

INTERNET POLICY

TO AID YOU IN THE CLASSROOM PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING:

1. Students should only use their own user area and should NEVER be allowed to use a staff log on. If you find a student using someone else's area please report immediately.
2. It is your responsibility in lessons to report any misuse of the Internet and also to report any inappropriate sites to the technicians so they can be blocked.
3. Students should not be allowed on 'chat rooms'.
4. When using the Internet do not give too long for students to search as they tend to 'wander'.
5. Keep an eye on the task bar at the bottom of the screen – students tend to minimize sites etc. when they know you are looking but you can still see the address on the task bar.

THE BENEFITS OF INTERNET ACCESS FOR EDUCATION

Most curricula at European level require students to demonstrate that they can effectively locate, retrieve and exchange information using ICT. Access to the Internet offers both students and teachers vast, diverse and unique resources. The Internet opens up opportunities to initiate cultural exchanges between students from all over the world, while at the same time providing access to educational, social and leisure resources.

The main reason that we provide Internet access to our teachers and students is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. However, for both students and teachers, Internet access at school is a privilege and not an entitlement.

Unfortunately as there is the possibility that students will encounter inappropriate material on the Internet; the school will actively take all reasonable precautions to restrict student access to both undesirable and illegal material.

Teachers are responsible for guiding students in their on-line activities, by providing clear objectives for Internet use. Teaching staff will also ensure that students are only too aware of what is regarded as acceptable and responsible use of the Internet. The main goal is to utilize Internet access to enrich and extend those learning activities that reflect the curriculum requirements and the age and maturity of the students.

All Internet access is filtered through a proxy server to screen out undesirable sites at source.

WHOLE SCHOOL NETWORK SECURITY STRATEGIES

- The school's computer network security systems are reviewed regularly.
- The school has the right to check user files, temporary internet files and history files at any time.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved application software is denied.
- All access to the school network requires entry of a recognized User ID and password. Students must log out after every network session.
- Virus protections software is installed and updated daily.
- Unapproved system utilities software and executable files are not allowed to be stored in student areas.

Hardware and software infrastructures

- The school has invested in the following hardware and software infrastructures to reduce risks associated with the Internet.
- Proxy server – in conjunction with a web management system
- Filtering software -that has been configured to prevent access to inappropriate websites
- Firewall – to prevent unauthorized external access to our network
- Virus Protection -prevents the use of malicious programmers from corrupting, deleting and misuse of files/programmers

RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF INTERNET CONTENT

The school has taken and will continue to take all reasonable precautions to ensure that students access appropriate material only. However, it is not possible to guarantee that a student will never come across unsuitable material while using a school networked computer. The school, however, cannot accept liability if such material is accessed nor for any consequences resulting from Internet access.

All students are taught effective online research techniques, including the use of subject catalogues and search engines. Receiving information over the web or in e-mail or text messages presupposes good information-handling skills.

Students will be made fully aware of the risks to which they may be exposed while on the Internet. They will be shown how to recognize and avoid the negative areas of the Internet such as pornography, violence, racism and exploitation of children.

However, if they encounter such material they will know that they should switch off the monitor, not the computer, and report the incident to the nearest teacher or the school's ICT coordinator who will deal with it accordingly.

REGULATION AND GUIDELINES

The school's Internet access incorporates a software filtering system to block certain chat rooms, newsgroup and inappropriate website. The filtering system used on the school network aims to achieve the following.

- Access to inappropriate sites is blocked
- The content of web pages or web searches is dynamically filtered for unsuitable words
- A rating system is used to rate web pages for inappropriate content and that the web browsers are set to reject these pages.
- Records of banned Internet sites visited by students and teachers are logged.

E-mail accounts

- Students may only use their approved e-mail account/s on the school network during school time.
- Students shall immediately report any offensive e-mails that they receive to the ICT Co-coordinator.
- Access in school to external, Web-based, personal e-mail accounts is denied for network security reasons.
- It is forbidden to distribute chain letters or to forward a message without the prior permission of the sender.
- Students may not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or arrange to meet someone outside school via the school network.
- Sending and receiving e-mail attachments is subject to permission from the teacher.

The School's website

- The Web Developer manages all aspects of placing web pages on the school's website. They have full editorial responsibility and ensure that the content on the site is accurate and appropriate.
- The website will comply with the Education Authority's guidelines.
- The copyright of all material produced by the school for display on the school's web pages belongs to the school. Permission to reproduce any other material will be sought and obtained from the copyright owner.
- The contact details for the school will include only the school's postal address, e-mail address and telephone number. No information about teachers' home addresses or the like will be published.
- The school will not publish any material produced by students without the agreed permission of their parents. In addition, photographs of students will not be published without a parent or carer's written permission. A student's full name will not be used in association with photographs.
- Website photographs that include students will be carefully selected and will be of a type that doesn't allow individual students to be identified – group photographs or 'over the shoulder' images are preferred.

COMMUNICATING THE SCHOOL'S AUP (Acceptable Use Policy)

Informing students

'Code of Practice' posters will be displayed near all networked computer systems. Students will be informed that their Internet use is monitored and be given instructions on safe and responsible use of the Internet. Students must sign the relevant part of the AUP before being allowed network access.

Informing staff

All staff will be provided with a copy of the School's Acceptable Use Policy. Teachers are aware that Internet traffic can be monitored and traced to an individual user. Staff will be consulted regularly about the development of the school's Acceptable Use Policy and instructions on safe and responsible Internet. Teachers will also sign the relevant part of the 'Acceptable Use Policy' document.

To avoid misunderstandings teachers will contact the ICT Co-coordinator regarding any doubts that arise concerning the legitimacy of any given instance of Internet use. Teachers will be provided with information on 'copyright and the Internet' issues that apply to schools.

Informing parents/carers

Parents' attention will be drawn to the School AUP by letter, in the school newsletter and the school brochure and on the school's website. Advice that accords with acceptable and responsible Internet use by students at home will be made available to parents. Safety issues will be handled sensitively.

The school will obtain parental consent before publication of students' work or photographs.