

Internet Acceptable Use Policy

St. Thomas' J.N.S. Esker 2017

Introduction

The Internet is an essential element for education, business and social interaction. Internet use is part of the revised curriculum and a necessary tool for education. The purpose of Internet use in our school is to raise educational standards, to promote pupil achievement, to support the professional work of staff and to enhance the school's management, information and business administration systems.

This Acceptable Use Policy will address all rights, privileges, responsibilities and sanctions associated with access to and use of the Internet in our school and will be revised annually.

Aims

The aim of our Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that pupils, teachers and parents will benefit from the learning opportunities offered by the school's Internet resources in a safe, responsible and effective manner.

Internet use and access is considered a school resource and privilege. Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to, this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions – as outlined in the AUP - will be imposed.

Any pupil, member of staff, or other individual working in the school (including volunteers) who breach the AUP, will be subject to the Board of Management's disciplinary procedures (cf. School's Child Protection Policy.) and reported to the relevant authorities as appropriate.

Strategies

The school will employ a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet.

These strategies are as follows:

General

1. Internet sessions will always be supervised.
2. Systems including filtering software and NCTE firewall, will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
3. The school (ICT Committee) will regularly monitor Internet usage.
4. All access to the internet is password protected and students will not have access to passwords.
5. Students, teachers and parents will be given access to training in the area of Internet safety and appropriate use of social media.
6. Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
7. Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
8. The use of personal pen drives, CD-ROMs or DVDs in school requires permission and all external software must be scanned with anti-virus software before use.
9. Students will observe good "netiquette" (i.e. etiquette on the Internet) at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.

World Wide Web

10. Sites that the children use in school will be previewed by their teacher before use. Where possible, children will access web sites by using Web Quests.
11. Students will use the Internet for educational purposes and only as deemed appropriate by the teacher.
12. Teachers and students will be familiar with copyright issues relating to online learning.
13. Teachers or students will never disclose or publicise personal information.
14. All Internet users in our school should be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored.

Social Media

15. All posts to our school website will be checked by a member of the ICT team in advance.
16. All posts to St. Thomas' PA Facebook page will be checked by P.A. Admin Committee (Social Media) in advance.
17. Students and staff (including people employed by the school/contractors etc) will not be given access to Internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
18. Children should inform their teacher if they inadvertently access information that makes them in any way uncomfortable. In the unlikely event that this should happen, the children will be reassured and their parents will be notified. Also, where possible, the offending URL will be noted and the service provider will be informed.
19. In cases where the school becomes aware of an inappropriate post being put on social media regarding any individual in the school community, the Principal will ask the 'poster' to remove the offending post and will contact the relevant authorities, if so required.

Email

20. The teacher should set one e-mail address for classes for work online with partner schools. Teachers should use their school email account for all school correspondence.
21. Teachers will print emails for class lessons if required. All emails must be checked by the teacher first and emails will be sent and opened by the class teacher for pupils participating in cross-schools project. Students will not send or receive by any means any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or any material that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
22. Students will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses, telephone numbers or pictures.
23. Students will never arrange a meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.
24. Students will note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher and as outlined above.

Internet Chat

25. Students will only have access to sites that have been vetted in advance by their teacher.
26. Chat rooms, discussion forums and other electronic communication forums will only be used for educational purposes and will always be supervised.
27. Students will not have access to closed chat room passwords.
28. Usernames will be used to avoid disclosure of identity.
29. Meetings with someone organised via Internet chat rooms and discussion forums is forbidden as is access to social media (cf. NCTE firewall)

School Website

Pupils will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork and school work on the World Wide Web with parental permission. The publication of student work will be co-ordinated by a teacher. Pupils' work will appear in an educational context on Web pages with a copyright notice prohibiting the copying of such work without written permission.

Digital photographs, audio or video clips of *individual* students will not be published on the school website. Instead, photographs, audio and video clips will focus on group activities and these will be published with permission using the school's standard permission form.

Personal pupil information including name, home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages. Pupils will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

Legislation

Internet users have been made aware of legislation relating to use of the Internet. Links have been provided on the "Favourites" menu, of each computer connected to the Internet, to the following:

- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003 <http://justice.ie/80256E010039E882/vWeb/pcJUSQ5YUHTP-en>
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998 - <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/ZZA22Y1998.html>
- Interception Act 1993 - <http://www.acts.ie/zza10y1993.1.html>
- Video Recordings Act 1989 - <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/ZZA22Y1989.html>
- The Data Protection Act 1988 - <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/ZZA25Y1988.html>

Support Structures

Websites offering support and advice in the area of Internet Safety have been listed on the "Favourites" menu of each computer connected to the Internet. The following is a selection:

- NCTE - <http://www.ncte.ie/InternetSafety/>
- Webwise - <http://www.webwise.ie/>
- Make IT Secure - <http://makeitsecure.ie>
- Safe Internet - <http://www.saferinternet.org/ww/en/pub/insafe/>

The following guides/manuals are available in school:

[Be Wise on the Net ...Information and Advice for Schools](#) NCTE

[Internet Safety Awareness Education Programme Teachers' Handbook](#) SAFT Project (NCTE)

Sanctions

Misuse of the Internet may result in disciplinary action according to the School's Code of Conduct, and/or the school's Anti Bullying Policy and/or the school's Child Protection Policy. The Code of Conduct includes written warnings, notification of parents, withdrawal of access privileges and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion.

*Please Refer to School's Code of Conduct/Anti Bullying Policy/Child Protection Policy for further information.

The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

School Linked Policies

I.C.T./Code of Conduct/S.P.H.E./Child Protection/Anti-Bullying Guidelines/Parents' Guide.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Thomas' JNS. in December 2014 and most recently reviewed in December 2017. It will be reviewed in January 2019.

Signed: Barry Kennedy
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 15.12.2017