

**ERIE COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOL
PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM**

DATE: July 20, 2005

SUBJECT: Regional Career & Technical Center Student Handbook

CATEGORY: Operations

INITIATED BY: Aldo Jackson

DESCRIPTION: As part of the preparation to train adults, a student handbook needs to be in place and approved by the Joint Operating Committee. The administration and our solicitor have conducted a thorough review of the proposed handbook.

RECOMMENDATION: Motion to approve the *Fulltime Adult Career & Technical Education, Policy & Procedure Handbook*, as presented (see a copy in the Supplemental Information section of the agenda).



REGIONAL CAREER & TECHNICAL CENTER

**Fulltime Adult
Career & Technical Education
*Policy & Procedure Handbook***

Regional Career & Technical Center
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Erie, Pennsylvania
814.864.0641 ext. 357
www.ects.org

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Reviewed and Revised: July 2005

General Information

Welcome

Welcome to the Regional Career & Technical Center, also known as RCTC. We are pleased you have chosen to join our student body. This handbook is designed to answer any questions that might arise during your course of study. Students are encouraged to speak with faculty members, counselors, or administrators should a specific issue arise. The entire RCTC staff is genuinely interested in your success and is here to assist you in reaching your goal.

Mission

The mission of the Regional Career & Technical Center is to educate people to have the skills and attitudes to be successful in their choices of career paths by providing a cooperative educational environment.

Goals

Instruction: To provide quality training using state of the art equipment and methods, creating an atmosphere for learning.

Quality Programs: Maintain current curricula consistent with industry's needs by simulating the world of work.

Placement: Provide information and opportunities for students to develop their job search skills to obtain meaningful employment.

School Calendar

RCTC conducts classes year-round with programs starting at various times in the year.

Admissions & Attendance

Admissions Policy

The Operating Committee recognizes the continuing interests of adult members of the community in educational growth and advancement and the need of both adults and minors for learning programs not available to them in the regular program of the school.

The policies and procedures of the Erie County Technical School Operating Committee shall govern the operation of the adult education programs, and all students enrolled in such programs shall adhere to such established policies and procedures.

Admission to the adult education program shall be open to adult residents who reside in Erie County and outside the City of Erie, and adult nonresidents who reside outside of Erie County or in the City of Erie (Reference: Board Policy 125).

Admission Clearance Statement (Act 151)

The Director shall require each applicant for admission to submit an official clearance statement issued within the preceding year by the Department of Public Welfare. Such clearance statements shall include information as to whether the applicant is named as the perpetrator of an indicated or a founded report related to child abuse.

No applicant for admission may be enrolled who is named as the perpetrator in a founded report or is named as an individual responsible for injury or abuse in a founded report for said applicant.

Attendance

Good attendance is an important part of the student's commitment to success in an RCTC program. Often, when potential employers ask about a student's school records, one of the first questions asked is about attendance records.

The RCTC operates under the general principle that class attendance is crucial and that students are expected to attend all classes. Students should be aware that unexcused and/or excessive absences might affect grades and final evaluation. Students are responsible for making up any missed work.

An excused absence is one that is due to illness, death in the immediate family, or any other unavoidable circumstance. If a student is unable to attend classes, they are required to notify the RCTC instructor before the start of class at 864-0641, ext. 357.

Tardiness

Any student not physically present at the start of his/her first class period will be considered tardy. Excessive tardiness could result in the discontinuance of training.

Withdrawal Procedure

A withdrawal is a separation from the school with no intent to return. A student may withdraw from the program at any time.

It is recommended that the student contemplating withdrawal from the school first discuss this with RCTC student support staff. A student who finds it necessary to withdraw is required to obtain an official withdrawal form from the RCTC Office to be completed and filed as directed. The official withdrawal form will then be signed by the RCTC Manager for release of any information regarding grades.

Non-attendance does not constitute an official withdrawal. A withdrawal is considered official only after the withdrawal form has been processed.

The withdrawal process includes the clearing of all financial obligations and an exit interview.

The designation “unofficial withdrawal” is placed on the permanent record of any student who terminates her or his studies without complying with the above procedure.

The school reserves the right to request the withdrawal of any student who fails to meet the school standards of proficiency, conduct and behavior.

Change of Name or Address

Students are requested to inform the RCTC Office of any change in name, address or telephone number so that accurate records are maintained for emergencies and mailing lists.

Cancellation of Classes

Make-up classes are scheduled only if school must be cancelled due to severe weather conditions or conditions beyond the control of the RCTC. Students are urged to listen to local radio and television stations for any change in normal operations due to severe weather conditions or emergencies affecting the RCTC.

