INTRODUCTION

This Detention Learning Packet consists of several pages of text and a Response form. The text explains what’s wrong with what you did, tells two stories about students who broke the same school rule, explains the consequences of what you did and suggests ways of setting goals and changing your behavior.

The Response form asks ten questions about why it’s wrong to break a school rule, what the people in the stories did that got them into trouble and how you can avoid getting into trouble in the future.

HOW TO DO THE ASSIGNMENT

As you read the text and answer the questions, think about what you did and why you did it. When you finish reading the text, write answers to the ten questions on the Response form. Your detention is not over until you finish this assignment.

WHAT’S WRONG WITH WHAT YOU DID

You were given a detention because you were involved in damaging or interfering with a computer or a computer network. “Computer sabotage” is defined as any intentional act that hinders the normal operation of a computer or the software installed on a computer. The interference you caused may have interrupted any number of teacher or student activities. It also may have cost the school both time and money to make necessary repairs. If data was destroyed your act may have caused irreparable harm.

CAUSES OF COMPUTER SABOTAGE:
TWO ILLUSTRATIVE STORIES

You will read two stories about students who have been given a detention for computer sabotage. See if you recognize yourself in them.
WILLIE SENDS ALONG A WORM

Willie has been comfortable with computers since he was seven years old. He had his own computer when he was ten and soon thereafter was networked to all the computers in his house with the added benefit of access to a high-speed connection to the Internet. His parents stressed to him the importance of careful “web surfing” and monitored his activity. He followed all of the rules and was a conscientious and responsible computer user.

When computer hackers started sending spam e-mail with viruses and worms attached, Willie was aware of the danger and carefully moved each unwanted e-mail to the “trash bin.” No one was going to damage his computer!

Willie was a good student but did not respect some of his teachers. He especially disliked those teachers without computer knowledge or expertise. Mr. James, his history teacher, was number one on that list. Every time Willie used an Internet reference for a source on a term paper Mr. James would circle it in red and note “not a valid source!”

“What does he know?” thought Willie.

One day Mr. James presented the class with an interesting new assignment: students could write their essays and e-mail them to him for extra-credit. This was most unlike Mr. James and Willie wondered if his history teacher was being forced to incorporate some computer-related exercises by the principal. Willie also thought this was a perfect opportunity to try an experiment of his own.

Willie went to Yahoo.com and created a new e-mail account for himself using a fictitious name. He then found an essay online that he could easily copy and paste into a Microsoft Word document. He smiled to himself as he opened the e-mail “trash folder” on his computer and found one with an attachment with an “exe.” suffix. He carefully dragged the attachment from the e-mail and attached it to the “essay” he was sending to Mr. James from his new Yahoo.com e-mail account.
He knew the “exe.” suffix was probably a virus or a worm. He also figured that Mr. James would open the e-mail and click on the attachment if Willie used the phrase “History Essay Assignment” in the line for e-mail subject. He added “click here to view the name and class period of the student submitting this essay.” Perfect.

When Willie arrived at school the next day he noticed a maintenance man on a ladder doing something with the clock by the front office. He saw both the principal and the dean were standing nearby having a serious discussion. Willie looked at his watch and chuckled when he realized the school clocks were wrong. A couple minutes later the secretary joined them and he heard something about “the computers....”

Yes, Mr. James opened the e-mail attachment. And yes, it contained a worm. What Willie did not realize was that the worm, upon being opened, deleted all of the files on the computer in the history room and then jumped to every other computer on the network and then to the computer server in the front office. The bell schedule, the bus lists, the class lists, the grades, the athletic schedule, the purchasing list for the cafeteria and the medication list for the nurse all were deleted.

Willie overheard the dean say to the principal “my brother is in computer forensics, I’ll get him over here right away. He’ll backtrack this to its source and we’ll get the person who did it.” The principal nodded saying “whoever did this is going to pay.”

PAM AND THE PAPERCLIP

Pam had almost a perfect grade point average going in to her senior year: only one “B” in her entire career. But this semester she was in trouble, and from an unlikely source: her gym teacher. This was a surprise from someone who had been on both the track and the volleyball teams for three years. Try to tell that to Ms. Pazden — it looked like Pam was going to get a “C” this term.

“No way,” she said. “I’ll die first. This will kill my chance to get a scholarship.”

Pam was one of the brightest math and science students in her school. One of her strengths was computers: she knew them inside and out - especially, inside. Pam knew that Ms. Pazden kept all grades in a “GradeBook” application on her PC in the coach’s office. She also knew that after volleyball practice she could often just walk right in to that office
and no one would even see her. Perhaps a couple of grades could be “modified.”

Pam got her chance, sat at her PE teacher’s computer and turned it on. The machine booted up to a login screen. Pam tried a half-dozen login guesses but none would work. She knew this trial-and-error technique would take forever. She shut down the machine and popped the side off to reveal the drives and motherboard. Finding a paper clip on the desk, she saw the CMOS chip was rectangular and marked with “F82C206.” She squinted and saw the label “OPTi.” She smiled. “Perfect.” She bent the paper clip and touched one end to pin number 3 and the other to pin number 26. This would effectively short the chip during boot and bypass the login requirement.

Holding the paper clip in place, she started up the computer and saw the desktop was open and available. Suddenly she smelled something burning and the screen went blank. She quickly pulled her hand out from inside the computer and saw that one end of the paper clip was charred. “Darn....”

Pam threw the paper clip in the trash, placed the side cover back on the computer and quickly left the office.

On her way out she did not even notice the file folder on Ms. Pazden’s desk. It was labeled “Grade Printout.”

