Scoil Mhuire

Internet Use

Policy

This Internet Use Policy has been drawn up to ensure that the internet will be used to enrich learning in a safe and effective manner. Internet usage is seen as a school resource and privilege. This policy outlines the standards of internet usage for pupils and teachers and also addresses the responsibilities of the teacher and other staff members to prevent the misuse of the system.

Scoil Mhuire's computer system is connected to the School's Broadband system which consists of a high quality network for schools that includes controlled internet access and a high level of security.

The internet is freely available to any person wishing to send e-mail or publish a web site. In common with other media such as magazines, books and video, some material available on the internet is unsuitable for pupils. Pupils in school are unlikely to see inappropriate content in books due to selection by publisher and teacher. The school will take every practical measure to ensure that children do not encounter upsetting, offensive or otherwise inappropriate material on the internet. The following key measures have been adopted to help ensure that our pupils are not exposed to unsuitable materials;

- Children using the internet will be working in the classroom, during lesson time and will be supervised by the class teacher at all times.
- Staff will check that the sites pre-selected for pupils use are appropriate to the age and maturity of pupils.
- Staff will be particularly vigilant when pupils are undertaking their own search and will check that the children are following the agreed search plan.
- Pupils will be taught to use e-mail and the internet responsibly in order to reduce the risk to themselves and others.
- Our Rules for Responsible Internet Use will be posted near computer systems.
- The IT co-ordinator will monitor the effectiveness of the internet access strategies.
- The IT co-ordinator will ensure that occasional checks are made on files to monitor compliance with the school's Internet Access Policy.
- Methods to quantify and minimise the risk of pupils being exposed to inappropriate material will be reviewed in consultation with colleagues.
- Pupils and teachers will be provided with training in the area of internet safety.
- Filtering software and anti-virus software will be used and updated regularly to minimise exposure to inappropriate material.
- The use of personal memory sticks and CD-ROMs must be approved by the teacher.
- Pupils will use equipment respectfully.
- Pupils will only use the internet for educational purposes and must always seek the permission of a teacher prior to use.
- Pupils will not visit internet sites unless approved by the teacher.
- Computer users will respect the property of others and obey copyright laws.

- Computer users will respect the privacy of others and will not disclose personal information in relation to themselves or other people.
- Pupils will not access internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Pupils will not send and receive information that contains obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Pupils will only e-mail people or send or receive e-mail attachment approved by the teacher or other staff members.
- Usernames will be used to protect identity and face to face meeting with someone organised via internet will be strictly forbidden.
- Pupils will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the internet and this will be co-ordinated by the teacher or another member of staff.
- Digital photographs, audio or video clips will focus on group activities. Individual photographs, audio and video clips will not appear on the school website or Twitter account.
- Pupils' work will appear in an educational context on the school website/twitter account.
- Support Structures and related legislation relating to the safe use of the internet will be available at the school.
- Misuse of the internet will result in disciplinary action in line with the school's agreed behaviour policy. The school authorities reserve the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

It is our experience to date that the above measures have been highly effective. However, due to the international scale and linked nature of information available via the internet it is not possible to guarantee that particular types of material will never appear on a computer screen. *The school will not accept liability for the material accessed, or any consequences thereof.*

A most important element of the Rules for Responsible Internet Use is that pupils will be taught to tell a teacher immediately if they encounter any materials that make them feel uncomfortable. With this in mind teachers will go through the Webwise "Internet Safety Awareness" Programme with their class prior to using the Internet. This will educate the children to the dangers of the internet and make them aware of cyber bullying and the harm it can cause and what actions to take in such event.

If there is an incident in which a pupil is exposed to offensive or upsetting material the school will respond to the situation quickly and on a number of levels. Responsibility for handling incidents involving children will be taken by the IT co-ordinator in consultation with the Principal teacher and the pupils' class teacher. All the teaching staff will be made aware of the incident if appropriate.

If one or more pupils discover inappropriate material our first priority will be to give them appropriate support. His/Their parents/guardians will be informed and

given an explanation of the course of action taken by the school. The school aims to work with parents/guardians and pupils to resolve any issue.

If staff or pupils discover any unsuitable sites the IT co-ordinator will be informed. The IT co-ordinator will report the URL and content to the Internet service provider if it is thought that the material is illegal. After consultation with the ISP, the site will be referred to the Internet Watch Foundation and the gardaí.

Pupils are expected to play their part in reducing the risk of viewing inappropriate material by obeying the Rules of Responsible Internet Use which have been designed to help protect them from exposure to internet sites carrying offensive material. If pupils abuse the privileges of access to the internet and e-mail facilities by failing to follow the rules they have been taught or failing to follow the agreed search plan when undertaking their own internet search, then sanctions consistent with our School Behaviour Policy will be applied.