Student Rights

Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Statement

The Regional Career & Technical Center is an equal opportunity education institution and will not discriminate based on race, color, age, creed, religion, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, gender or handicap/disability, or any other legally protected characteristic in its activities, programs, or employment practices as required by Title VI, Title IX and Section 504.

For information regarding civil rights or grievance procedures, contact the Compliance Officer at 8500 Oliver Road, Erie, PA 16509 (814-864-0641, ext. 344). For information regarding services, activities, and facilities that are accessible to and useable by handicapped persons, contact the Compliance Officer.

Ethnic Intimidation

The Regional Career & Technical Center is committed to the maintenance of a working and academic environment free from racial intimidation and harassment. The RCTC will not tolerate any activity or behavior by a member of the RCTC community that is racially motivated, and condemns all acts of racial intimidation and/or harassment.

Pennsylvania's Ethnic Intimidation and Institutional Vandalism Law makes certain crimes subject to more severe penalties when motivated by "hatred or malice toward the race, color, religion, or national origin of another individual or group". In summary, these crimes include, but are not limited to, crimes against property such as criminal trespass, criminal mischief and arson.

The RCTC condemns all racially motivated incidents and promptly investigates all race-related occurrences. Violators of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, reprimand, suspension, termination, or expulsion. Additionally, any racially motivated activities which may be in violation of federal, state or local laws will be forwarded to appropriate authorities and the RCTC will cooperate with law enforcement investigations.

Employees and students who have any inquiries or complaints of racial harassment or intimidation should contact the Compliance Officer at 814-864-0641, ext. 344.

Harassment

It is the policy of the Regional Career & Technical Center to maintain learning and working environments that are free from intimidation or abuse of students that rises to the level of "harassment".

"Harassment" includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome slurs, jokes or other verbal/oral, graphic or physical conduct based on a student's race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability, or any other legally protected class, or for engaging in any other protected activities, or otherwise, which is so objectively severe or pervasive in nature that it (1) creates, or poses a realistic or well-founded threat of creating, a substantial or material disruption to the educational process or activities or (2) interferes, or poses a realistic or well-founded threat of interfering with, the rights of the student/s or the student/s' access to or participation in the benefits or programs offered by the RCTC.

It shall be a violation of this policy to harass a student. Sexual harassment is also a type of prohibited harassment. By way of further explanation, sexual harassment shall consist of, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other inappropriate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when made to a student when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's education, or when
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for decisions affecting that individual.

Students are encouraged to report to school officials any incidents of harassment. Any student who alleges he/she is a victim of harassment in the Regional Career & Technical Center may use the school's complaint procedure or may complain directly to the administrator designated to receive such complaints. Except for claims that are knowingly

false, or made in reckless disregard of the facts, the filing of a complaint or otherwise reporting harassment will not reflect upon the individual's status nor will it affect future grades or position assignments.

The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the accused, will be respected consistent with the RCTC legal obligations, basic fairness to the accused and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and to take corrective action when this conduct has occurred.

A substantiated charge against a student shall subject the student to disciplinary action including suspension or expulsion.

Equal Rights and Opportunities

It is the Compliance Officer's responsibility to make certain that all educational programs and activities and all employment practices are free from discrimination on the basis of those conditions stated in the Equal Rights and Opportunity statement. This responsibility includes instructing appropriate persons in the Regional Career & Technical Center in the provisions of the laws and regulations concerning equal rights and opportunities, fair employment practices, and all current local, state, and federal laws and regulations regarding these issues. The Compliance Officer can be reached at the Erie County Technical School, 8500 Oliver Road, Erie, PA 16509 or by telephone at 814-864-0641, ext. 344.

Any student or employee who should experience problems or has an issue concerning violations of Title IX of the Education Act of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or Title VI, may submit them to the following formal problem-solving procedure, using the appropriate grievance forms which may be obtained from the Compliance Officer.

