Acceptable use of IT and the Internet

St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy

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ACCEPTABLE USE OF IT AND THE INTERNET

This policy operates in line with our school mission, Catholic ethos and best safeguarding practice. St Mary's is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

1. INTRODUCTION

Usually, the resources used by pupils in school are carefully chosen by the teacher and determined by curriculum policies. Use of the Internet, by its nature, will provide access to information which has not been selected by the teacher. Whilst pupils will often be directed to sites which provide reviewed and evaluated sources, at times, they will be able to move beyond these, to sites unfamiliar to the teacher.

The problems and issues that have been highlighted by the media concern all schools. Whilst some of the media interest is hype, there is genuine cause for concern that children might access unsuitable material either accidentally or deliberately.

The purpose of this policy is to:
- Establish the ground rules we have in school for using the Internet
- Describe how these fit into the wider context of our discipline and pastoral care policies
- Demonstrate the methods used to protect the children from sites containing pornography, racist or politically extreme views and violence

The school believes that the benefits to pupils from access to the resources of the Internet far exceed the disadvantages. Ultimately, the responsibility for setting and conveying the standards that children are expected to follow, when using media and information resources, is one the school shares with parents and guardians. We feel that the best recipe for success lies in a combination of site-filtering, of supervision and by fostering a responsible attitude in our pupils in partnership with parents. School will remain up-to-date with changes in technology and the types of resources children may access. Parents will be sent an explanatory letter and the rules which form our Internet Access Agreement (Attached to the end of this document).

1. USING THE INTERNET FOR EDUCATION

The benefits include:
- access to a wide variety of educational resources including libraries, search engines and newspaper sites.
- rapid and cost effective world-wide communication.
- gaining an understanding of people and cultures around the globe, staff professional development through access to new curriculum materials, experts' knowledge and practice.
- social and leisure use.
- greatly increased skills in Literacy, particularly in being able to read and appraise critically and then communicate what is important to others.

The school intends to teach pupils about the vast information resources available on the Internet, using it as a planned part of many lessons. The school will teach about e-safety as part of the planned Computing and PSHE curriculums.

All staff will review and evaluate resources available on web sites appropriate to the age range and ability of the pupils being taught and the ICT Subject Leader will assist in the dissemination of this information.

Initially the pupils may be restricted to sites which have been reviewed and selected for content. They may be given tasks to perform using a specific group of web sites accessed from a common 'Favourites' menu. All classes will study at least one unit of work around the safe use of the internet. In addition, many classes will have a specific focus on using the internet for research and evaluating its reliability.

As pupils gain experience, they will be taught how to use searching techniques to locate and specific information for themselves. Comparisons will be made between researching from different sources of information, (books, WWW). Pupils will learn to decide when it is appropriate to use the Internet, as opposed to other sources of information, in terms of: the time taken; the amount of information found; the usefulness and reliability of information located.

At times, information, such as text, photos etc may be "downloaded" from the Internet for use in pupils' presentations. Tasks will be set to encourage pupils to view web sites and information with a critical eye.

2. PUPILS' ACCESS TO THE INTERNET

St Mary's Catholic Primary School will use the filtered and monitored Internet Service, as supplied by **LightSpeed Systems via the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust** which will minimise the chances of pupils encountering undesirable material.

The school will normally only allow children to use the Internet when there is a responsible adult present to supervise. However, it is unrealistic to suppose that the teacher's/teaching assistant's attention will always be directed toward the computer screen. Members of staff will be aware of the potential for misuse, and will be responsible for explaining to pupils, the expectation we have of pupils. Teachers will discuss safe use with the children on a regular basis.

