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INTERNET FILTERING AND PRIVACY

In December 2000, the US Congress passed a law called the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) which required all public schools and libraries to filter Internet content. The part of the law that applies to public libraries was legally challenged under free speech laws and found to be unconstitutional by the US Supreme Court. The law stands, however, for public schools and we are required to adhere to its provisions.

As of January 2002, the district has had a filtering system in place for all Internet access through any computer connected to the district's network. We have found very little interference with regular and legitimate Internet use.

Filtering technology is far from perfect. What a filter *will* do is to help prevent obvious and inadvertent access to sites that are not intended for children. Unfortunately, filters also impose a maintenance burden since they must be frequently updated. Given the constantly changing nature of the Internet, it is impossible for any filter to successfully block all intended material. Filters also may block many legitimate sites that have educational value. If you find that a legitimate site is being blocked by our filter, please alert the Technology Office (tech@mpcsd.org) and we can quickly remove the restriction. Similarly, if you find an inappropriate site that is not blocked, please alert us and we can add it to the restricted list. It is important to plan ahead. If you are planning to use an Internet site in a lesson, try it out at school in advance to be sure you can get to the site without any problems.

Because filters are far from foolproof, the best way to insure appropriate use of the district's Internet resources is monitoring and supervision. Please don't assume that you can leave students alone in a room to surf the web because we are "protected" by a filter.

You should also know that the district has the ability to monitor which web sites are visited from our Internet connection. This is for the district's protection and security. Additionally, the filter software now logs all attempts to visit blocked sites, as required by the new law. Please keep in mind that nothing is 100% private when using school resources, including email.