1. Within fifteen working days after the alleged violation, the grievant shall initiate an informal discussion with the appropriate RCTC Manager through the Compliance Office. If the informal discussion does not resolve the issue, the grievant shall submit a written complaint to the RCTC Manager. A formal response will be received within fifteen working days.
2. If the grievance is not resolved to the grievant's satisfaction using Step 1, the grievant shall submit a formal written complaint within fifteen working days to the Director of Vocational Education or his designee. A formal written response will be returned to the grievant from the Director within fifteen working days.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 allows students access to their own educational records and sets guidelines for the viewing of student education records by outside parties. RCTC has adopted a student records policy consistent with FERPA. According to this policy, students have the following rights:

1. The right to inspect and review information contained in their educational records within 45 days of the day the RCTC receives a written request for access. Students must submit to the Director of Vocational Education, or his designee, a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Director or his designee will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to seek amendment of their education records that the students believe to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the students' privacy rights.
 - a. A student may request the RCTC to amend a record that he/she believe to be inaccurate or misleading by writing to the Director of Vocational Education, or his designee, clearly identifying the part of the record he/she wants changed and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.
 - b. Within a reasonable time after it receives the request to amend, the RCTC will decide whether to amend the record as requested. If the RCTC decides to amend the record as requested, it shall amend the record and inform the student of the amendment in writing.
 - c. If the RCTC does not agree to amend the record as requested by the student, the RCTC will notify the student of the decision and advise him/her of his/her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. The hearing shall meet the following requirements:
 - (1) The RCTC shall hold the hearing within a reasonable time after it receives the request for a hearing.
 - (2) The RCTC shall give the student reasonable advance notice of the date, time and place of the hearing.
 - (3) The hearing will be conducted by an official of the RCTC who does not have a direct interest in the outcome of the hearing.
 - (4) The student shall have the opportunity to present evidence on the issue of whether the information contained in the education records is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the privacy rights of the student. The student may be assisted or represented by counsel.
 - (5) The RCTC shall make its decision in writing within a reasonable period of time after the hearing. The decision will be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing, and will include a summary of the evidence and the reasons for the decision.
 - d. If as a result of the hearing:
 - (1) the RCTC decides that the information in the record is inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of the student, it shall amend the record and inform the student of the amendment in writing.
 - (2) the RCTC decides that the information in the record is not inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of the student, it shall inform the student of his/her right to place a statement in the record

commenting on the contested information in the record or stating why he/she disagrees with the decision of the RCTC. If such a statement is placed in the education records of the student, the RCTC shall maintain the statement with the contested part of the record for as long as the record is maintained and disclosed the statement whenever it discloses the portion of the record to which the statement relates.

3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in education records, exception to the extent that FERPA allows disclosures without consent. Three of these exceptions to the prior consent rule are as follows:
 - a. The RCTC may disclose education records to "school officials" with "legitimate educational interests" without obtaining the prior consent of the student. A "school official" is a person employed by the RCTC as an administrator, supervisor, instructor or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel), an individual of the Operating Committee, a person or company with whom the RCTC has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant or therapist), or a parent or student serving on an official committee of the RCTC (such as a disciplinary or grievance committee) or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a "legitimate educational interest" if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility.
 - b. The RCTC will disclose education records without consent to officials of another school district or school entity in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.
 - c. Information which is labeled "directory information" by the RCTC is excluded from protection from release and can be released without student consent. The RCTC releases the following "directory information" to the public: the student's name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, grade level, enrollment status (e.g., undergraduate or graduate; full-time or part-time), participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height or members of athletic teams, degrees, honors and awards received and the most educational agency or institution attended by the student, and other similar information that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. Additionally, federal law requires that the RCTC provides to military recruiters, upon request, three directory information categories—names, addresses and telephone listings of all students—unless the student has advised the RCTC they he/she does not want this information disclosed without their respective prior written consent.

If you do not want some or all of this "directory information" released, you may prevent its disclosure by so stating in writing and submitting this request to the Director of Vocational Education or his designee.

4. The right to file complaints with the United States Department of Education concerning the alleged failures of the RCTC to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA complaints is: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-4605.

Students must complete a Release Form prior to RCTC releasing personally identifiable information contained in a student's education records (unless an exception applies). This includes medical, psychiatric or similar records, confidential in nature and only available with student permission to professionals in the respective fields.

Grievance Procedure

Any individual who experiences problems, or has an issue concerning violations of Title IX of the Education Act of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VI-Civil Rights Act of 1964, or the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 may submit them using the appropriate grievance forms and procedures which may be obtained from the Compliance Officer. This procedure applies to students, employees, and job applicants of the RCTC:

- Within fifteen working days after the alleged violation, the grievant shall initiate an informal discussion with the RCTC manager or appropriate department supervisor through the Compliance Office. If the formal discussion does not resolve the issue, the grievant shall submit a written complaint to the RCTC manager or immediate department supervisor. A formal response will be received within fifteen working days.
- If the grievance is not resolved to the grievant's satisfaction using Step 1, the grievant shall submit a formal written complaint within fifteen working days to the ECTS administrator or his/her designee. A formal written response will be returned to the grievant from the ECTS administrator within fifteen working days.

