

Furze Platt Senior School



Internet Safety Policy

1. Introduction

The purpose of Internet use in school is to raise educational standards, to promote student achievement, to support the professional work of staff and to enhance the school's management information and business administration systems.

The Internet is an essential element in 21st Century life for education, business and social interaction. The school has a duty to provide students with quality Internet access as part of their learning experience.

Benefits of using the Internet in education include:

- access to world-wide educational resources;
- educational and cultural exchanges between students world-wide;
- access to experts in many fields for students and staff;
- staff professional development through access to national developments, educational materials and good curriculum practice;
- communication with support services, professional associations and colleagues;
- improved access to technical support including remote management of networks;
- exchange of curriculum and administration data with LA and DCFS.

2. Internet Education

Students will be encouraged to develop skills which will allow them to become discriminating and productive Internet users. The skill development opportunities are incorporated into programmes of study ICT and regularly reinforced in other subject areas.

- Internet access will be planned to enrich and extend learning activities.
- Staff will guide students in online activities that will support the learning outcomes planned for the students' age and maturity.
- Students will be educated in the effective use of the Internet in research, including the skills of knowledge location and retrieval.
- Students will be taught to be critically aware of the materials they read and shown how to validate information before accepting its accuracy.
- Students will be taught to acknowledge the source of information and to respect copyright when using Internet material in their own work.
- The school will encourage practices which ensure that the use of Internet derived materials by staff and by students complies with copyright law.
- Students will be taught what is acceptable and what is not acceptable and given clear objectives for Internet use.
- If staff or students discover unsuitable sites, the URL (address) and content must be reported to the Internet Service Provider via the Network Manager.

3. Use of E-mail

- Students may only use borough intranet e-mail accounts on the school system.
- Students must immediately tell a teacher if they receive offensive e-mails.
- Students must not reveal details of themselves or others, such as address or telephone numbers, or arrange to meet anyone in e-mail communication.
- Access in school to external personal e-mail accounts is blocked.
- Excessive social e-mail use can interfere with learning. Sending and receiving social e-mails in lessons will be dealt within the same behavioural framework as other off-task behaviour.

- E-mail sent to an external organisation by staff should be written carefully in the same way as a letter written on school headed paper.
- The forwarding of chain letters is banned.
- Student e-mail accounts will be limited in such a way to avoid the sending of bulk mailings.
- In the school context, e-mails should not be considered private and school reserves the right to monitor e-mails of both staff and students. The school is mindful of the need to balance the need to maintain the safety of students and the preservation of human rights.
- The e-mail addresses of key staff will be provided to parents.
- Staff may respond directly to parental communication via e-mail but must regard such communication as official and written in an appropriately formal and professional style.
- E-mail communication between staff and students should, for the protection of both parties, only take place through the borough intranet where such communication is easily monitored and tracked. Private e-mail addresses should not be shared between staff and students.
- Staff should be particularly mindful of the need to maintain an appropriate and professional tone in all electronic communication with students.
- Should a member of staff have reason to feel professionally uncomfortable or compromised by the tone or content of an electronic communication then this must be reported to their line manager at the earliest possible opportunity.
- The school uses Parentmail, a proprietary system, to facilitate bulk-mail to parents. This service is managed remotely. Parents may subscribe and unsubscribe themselves from this service. The school will not send unsolicited mail to parents using e-mail addresses provided to the school for other purposes.

4. The School Website

The school website is a valuable means of publicising the school and providing useful information to parents and the community. Due to the public nature of the Internet the following protocol is used to ensure appropriate content.

- The point of contact on the Website will be the school address, school e-mail and telephone numbers. Staff or students' home information will not be published.
- Website photographs that include students will be selected carefully and will not enable individual students to be identified.
- Written permission from parents or carers will be obtained before photographs of students are published on the school website. This is achieved through the annual information check carried out in the Autumn term.
- The Headteacher or nominee will take overall editorial responsibility and ensure content is accurate and appropriate.
- The copyright of all material must be held by the school, or be attributed to the owner where permission to reproduce has been obtained.

5. Internet Access

- Internet access is provided for all staff and students.
- Parental permission will be gained through the acceptance of the Internet Usage contract in the Student Planner.
- A copy of this Policy is posted in the Furze Platt staff folder within the borough intranet.

6. Internet Content

The school recognises its responsibilities in protecting students from exposure to unsuitable material. It is impossible, however, whilst maintaining a flexible and responsible system, to remove completely the risk that students might access unsuitable materials.

- The school will take all reasonable precautions to ensure that users access only appropriate material. However, due to the international scale and linked nature of Internet content, it is not possible to guarantee that unsuitable material will never appear on the school computer. Neither the school nor RBWM can accept liability for the material accessed, or any consequences of Internet access.
- Methods to identify, assess and minimise risks will be reviewed regularly.
- The school will utilise the filtering provided by its Internet service provider and augment this by other safeguards as appropriate.
- If staff or students discover unsuitable sites, the URL (address) and content must be reported to the Internet service provider via the network manager.
- Rules for Internet access will be posted near all fixed computer systems.
- Students and staff will be informed that Internet use will be monitored.
- A module on responsible Internet use will be included in the ICT programme covering both schools and home use.
- All staff must accept the terms of the 'Responsible Internet Use' statement before using any Internet resource in school.
- Staff will be made aware that Internet traffic can be monitored and traced to the individual user. Discretion and professional conduct is essential.
- The monitoring of staff Internet access will only be initiated by the Headteacher and supervised by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

7. Misuse of the school computer system and Internet

- Misuse of the school's computer system by students will be dealt with in accordance with the school's behaviour policy framework.
- Misuse of the school's computer system by staff will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Staff Disciplinary Policy. Any complaint about staff misuse must be referred to the Headteacher.
- When appropriate the school's designated Child Protection coordinator will be involved in accordance with the Child Protection Policy.

8. Online communities, newsgroups and chats

Public and unregulated newsgroups, chat rooms, weblogs and online communities can be of educational use but currently present an unacceptably high risk to students' safety.

- Students will not be allowed access to public or unregulated chat rooms.
- Students will use only regulated educational chat environments. In most circumstances chat will take place through the chat facility in the borough intranet.
- The use of borough intranet chat will only be implemented for special projects and in all cases the use will be supervised.
- Newsgroups will not be made available unless an educational requirement for their use has been demonstrated. In these cases an offline solution will be used to remove the possible access to unsuitable material.

- Chat and forum communication between staff and students should, for the protection of both parties, only take place through borough intranet.
- Blogging sites and unregulated online communities will be blocked,
- Access to the Internet via WAP technology over the mobile phone network can not be regulated by the school. There is, however, a campus wide ban on the sight and sound of handheld electronic devices which will help minimise the potential problems.

9. Emergent Technologies

Senior staff will maintain an up to date knowledge of emergent Internet technologies and their potential for delivering educational or institutional benefits. New technologies will only be implemented after a thorough risk assessment.

10 Monitoring and Evaluation

The day to day implementation of this Policy will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team member responsible for ICT developments. Monitoring activities will include:-

Fortnightly meetings with the Network Manager;

Fortnightly meetings with the Head of ICT;

Termly meetings with the cross-curricular departmental ICT representatives;

Review and evaluation of this Policy is the responsibility of the Governors' Pupils and Parents Committee.