OneDrive Sync with Local Computer Hard Drive

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New content is italicized.

INTRODUCTION

Beginning January 1, 2019, Richland One disabled a feature of OneDrive that automatically creates copies of files saved to OneDrive. The decision to disable the "syncing" feature in OneDrive was made after discussions in Executive Team regarding the security of confidential and personally identifiable information that is stored on Richland One laptops used by employees and students.

BACKGROUND

All teachers, students, administrators, and other employees of Richland One have access to Microsoft OneDrive, which provides cloud-based storage for folders and files created by each user. OneDrive is a feature of Office 365, which is licensed for all employees and students in the District. OneDrive allows all employees and students to put their work in OneDrive folders and to access those files and folders from anywhere they can login to the Internet. OneDrive also allows files and folders to be shared with other employees and students in the District.

Note that "cloud-based storage" refers to storage on servers on the Internet.

OneDrive is an important tool for teachers, students, and administrators. It allows the sharing of work and resources without the need to create printed copies to share with others, among other things.

One of the features of OneDrive is automatic "sync" between files and folders put into OneDrive and files and folders on the hard drive of your regular computer and laptop:

- If you save a file to a OneDrive folder in the cloud, OneDrive automatically creates (or "syncs") a copy of that file to a folder on your local hard drive.

- If you save a file to a OneDrive folder on your local computer, OneDrive automatically syncs a copy of that file to the OneDrive folder in the cloud.

- If you change a file in either folder, the changes will be synced to the other folder.

This feature of OneDrive can create a problem for employees and students who work with confidential information or personally identifiable information.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Files containing confidential and personally identifiable information that are stored on OneDrive are automatically synced to the folder on the local computer or laptop – desktops are not such a problem because those do not leave schools or administrative offices. Because this "syncing" is done automatically, some users may not know that the information is being copied to their laptops.

If that laptop is then lost or stolen, the confidential or personally identifiable information in the local OneDrive folder may fall into the hands of other people who are not entitled to have or see that information.

Please note that this problem is the same for other cloud-based storage applications like Google Drive, Dropbox, iCloud, and more; this is not unique to OneDrive's cloud-based storage.

ACTION TAKEN TO PROTECT DATA, EMPLOYEES, AND STUDENTS
As stated in the Introduction, Richland One has disabled the syncing process between the cloud-based OneDrive folders and the OneDrive folders that can be found on the local hard drives of teachers, students, administrators, and other District employees. Please note the following:

- Note that no files or folders have been deleted from the cloud-based OneDrive or from the local hard drive.

- Beginning January 1, 2019, files saved on the cloud-based OneDrive will NOT be synced automatically to the local hard drive – and vice versa. If you want a file to be on both drives, you can copy and paste the file from one to the other – this is an "intentional" process.

- Disabling the sync process does NOT change the way you access your OneDrive resources in the cloud, whether on campus or away from campus.

- At some time after the end of January 2019, the District will require that all files and folders in the local OneDrive folder are deleted. You should do that as soon as you can – and as soon as you are sure you have copies of all those files in your cloud-based OneDrive folder.

- If you login to the District's network (on campus), your computer will "map" a local drive (Drive-O) that is a direct path from your computer to your cloud-based OneDrive. Drive-O is NOT a copy of your OneDrive; it IS your OneDrive. Files and folders saved to Drive-O are saved directly to your OneDrive.

- If you login to your laptop away from campus, your computer will NOT "map" to Drive-O; you will have to access your OneDrive directly through the Internet. This ensures that you are not carrying around confidential or personally identifiable information that might be lost or stolen.

- *When you login to your laptop, you may see a folder titled "OneDrive – Richland County School District One" (its icon is a pair of blue clouds). That is the folder that is automatically created for syncing. That is the folder that is NOT being synced now.*

- *You should use Drive-O for saving files to OneDrive or use your web-based OneDrive; those are one-and-the-same drive.*

Turning off the syncing process has significant benefits:

- It prevents the copying of files from your OneDrive folder to your laptop without your knowledge.

- It protects confidential and personally identifiable information from being lost or stolen if your laptop is lost or stolen.

- It protects you from any liability that might be associated with losing confidential or personally identifiable information.

CONCLUSION
The District has disabled the automatic syncing between everyone's cloud-based OneDrive and their desktops and laptops. The District has provided Drive-O as a means of accessing OneDrive when you are logged into the District's network and online access to OneDrive when you are not logged into the District's network.

The use of OneDrive allows employees and students to access their files from anywhere they happen to be working.

Please note that employees and students who do not have access to the Internet at home may copy files to their laptops – and, because, they must physically copy the files, they are aware they need to protect their laptops more while away from campus.

Additional information and links about using OneDrive can be found on the District's website at this link: https://www.richlandone.org/Page/3844.