Student Conduct

Student Responsibility

Students are responsible to be familiar with the rules and regulations of the RCTC pertaining to academic affairs and student conduct which are stated in the handbook or in the RCTC catalog. Each student is responsible for conforming to these rules and regulations.

Student Conduct and Discipline Policy

A goal of the Regional Career & Technical Center is to create and maintain an atmosphere conducive to quality technical education for all students. Guidelines for student conduct and discipline have been established to encourage professional behavior, which is also expected in the workplace. These guidelines are for the personal welfare of the students and for the common good of the entire school.

The following conduct may result in disciplinary action; however, the listing of causes for disciplinary action is not intended to be nor shall it be considered restrictive or a waiver of any other act not listed or specifically mentioned herein:

1. Possession, use, sale or distribution of narcotics or other controlled substances.
2. Public intoxication, use, possession, sale or distribution of alcoholic beverages.
3. Gambling on school premises.
4. Smoking in prohibited areas.
5. Possessing or using weapons on RCTC property or at RCTC sponsored events.
"Weapons"- shall include, but not be limited to any of the following or any replica or look-alike of the following: guns; BB guns; firearms; ammunition, such as bullets; knives; metal knuckles; straight razors and razor blades; noxious, irritating or poisonous gases, including mace and pepper spray; poisons; explosive materials; bombs; missiles; chains; metal objects or any other object designed for protection or designed to harm others; or any object intended by the student to do bodily injury or threat of bodily injury to another.
6. Obstruction or disruption of authorized or sponsored school activities.
7. Attempted or actual theft or damage to property of the RCTC.
8. Conduct that endangers the health or safety of any person.
9. Academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating or plagiarism.
10. Furnishing false information or other similar form of dishonesty including knowingly making false oral or written statements.
11. Forgery, alteration, destruction or misuse of RCTC documents.
12. Unauthorized entry into or use of the RCTC facility.
13. Violation of RCTC policies, rules or regulations.
14. Violation of federal, state, or local law on RCTC facility.
15. Failure to comply with the directions of RCTC officials or law enforcement officers acting in the performance of their duties.
16. Disruption or obstruction of classes or school sponsored activities.

17. Discriminating against RCTC staff or students on the basis of race, color, gender (including sexual harassment), religion, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, age or disability or any other legally protected class.

Discipline

Disciplinary action begins in the classroom/training area. The faculty will provide verbal warnings for minor infractions and refer students to the office for further action when necessary. Any infractions that involve a violation of public law such as use of tobacco, stealing, truancy, vandalism, fighting, alcohol/drugs, etc. may be referred to law enforcement officials for prosecution.

Assigning disciplinary actions for unacceptable behavior, especially when others' rights have been violated, will occur. Removal of privileges (in a variety of formats) is a viable option to deal with the student who is a chronic violator of RCTC rules. Major infractions and repeated offenses will result in out-of-school suspension and even expulsion in extreme cases.

Every attempt will be made to counsel students to provide the best learning atmosphere and to avoid disciplinary measures.

Types of Punishment

- A. Verbal or written reprimand will be an appropriate approach for some violations. The reprimand will come from the instructor or, if deemed necessary, from the RCTC Manager.
- B. Suspension, including expulsion, may be warranted for some violations. This punishment can be recommended by the instructor. Suspension will be implemented by the RCTC Manager or their designee.

Academic Honesty

Instructors are responsible for taking reasonable precautions to prevent academic dishonesty, but students share a joint responsibility for maintaining honorable conditions. Academic dishonesty includes cheating and plagiarizing. An instructor may give a failing grade to any student who displays academic deception in a class. The failing grade may be on tests, papers, class assignments, or the entire course. The circumstances surrounding the alleged dishonesty will be discussed with the student before giving the failing grade. Repeated acts of academic dishonesty could constitute grounds for termination from the school.

Dress Code

Students are expected to report to school dressed as though they were going to work in a professional environment.

Visitors and Personal Telephone Calls

All visitors to the RCTC are required to register in the Office. Students are not encouraged to have visitors during class hours or without permission from administration. Public telephones are available for student use in the lobby area. It is asked that personal telephone calls be made only during non-class hours. In the event of a personal emergency, family members may reach students through the RCTC main telephone number.

Tobacco Products

The use or possession of tobacco or tobacco products on any part of school property, including public conveyances providing transportation to a school or school-sponsored activity, is prohibited.

“Tobacco” is defined as “a lighted or unlighted smoking product and smokeless tobacco in any form”. 18 PA. C.S.C.- 6306.1.