- **This may involve informing parents/guardians.**
- **Teachers may also consider whether access to the internet may be denied for a period.**

Internet to enhance learning

Pupil will learn how to use a web browser. Older pupils will be taught to use suitable web search engines. Staff and pupils will use the internet to find and evaluate information. Access to the internet will become a planned part of the curriculum that will enrich and extend learning activities and will be integrated into the class schemes of work. As in other areas of their work, we recognise that pupils learn most effectively when they are given clear objectives for internet use.

Different ways of accessing information from the internet will be used depending upon the nature of the material being accessed and the age of the pupils.

- Access to the internet may be by teacher demonstration
- Pupils may access teacher-prepared materials, rather than open the internet.
- Pupils may be given a suitable web page or a single web site to access.
- Pupils may be provided with lists of relevant and suitable web sites which they may access.
- Older, more experienced pupils may be allowed to undertake their own internet search having agreed a search plan with their teacher. Pupils will be expected to observe the Rules of Responsible Internet Use and will be informed that checks can and will be made on files held on the system and sites they access.

The teacher will supervise pupils accessing the internet **at all times**. They will only be allowed to use the internet once they have been taught the Rules of Responsible Internet Use and the reasons for these rules. Teachers will endeavour to ensure that these rules remain uppermost in the children's minds as they use the internet.

Using information from the web

We believe that in order to use information from the internet effectively, it is important for pupils to develop an understanding of the nature of the internet and the information available on it. In particular, they should know that, unlike the school library books for example, most of the information on the internet is intended for an adult audience, and that much of the information on the internet is not properly audited / edited and most of it is copyright.

- Pupils will be taught to expect a wider range of content, both in level and in audience, than is found in the school library or on television.
- Teachers will ensure that pupils are aware of the need to validate information whenever possible before accepting it as true and understand that this is even more important when considering information from the internet.
- When copying materials from the web, pupils will be taught to observe copyright and reference their work.
- Pupils will be made aware that the writer of an e-mail or the author of a web page may not be the person claimed.

Using e-mail

Pupils will learn how to use an e-mail application and be taught e-mail conventions. Staff and pupils will begin to use e-mail to communicate with others, to request and to share information. It is important that communications with persons and organisations are properly managed to ensure appropriate educational use and that the good name of the school is maintained.

Therefore;

- Pupils will only be allowed to use e-mail once they have been taught the Rules of Responsible Internet Use and the reasons for these rules.
- Teachers will endeavour to ensure that these rules remain uppermost in the children's minds as they monitor children using e-mail.
- Pupils may send e-mail as part of planned lessons but will not be given individual e-mail addresses as a general rule.
- In-coming e-mails to pupils will not be regarded as private and will be monitored.
- Children will have the e-mail messages they compose checked by a member of staff before sending them.
- The forwarding of chain mails will not be permitted.
- Pupils will not be permitted to use e-mail at school to arrange to meet someone outside of school hours.
- Senior classes **may** be provided with an email address for class use, for the sharing and printing of school work or projects. The settings on these accounts will be such to restrict email functionality and will purely be used for the accessing of some Google/Gmail features.

Rules of Responsible Internet Use

The school has installed computers with internet access to help our learning. These rules will help keep us safe and help us be fair to others.

Using computers.

- I will not access other people's files.
- I will not bring in Cds or memory sticks from outside school and try to use them on school computers.
- I will not delete files or folders without permission
- I will not change the desktop picture without permission.

Using the Internet

- I will ask permission from my teacher before using the internet.
- I will report any unpleasant material to my teacher immediately because this will help protect other pupils and myself.
- I understand that the school may check my computer files and may monitor the internet sites I visit.
- I will not complete and send forms without the permission of my teacher.
- I will not give my full name, my home address or telephone number when completing forms.
- I will use the internet for educational use only.
- I will not visit internet sites which contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable material.
- I will not visit social media sites or use YouTube under any circumstances.

Using e-mail

- I will ask permission from a teacher before checking the e-mail.
- I will immediately report any unpleasant messages sent to me because this would help protect other pupils and myself.
- I understand that others may read e-mail messages which I receive or send.
- I will not send any illegal, obscene, defamatory or annoying messages.
- I will only send e-mails to people I know, or my teacher has approved.
- I will only send an e-mail which has been approved by a teacher.
- I will not give my full name, my home address or telephone number.
- I will not use e-mail to arrange to meet someone outside school hours.

Sanctions

Misuse of the internet will result in disciplinary action, up to and including SUSPENSION.