or call the school.
3. If the issue cannot be resolved via email or phone, the student will be asked to return the laptop to the ECCS main office for repair. During repair, students will be given a computer on loan to continue working until the issue is resolved. Students living more than 20 miles from the ECCS main office will be mailed a prepaid padded box to safely ship their laptop to the ECCS main office.
4. If the issue is deemed to be caused by negligence (if damaged) or improper use of the laptop, students will be held responsible and subject to disciplinary action and the cost of repair or replacement.

## Webcams

Each student laptop is equipped with a webcam. This equipment offers students an extraordinary opportunity to experience a 21st Century tool and develop 21st Century communication skills.

Webcams are to be used for educational purposes only, under the direction of a teacher. Examples include:

- Recording videos or taking pictures to include in a project.
- Recording a student giving a speech and playing it back for rehearsal and improvement.
- Participating in a live, virtual class lesson with a teacher present.

Note: Installing unauthorized Internet calling/video-conferencing software is prohibited on ECCS laptops. Software for using the webcam is already installed on the ECCS laptop. Please ask immediately if you are unsure how to operate your webcam.

## Listening to Music

Students are not permitted to install any P2P (Peer-to-Peer) sharing programs or torrent programs on their laptops (i.e., FrostWire, Bareshare). This is considered pirating (stealing) and is a Federal offense. Such programs open a door to viruses and other malware that can cause severe damage to a computer. If such programs are found, the student will be subject to disciplinary action and/or the cost of repair or replacement if the laptop is damaged.

### **At home:**

Listening to music on your laptop (from a streaming website or CD) is allowed at home. However, students cannot rip or download music directly onto their laptops. ECCS is not responsible for any lost music downloaded onto the computer.

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## Watching Movies/Videos

Videos are a significant tool utilized by our curriculum to provide a more interactive and fun learning experience. Therefore, we encourage students to use the internet and its many video resources to enhance their learning. Just as with listening to music, students are permitted to watch educationally relevant movies and videos from streaming websites. However, they cannot install any P2P (Peer-to-Peer) sharing programs or torrents onto their computer. This is considered pirating (stealing) and is a Federal offense. Any student caught with these programs or illegally downloading movies will be subject to disciplinary action.

## Gaming

**Online gaming is only allowed if the following conditions are met:**

- The content of the game is school appropriate.
- You have permission from your parent/guardian.
- The game is in support of education.
- All schoolwork is complete.
- No download of any kind is needed.

You are not allowed to load personal software onto your computer.

## Desktop Backgrounds and Screensaver

Any images set as the desktop background must comply with the Acceptable Use guidelines. Inappropriate media may not be used as a desktop background. The presence of guns, weapons, references to violence, pornographic materials, inappropriate language, alcohol, drugs, or gang-related symbols will result in disciplinary action.

## Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

A student may not cheat or plagiarize material; it is considered a level two offense. The content area teacher will determine cheating and/or plagiarism; penalties will include automatic failure of the assignment and/or course.

### ***As per the Code of Conduct:***

The following sets forth the corrective actions that may be taken in the event of level two offenses:

1. The student may receive a suspension and/or a particular contract between the school and the student's parents.
2. The student may be required to make restitution for the offense(s) committed.
3. The student may be referred for mandatory counseling at the parent/guardian's expense.
4. The student may be required to appear before the Board of Trustees.
5. The student may be expelled for cause.

## Technology as in Relation to the Code of Conduct/ Disciplinary Action

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All ECCS Code of Conduct rules and regulations will be held concerning computer use. Any situations involving unacceptable and inappropriate use of any ECCS-issued device or network will result in disciplinary action, including a formal meeting between the student, parent/guardian, school administrator, and Technology Coordinator.

## Examples of Unacceptable Use

Unacceptable conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Using the network for illegal activities, including copyright, license, or contract violations.
2. Unauthorized downloading or installation of any software, including shareware and freeware.
3. Using the network for financial or commercial gain, advertising, or political lobbying.
4. Accessing or exploring online locations or materials that do not support the curriculum and/or are inappropriate for school assignments.
5. Vandalizing and/or tampering with equipment, programs, files, software, network performance or other components of the network; use or possession of hacking software is strictly prohibited.
6. Gaining unauthorized access anywhere on the network.
7. Revealing the home address or phone number of one's self or another person.
8. Invading the privacy of other individuals.
9. Using another user's account or password or allowing another user to access your account or password.
10. Tampering with another individual's laptop or removing their equipment from their designated area.
11. Coaching, helping, observing, or joining any unauthorized activity on the network.
12. Posting anonymous messages or unlawful information on the network.
13. Participating in cyber-bullying or using objectionable language in public or private messages, e.g., racist, terroristic, abusive, sexually explicit, threatening, stalking, demeaning or slanderous.
14. Falsifying permission, authorization, or identification documents.
15. Obtaining copies of or modifying files, data, or passwords belonging to other users on the network.
16. Knowingly placing a computer virus on a computer or network.
17. Attempting to access or accessing sites blocked by the ECCS filtering system.
18. Download music, games, images, videos, or other media.
19. Sending or forwarding social or non-school-related emails.