Suspension will be assigned to any student who violates this policy on the first offense. Repeated offenses could result in a summary offense through the District Justice’s office or program termination.

Telephones, Cellular Telephones, Pagers and Other Electronic Devices

According to the PA School Code (24PS13-1317.1):

A. The possession by students of telephone paging devices, commonly referred to as "beepers", shall be prohibited on school grounds, at school-sponsored activities and on buses or other vehicles provided by the school district.

B. The prohibition contained in subsection (A) shall not apply in the following cases, provided that the school authorities approve of the presence of the beeper in each case:

1. A student who has a need for a beeper due to the medical condition of an immediate family member.
2. A student who is a member of a volunteer fire company, ambulance or rescue squad.

Students are also prohibited from carrying or being in possession of cellular phones while at the Regional Career & Technical Center.

Instruction

Instructor & Counselor

The faculty acts as the initial contact for counseling services at the RCTC. This instructor/counselor relationship exists to assist the student with additional help in academic matters or any personal matters the student wishes to discuss.

Faculty allows ample time after structured classroom learning hours for additional help, advanced learning, guidance or advice with course work or help with important academic decisions. The administration is also available to students for discussion of academic, financial, or personal issues.

Grading Policy

100 – 93 = A
92 – 85 = B
84 – 77 = C
76 – 70 = D
Below 69 = F

Books and Equipment

The RCTC provides technical books, supplies, and equipment for training purposes. Students who use school equipment are responsible for their care and proper use. Misuse resulting in damage may be chargeable to the student using that equipment. Students are responsible for all books and equipment issued to them as part of their program and should have all necessary items with them for each class.

Materials for Instruction

Supplies necessary for assigned instructional projects will be supplied by the school. Materials for personal projects, even though approved by the instructor, will be paid for by the student. A number of courses require uniforms or items of personal safety that must be purchased or rented by the student. This clothing and equipment must be properly worn during class sessions. Students without proper clothing will not be permitted to participate in shop activities.

Computer, Network and Internet Usage

Erie County Technical School is committed to providing students, faculty, administration and staff resources which allow for the greatest productivity and educational value for all involved. All computers and peripherals are intended for educational and administrative use only. They are intended to facilitate learning and teaching through interpersonal communications, access to information, research and collaboration. The use of the Technical School's technological resources is a privilege, not a right.

No one should attempt to do anything which might disrupt the operation of the network, equipment and/or interfere with the learning of other students. The Technical School may restrict or terminate any user's access, without prior notice, if such action is deemed necessary to maintain computing availability and security for other users of the systems. Additional disciplinary action may also be imposed. This belief is based on the premise that a network is a cyber community and must be administered by the same rules that apply in the normal school environment.

The Technical School reserves the right to log network use and to monitor fileservers space utilization by users, while respecting the rights of the technical school users and outside users.

The use of the computers, network and Internet are privileges, not rights; inappropriate, unauthorized and illegal use will result in the cancellation of those privileges and appropriate disciplinary action.

COMPUTER/NETWORK/INTERNET USAGE GUIDELINES

Internet/computer users are expected to behave responsibly in accessing and viewing information that is pertinent to the educational mission of the RCTC. The use of RCTC technology resources is a privilege, not a right. To acquire and retain that right, you are required to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include, but are not limited to, the following guidelines:

1. Accounts will be assigned to each student/staff member. Accounts/Passwords are not to be shared with others. Distribution or alteration of a password is prohibited.
2. School related files are the only files to be saved on the account.
3. Reading, modifying, or removing files and/or mail owned by others is not allowed.
4. Students are prohibited from giving out personal information, such as their (or others') addresses, telephone numbers, even through e-mail correspondence.
5. Playing unauthorized games or inappropriate textual material or graphic images is prohibited.
6. Only authorized, properly licensed software is to be used on the RCTC's computers.
7. Copying or modifying school software and/or borrowing software from the RCTC are not permitted.
8. Use for product advertisement, political activity, threatening, obscene, or harassing communications are strictly prohibited.
9. Students are prohibited from using peer-to-peer networking applications on the Internet/World Wide Web, such as, but not limited to "fasttrack", "gnupella," "kazaa," and "napster."
10. Students are prohibited from accessing materials that is profane or obscene; material that is pornographic, expressly including child pornography; material that is harmful to minors (i.e., pictures or visual depictions which, taken as a whole, appeal to a prurient interest in nudity, sex or perverted or lewd acts); material that advocates or condones the commission of unlawful acts (illegal);

and/or material that advocates or condones violence or unlawful discrimination towards other people (hate literature). Students should be aware that the RCTC has implemented a Technology Protection Measure that blocks or filters access to the above categories of material or information which the RCTC has deemed inappropriate for viewing by students in the educational setting.