Delegated members of staff will have access to Internet related files and will check these on a regular basis to ensure expectations of behaviour are being met. Teachers will be especially vigilant when asking children to source images from the internet. The Headteacher will be notified of any inappropriate use of IT resources**.**

3. EXPECTATIONS OF PUPILS USING THE INTERNET

- Pupils must ask permission before accessing the Internet and have a clear idea why they are using it.
- Pupils should not access other people's files unless permission has been given.
- Computers should only be used for schoolwork unless permission has been granted otherwise.
- No program files may be downloaded to the computer from the Internet. This is to prevent corruption of data and avoid viruses.
- No programs on flash drives or CD Rom should be brought in from home for use in school. This is for both legal and security reasons.
- No personal information such as phone numbers and addresses should be given out and no arrangements to meet someone made unless this is part of an approved school project.
- Pupils consistently choosing not to comply with these expectations will be warned, and subsequently, may be denied access to Internet resources. They will also come under the general discipline procedures of the school which comprises an escalating set of measures including a letter to parents and withdrawal of privileges.

4. WEBSITE GUIDELINES

The school website will be used to promote the school, publish resources for projects and homework, and link to other good sites of interest.
- No names that identify individual children will appear on the website.
- Home information and e-mail identities will not be included only the point of contact to the school i.e. phone number, school address and e-mail to the head teacher.
- Group photos will not contain a names list.
- Work displayed will be of the highest quality and reflect the status of the school.

5. INTERNET AGREEMENT

All pupils and their parents will be asked to read and sign an agreement covering the expectations we have of pupils using the Internet in school **(sample letter below)**

Dear Parents
Responsible Use of the Internet
At St Mary's we are mindful of the problems there are with children gaining access to undesirable sites on the internet, and we have taken steps to deal with this.
Our Internet access is supplied by SRS Trust and it has a built in filtering and monitoring system that restricts access to sites containing inappropriate content. All our computer screens are in public view and there will always be an adult present to supervise.
No system is perfect, however, and you should be aware that it is not possible to remove entirely the risk of finding unsuitable material.

Indications are that the children benefit enormously from this facility and are using it very responsibly already. If you would like to have a look at our full 'Use of the Internet Policy', you can call into the school and we will be more than willing to provide you with a copy.

I would be grateful if you would read over the 'Pupil's Internet Instructions' with your child and complete the statement below.

Yours faithfully

John Nish

6. ACCEPTABLE INTERNET USE STATEMENT FOR PUPILS

When I am using the internet on a computer, I should only follow the instructions that the teacher gives me. If I want to go to a page that I am interested in, I should ask the teacher first for permission. I should never search the internet on my own.

I fully support the school in their use of the Internet and do not have a problem with my

Child ……………………………………………… *[insert child's full name]* **using it in school.**

Signed by ……………………………………………… *[insert parent/ carer's full name]*

Signature ……………………………………………… Date …………………………

7. ACCEPTABLE INTERNET USE STATEMENT FOR STAFF

The computer system is owned by the school and is made available to students to further their education and to staff to enhance their professional activities including teaching, research, administration and management. The school's 'Internet Access Policy' has been drawn up to protect all parties - the students, the staff and the school.

The school reserves the right to examine or delete any files that may be held on its computer system or to monitor any Internet sites visited.

Staff requesting Internet access should sign a copy of this 'Acceptable Internet Use Statement' and return it to the Head Teacher for approval. Staff users should be aware that any breach of acceptable use will result in disciplinary action been taken in line with the current staff discipline procedures.

- All Internet activity should be appropriate to staff professional activity or the student's education;
- Access should only be made via the authorised account and password, which should not be made available to any other person;
- Activity that threatens the integrity of the school ICT systems, or activity that attacks or corrupts other systems, is forbidden;
- Users are responsible for all e-mail sent and for contacts made that may result in e-mail being received;
- Use for personal financial gain, gambling, political purposes or advertising is forbidden;
- Copyright of materials must be respected;
- Posting anonymous messages and forwarding chain letters is forbidden;
- As e-mail can be forwarded or inadvertently be sent to the wrong person, the same professional levels of language and content should be applied as for letters or other media;
- Use of the network to access inappropriate materials such as pornographic, racist or offensive material is forbidden.

Name ……………………………………………… *[insert full name]*

Signature ……………………………………………… Date …………………………

Access granted by Headteacher ……………………………………………….. *[headteacher to sign and date]*