## Laptop Security

Two primary forms of security are laptop security and Internet filtering. Each of the ECCS laptops has a security program installed on it. ECCS strives to strike a balance between the usability of the equipment and appropriate security to prevent the units from being damaged.

### **Laptop Security:**

Security is in place on the laptop to prevent certain activities. These include downloading or installing software on the laptops, removing software, changing system settings, etc.

### **Internet Filtering at the School:**



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ECCS maintains an on-site Internet filtering software package. This program automatically filters all student access to the Internet.

**Internet Filtering at Home:**

If a parent/guardian feels their student is often off task and would like tighter internet restrictions on their child's unit, they may email or call the Technology Coordinator to arrange said modification.

## **Damaged Equipment**

**Unexpected issues:**

Occasionally, unexpected problems do occur with the laptops that are not the fault of the user (computer crashes, software errors, etc.). These issues will be remedied at no cost. The student should follow the Troubleshooting and Swap policy mentioned previously. However, if it is determined that the computer crash was an effect of negligence or inappropriate use of the laptop, the student will be subject to disciplinary action and/or the cost of repair or replacement of the unit.

**Loaner Laptops:**

Temporary replacements, known as “loaners,” are available to each student so that the repair process does not disrupt learning. Students are responsible for the care of the loaner while issued to them. The same rules and regulations apply to a temporary loaner computer. Students should backup their files through Google Drive so that they may continue working on a loaner computer.

**Damage:**

After an investigation by the Technology Coordinator and IT specialist, the student will be subject to discipline and the cost of repair or replacement if the laptop is deemed to be intentionally or negligently damaged by the student.

## **Lost or Stolen Equipment**

### Lost Equipment

**Reporting:**

If any equipment is lost, the student or parent must report the loss immediately to the Technology Coordinator.

**Financial Responsibility:**

The circumstances of each situation involving lost equipment will be investigated individually. Students/families may be billed for damaged or lost equipment.

### Stolen Equipment

**Reporting:**

If equipment is stolen, a police report must be filed, and the student or parent/guardian must promptly provide a copy of the report to the school.

If there is no clear evidence of theft or the equipment has been lost due to student negligence, the student and parent will be responsible for the total cost of replacing the item(s).

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Failure to report the theft to the proper staff and follow the appropriate filing procedure may result in a bill for the full replacement cost to the student.

**Financial Responsibility:**

After investigation and review of proper documentation, ECCS will cover its replacement if a laptop is deemed stolen. The student will be issued a replacement computer at no cost to them.

### Policy on the Computer Access

All Chrome-based devices are registered with the application known as GoGuardian. GoGuardian provides content filter, GER-tracking, and remote access services to all Chrome OS-based devices. The app allows the school to limit access to harmful content on the Internet and track sites that could threaten student safety and security.

The school also reserves the ability to remotely track and access the school-issued device if the device is lost or stolen. We understand the importance of privacy, and the school shall never access the device unless it is deemed necessary to retrieve the school's property. If the device is lost or not returned, the school will use the geo-tracking features offered by GoGuardian to locate the device. The school will then attempt to retrieve or report the device to the proper authorities as a fraud.

If the device is stolen from the student, the school will use the geo-tracking feature to identify the device's location and provide the information to the proper authorities for retrieval and investigation. In this event, the school also reserves the right to access the device's webcam to identify the individual using the device to provide the information and images to the authorities. This feature is only to be used in the event of a stolen device and will never be used while the device is in the student's possession.

### Replacement Costs

ECCS strives to repair and return damaged units as quickly as possible. We have taken it upon ourselves to repair two of the most common issues in-house. If a student damages an ECCS-issued laptop's display (screen) or keyboard, the repair will be done at the school. Ultimately, this reduces the cost of repairs to a machine that has been damaged in this manner.

If it is determined that the laptop will need more extensive repairs, other than the damage mentioned above, ECCS will send the damaged machine to an authorized repair specialist for repairs. These repairs will vary in cost and must be paid for by the student and parent.

If the unit is deemed beyond repair, the student and parent will be held responsible for the total cost of a replacement unit. **(Cost to be provided after investigation.)**

### Payment Timeline

Parents/guardians/students have 30 days to pay any bills. If bills are not cleared within 30 days, students/parents will be billed for the total cost of repairs, and the school will file a claim. The school may set up payment plans to clear bills if needed.

### Important Contact Information

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Please use the following contact information if you need assistance with your technology. It is our goal at ECCS to provide appropriate service in a timely fashion. In many cases, your request will be answered within an hour; however, we ask that you allow for a 24-hour response to your questions or concerns.

**Esperanza Cyber Charter School**

4261 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19120  
215-967-9703

**Technology Help Desk**

[help@esperanzacybercs.net](mailto:help@esperanzacybercs.net)

215-967-9703, option 3

**Technology Coordinator**

Daniel Schroeder  
[dschroeder@esperanzacybercs.net](mailto:dschroeder@esperanzacybercs.net)  
267-908-2931