11. Electronic mail (e-mail):
 - a. Students must understand that there is no guarantee of privacy in their e-mail messages and that e-mail messages are subject to review by the RCTC at any time. Routine maintenance and monitoring of the RCTC's system may lead to discovery that the student has violated the law of a school policy/rule. An individual search of a student's e-mail will be conducted if there is a reasonable suspicion that a user has violated the law or school policy/rule.
 - b. E-mail should be used only for legitimate educational purposes or as authorized by the RCTC.
 - c. Students must be courteous and respectful in their e-mail message to others.
12. Plagiarism. Students are reminded that it is plagiarism to "cut and paste" information from the Internet and then pass it off as their own original ideas. Students are prohibited from plagiarizing information and resources from the Internet and are reminded to cite properly sources used from the Internet.
13. Copyright infringement. All communications and information via the network (i.e., the Internet) should be assumed to be private property and protected by copyright. Students may not reproduce copyrighted material without explicit permission of the author/owner. Only public domain software can be downloaded.
14. Disruptive use. Students are prohibited from using the RCTC's network in such away that would disrupt the use of the network by other users. Students may not create or share computer viruses. Students may not destroy another person's data. Students may not break in or attempt to break into other computer systems.
15. Purchase of products or services. Students are prohibited from purchasing products or services through the RCTC network. The Technical School is not responsible for any financial obligations arising from unauthorized use of the RCTC network for the purchase of products or services.

Disclaimers of Liability Regarding Use of Computer/Internet.

- A. When utilizing online resources, there is always the risk of a system failure which could result in loss of data, interruption of service, etc. The RCTC disclaims any responsibility for losses incurred as a result of system failure and students are advised to make a personal back-up of material contained/saved on the RCTC network.
- B. The RCTC can not ensure the reliability or accuracy of information maintained on the RCTC computer system or accessed through the RCTC system. The RCTC disclaims responsibility for losses incurred as a result of reliance on unreliable or inaccurate information,
- C. The RCTC disclaims responsibility for student misuse or unauthorized use of the system and disclaims responsibility for harm caused to the students themselves, to other persons or to organizations through misuse or unauthorized use of the RCTC's computer system as set forth in this policy.

- D. Due to the nature of the vast amount of information and material available on the Internet, it is impossible for the RCTC to restrict completely access to all controversial materials. As such, the RCTC is not responsible for materials acquired or viewed by students on the RCTC's network and/or the Internet. Vandalism at RCTC will result in cancellation of all computer privileges.

Vandalism is any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, the Internet, internal networking operations. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses.

Problems with computers, network, Internet, or peripherals are to be reported immediately. Each user has the responsibility to report all violations of privacy.

Consequences of Violating Computer Usage Guidelines

1. Students will be notified of each alleged violation of these Guidelines and will be given an opportunity to respond to the allegation.
2. Depending on the severity of the violation of the Guidelines, students face disciplinary consequences ranging from warning to loss of privilege of use of the Internet/computer network to suspension and/or expulsion from the RCTC. Repeated less severe violations of the Guidelines will be treated as more serious violations of the Guidelines. All discipline resulting from a violation of these Guidelines will be handled pursuant to the requirements and procedures set forth in the RCTC discipline policies.
3. Suspicion of a student's illegal use of the RCTC's network and/or Internet access, such as copyright violations, theft of services, using the system to publish defamatory statements, may be reported to the appropriate legal authorities for possible prosecution.
4. Students are responsible for damages to the equipment, systems and software resulting from deliberate or willful acts.

Satisfactory Program Completion

Students who have satisfactorily completed training at the RCTC will be awarded a Certificate of Completion. This certificate will indicate the number of total program hours the student has completed. Certificates will not be awarded to students who have not successfully completed their programs. In addition, no certificate will be awarded to a student whose overall attendance drops below 90% at any point in the program.

There are situations in which students are unable to succeed in an RCTC training program, even though they have devoted their best efforts to this goal. Most cases of unsatisfactory progress can be traced to excessive absenteeism or tardiness, or lack of a strong commitment to the training program. Most students will succeed if they set goals for themselves, give their best effort, and commit themselves to the work required.

Campus Services

Food and Beverages

Food and beverages are not permitted in any lab or classroom at any time. Food should be eaten only in the cafeteria.