CONSEQUENCES OF COMPUTER SABOTAGE

Damaging computers or computer software is often like pushing the first in a long line of dominoes: many things can happen. Often the student believes he or she has a good reason for doing the sabotage. Willie thought he would simply teach Mr. James a little lesson about computers. Pam thought Ms. Pazden was being unjust by assigning a low grade. Neither one of them anticipated their actions might go beyond their intentions.

A few days later Willie read in the newspaper that estimated damages to the school’s computer system was over $14,000. He read a comment from the school superintendent that said, “we’re well on the way to discovering who did this and taxpayers can rest assured that individual will pay.”
When Pam went to her gym class the next day she saw two computer repair people working on Ms. Pazden’s computer. She overheard two girls talking about how they heard the technicians were charging the school over $60 per hour. Each.

Many instances of computer sabotage result in expensive repairs. As the expenses mount, so do the charges. The newspapers are filled with stories about felonies being leveled against students who thought they were doing a harmless prank but ended up bringing down the school’s computer network.

Monetary damages can be painful in the short term. Felony charges can ruin a life.

PREVENTION OF COMPUTER SABOTAGE

If you have some computer skills there are plenty of positive activities you can become involved in to put your skills to use. Even though the image of the “computer hacker” may be appealing to some students, the potential damage that such a reputation can cause should make one consider alternatives.

Here are some places where putting your skills to use will not only be safe but will also be helpful to you in the long run.

1. An elementary school may have an after school program for students who have no one home after school. The teacher running the program is often looking for interesting activities for the young students. You can help by volunteering to set up a “computer corner” and teaching some educational games.

2. A “senior center” may have an afternoon or evening session where senior citizens are looking for more than just bingo and cards as activities. You can help set up a computer station and teach computer basics (e-mail and web-surfing) to some very eager “students.”

3. There are plenty of computer clubs and “user groups” where members have opportunities to not only demonstrate their skills and knowledge, but even gain a better understanding on some aspects of computer hardware or software.

4. Many small businesses cannot afford to hire Information Technology staff
members, but they certainly need the help. New applications require installation and training. Volunteer at the local gas station, bakery, video store or restaurant and you may discover they “pay” for such help in terms of an exchange of goods and services. (Can you use a tank of free gas?)

Any of the activities above will probably result in some positive experiences as well as help when you work on your college application or job resume. Think about the difference between “volunteered to set up a computer corner at the senior center” and “convicted of a felony for damaging the school’s computers.”

On the next pages, you will find some questions about computer sabotage. These questions will help you to understand the reasons for your actions and will help you set goals for changing your behavior.
Student Response Packet #1.1

Computer Sabotage

Name ________________________________
Date ______ _________________________
Grade _____ Homeroom _______________

WHAT TO DO

Answering the questions in this Response Packet will help you understand why what you did was wrong and how you can avoid such behavior in the future. Although your answers are not graded, your teacher, a counselor, the principal, or your parents may read what you have written.

As you write your answers, think before you write and be honest with yourself about what you did and why you did it. Honesty in writing your answers reflects your willingness to improve your behavior and attitude.

Write your answers in the spaces below the questions. If there is not enough room, write on the backs of these sheets. Be neat, spell correctly, use good grammar, and write in complete sentences. If we can’t read what you write, you will have to do the packet over again.

1. You are in detention because you damaged school computer hardware and/or software. Describe exactly what you did.

2. Why did you do this damage?

3. Was the damage you did greater than what you expected? Explain.
4. How would you feel if someone sabotaged work on a computer you owned? Explain why you would feel this way.

5. You read in the Learning Packet that computer sabotage is often like pushing the first in a long line of dominoes. Explain why this is so.

6. What did Willie do to cause a problem at his school?

7. What was Willie’s justification for doing what he did? Do you think he had a good reason?
8. The school superintendent mentioned that he intended to charge the person doing the damage for expenses incurred. Do you think the taxpayers were pleased to read this? Explain.

9. Pam was upset with her grade in gym class. What other action could she have taken that would not have such serious consequences for her?

10. You read about four activities where those who are skilled with computers might put those skills to better use. Add at least one more idea to this list. Do you think you might be able to accomplish any of these activities? Explain.
WHAT TO DO

Answering the questions in this Response Packet will help you understand why what you did was wrong and how you can avoid such behavior in the future. Although your answers are not graded, your teacher, a counselor, the principal, or your parents may read what you have written.

As you write your answers, think before you write and be honest with yourself about what you did and why you did it. Honesty in writing your answers reflects your willingness to improve your behavior and attitude.

Write your answers in the spaces below the questions. If there is not enough room, write on the backs of these sheets. Be neat, spell correctly, use good grammar, and write in complete sentences. If we can’t read what you write, you will have to do the packet over again.

1. You have received another detention for doing damage to a computer and/or some computer software. Describe what you did this time.

2. What was your reason and justification for doing what you did?
3. What was your reason for computer sabotage the last time you had this problem? Was it the same or different from this time?

4. What is the difference between a “computer hacker” and a “vandal?” What type of reputation do you think both types of individuals have with teachers? With employers?

5. What type of problems do you think someone known as a “computer hacker” or a “computer vandal” might have getting employment? Why?

6. What did Pam do to Ms. Pazden’s computer? Why?
7. Do you think Pam or Willie had any idea their actions would cause larger problems than they intended? Should they be punished less because they really didn’t mean to do so much damage? Explain.

8. What actions could Pam have taken with regard to her gym grade that would have not only helped her, but also would have kept her out of trouble?

9. In the Learning Packet you read “Often the student believes he or she has a good reason for doing the sabotage.” Explain this statement.

10. In the space below write a detailed plan on how you will start using your computer skills to help others and, in the process, help yourself. Describe how such a plan might help your career.