Driving and Parking

Students are permitted to park in the designated student parking areas. There are designated and reserved spaces for the handicapped and visitors which are clearly marked. Any cars parked in those spaces without specific authorization will be towed immediately at the owner's expense. The parking lot is fully illuminated as a safety measure for evening classes.

Students may drive to school only with written permission from the school administration. Requests for driving passes are available at the main office. The form must be completed and on file prior to a student driving to the school. The following rules apply to driving to school:

1. Students are to register their car(s) or any vehicle they intend to drive to the technical school in the office. This registration is to be updated if there is a change in vehicle status.
2. Students are to park in assigned areas only; this will be explained on the first day of school.
3. Students are not permitted in parked vehicles during the school day. Upon arrival, students must immediately enter the building. There shall be no loitering in vehicles or in the parking lot.
4. Students are to follow the exit procedures as outlined on the first day of school.
5. Traffic control marshals have absolute control over parking and driving. Students are to obey all suggestions, recommendations and comments made by the marshals.
6. Any accidents in the parking lot must be reported to the office; any incidence of vandalism shall be reported to the office. Incidences of vandalism should also be reported directly to the State Police.
7. There is a 15 MPH speed limit on school property.

Equipment and Facility

Each student is expected to assume responsibility for the care of all school property. Students who damage property may be held responsible for restitution. Damage resulting from malice will be considered a criminal matter and will mandate police involvement. This action may also be grounds for termination from the school.

Student Lockers

Students are assigned a locker for use during their time at the RCTC. The RCTC cannot be responsible for losses resulting from fire, theft, or vandalism of any student's personal

property, including books and supplies. Student use of lockers is a privilege, not a right, and students are hereby notified that the RCTC reserves the right to search student lockers at any time for any reason. Students should have no expectation of privacy in their lockers.

Student Services

Disability Services

Special services are available to accommodate individuals with disabilities and may be arranged by contacting the RCTC office. These services include, but are not limited to, special parking, elevator use, attendant services, and assistance in writing or testing. Learning disabilities must be specifically identified and verified.

A request for special services must indicate the specific disability and how long he/she has had the disability, and must include a personal physician's statement that clearly describes the disability, a prognosis, and the estimated duration, if temporary. A physician's statement may not be required when the disability is obvious.

The RCTC Manager is responsible for approving/disapproving a request for disability services. The specific verification and the burden of proof of the need for service lies with the student.

Placement Assistance

The RCTC will exert every effort to help students secure employment after successful completion of the programs. Special workshops will be conducted to help students prepare for a job search including resume writing, interviewing skills and employment application completion. Instructors help students prepare for any such interviews and students are released from class if the appointment is during normal class hours.

FERPA protects all students' rights to confidentiality of personally identifiable information contained in education records. Consequently, each student is asked to sign a release, giving the RCTC permission to release information to prospective employers regarding academic achievement, course grades, and attendance.

Funding Sources and Financial Aid

Students who are attending the RCTC are eligible to apply for Federal Financial Aid. If a student is interested in applying for the Pell Grant or the Federal Stafford Loan, there are documents that will be of value as a student complete the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**. The FAFSA is the form that is used to determine a student's financial aid eligibility. Included in each application is a set of detailed instructions that will guide a student through the completion of the form. Once students have completed the FAFSA, it is always best to make a copy for one's records. This will help students in the event that corrections need to be made. The following documents will make the application process a simple one:

- Federal income tax return (i.e. IRS Form 1040, 1040A, or 1040EZ)
- W-2 Forms and other records of money earned
- Records of untaxed income, such as welfare, social security, AFDC or ADC, or veteran benefits
- Current bank statements
- Current mortgage information
- Business and farm records
- Records of stocks, bonds, and other investments
- Student's driver's license and social security card

Please keep in mind that not all students will have all of the above mentioned forms. However, students must complete all questions that apply to their situation, and must be able to produce any accompanying documents upon demand.

The result of the FAFSA is referred to as the Student Aid Report (SAR). The SAR will be mailed directly to the student. It is the responsibility of the student to make sure that the information on the SAR is correct. After the student reviews the SAR, please bring it to our office. At this time, we will help students with any questions or concerns. If they are eligible to receive a Pell Grant, they will have a statement in their SAR to that effect. If they are not eligible and do not understand why, the school can review their application to make sure that no errors were made in the processing of their application.

If a student is not eligible to receive the Pell Grant, they may still be eligible to participate in the Federal Stafford Loan program. Their eligibility for the loan program, in part, is determined by the results of the SAR. Remember, simply applying for financial aid does not mean a student will receive financial aid.

Special Services

Special services are available to students through various community agencies. They are: Veterans Outreach & Assistance Center, Erie Team PA CareerLink and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Health & Safety

General Safety Information

Safety is a concern of everyone at the RCTC. We ask our students to help us maintain a safe, comfortable environment by not only following all established safety rules and policies, but also by making instructors and the administration aware of ways to improve the safety in our facility.

The following are general safety rules effective for all shops and classrooms:

1. Obey all signs and signals in the classrooms and shops.

2. Do not smoke anywhere inside the facility.
3. Horseplay or practical jokes of any kind are prohibited in shops and classrooms.
4. Report injuries, no matter how slight, to instructors immediately. ALL INJURIES MUST BE REPORTED.
5. When lifting, lift slowly and use leg muscles, not your back.
6. Report broken or defective equipment to instructors immediately.
7. Follow all shop and classroom rules.

First Aid and Student Illness

Any need for first aid assistance or any occurrence of illness should be reported to the instructor or office staff immediately. STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO FOLLOW SAFETY RULES AT ALL TIMES.

Emergency Notification Form

Emergency forms with vital information must be on file in the office before a student can perform any work in the lab. It is important that these be updated if there is an address or telephone change so that a family member may be reached in an emergency. All students are urged to carry an accident insurance policy. A group Student Accident Insurance Policy is available upon request. Applications are available in the office. All accidents or injuries must be reported to the instructor immediately.

Safety Glasses

Safety glasses will be required in many activities performed at the Technical School. Students will be provided with one pair of safety glasses which he/she will be responsible for throughout their attendance at the technical school. Instructors may collect these glasses for inventory and control over vacation periods. If the glasses are badly scratched, lost, broken, or stolen while in the possession of the student, they must be replaced by the student and can be purchased from the high school office at a nominal fee. **Students who wear corrective lenses must have safety lenses and side shields.** The lab instructor has full authority to direct students to wear safety glasses at any time.

Fire and Emergency Evacuation Plan

All students should strictly adhere to the building evacuation plan should a fire or emergency situation occur. The instructor will review this procedure at the start of class.

Weapons Policy

The RCTC, in accordance with the statutes enacted by the State of Pennsylvania, prohibits the possession of any weapon or replica or look-alike of a weapon on RCTC property or at RCTC-sponsored functions.

"Weapons" shall include, but not be limited to any of the following or any replica or look-alike of the following: guns; BB guns; firearms; ammunition, such as bullets; knives; metal knuckles; straight razors and razor blades; noxious, irritating or poisonous gases, including mace and pepper spray; poisons; explosive materials; bombs; missiles; chains; metal objects or any other object designed for protection or designed to harm others; or any object intended by the student to do bodily injury or threat of-bodily injury to another.

When a student is found to be in violation of this policy, the RCTC will exercise all its legal options as well as enforce appropriate discipline, which may include suspension or expulsion.

Any student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school and/or on school property will be terminated.

Alcohol and Drugs

The use of alcoholic beverages or controlled substances, both on and off the school premises during class hours is strictly prohibited. The policy of the RCTC is that no student will be admitted to class if he/she appears to have been drinking or to be under the influence of a controlled substance. Students may be terminated from school for violation of this policy. All instructors have been instructed to refuse admittance to that student and the student will be scheduled for a meeting with administration.

If a student must take prescribed drugs during school hours, the student must provide a written note to the RCTC from their physician. This note will then become part of the student's confidential record.

Financial Information

Financial Matters

Students who have questions regarding financial matters or tuition payment should contact the Business Office or administration. Special arrangements for fee or tuition payments must be discussed and approved by the administration. The RCTC reserves the right to adjust tuition or fee rates but no tuition increase will occur within the current term of a student's program attendance.

Funding Options

Over the years, the RCTC has worked with a variety of local, state, and federal agencies in order to provide low-cost training to individuals. Each organization has their own list of eligibility requirements and deadlines. If a student believes they may qualify for tuition assistance, or if they wish to discuss their situation in person, contact the RCTC staff for more information.

Payment Policy

Tuition is due upon enrollment in a course.

Refund Policy

Tuition due will be prorated on a daily basis if a drop occurs before 50% of the calendar time of the program is completed. No refunds will be made once the program has passed the 50% mark of scheduled class time.

When a refund is due a student, they will be processed without student request. Refunds will be processed in a timely manner. Students due a refund can expect it within 30 days of their last date of attendance (when proper notification of withdrawal is given) or 30 days from the date the RCTC terminates or determines withdrawal of a student.

All fees received from a student prior to the enrollment period will be refunded in full should the student decide not to begin classes. Refunds will be prorated on a per diem basis after the first day of class.

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