

Internet Access & Acceptable Usage Policy

St. Seachnall's NS

The main goals of this Policy are:

- To educate students, parents and teachers about the potential of the Internet as a valuable learning resource,
- To define acceptable behaviour and specify the consequences of violating it,
- To identify the school strategy on promoting the safe use of the Internet and address the risks associated with its use
- to ensure that Electronic Digital Communications which include internet and email usage, are properly used, and that St. Seachnall's NS is protected from problems such as error, fraud, defamation, breach of copyright, unlawful discrimination, illegal activity, privacy violations and service interruptions.

This policy governs the use of all electronic and digital communications (excluding telephones), and includes but is not limited to:

Web Publishing and browsing on the Internet

E mail

Electronic bulletin/notice boards,

Electronic discussion/news groups,

File transfer,

Video conferencing,

Streaming media,

Instant messaging, and 'Chat' facilities.

Internet access in school:

Providing access to the internet in school will raise educational standards and support the professional work of staff. Children in all classes will have supervised access to web-sites worldwide (including museums and art galleries) offering educational resources, news and current events.

In addition, staff will have the opportunity to access educational materials and good curriculum practice, to communicate with the advisory and support services, professional associations and colleagues; exchange curriculum and administration data and receive up-to-date information and business administration systems.

All staff involved in supervising children accessing the internet, will be provided with the School Internet Access Policy, and will have its importance explained to them. Parents' attention will be drawn to the Policy by letter in the first instance and, thereafter, in our school prospectus and website.

Ensuring internet access is appropriate and safe

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 the selection by the publishers and teachers. Similarly, the school will take every practical measure in order to maximise learning opportunities and also to ensure that children do not encounter upsetting, offensive or otherwise inappropriate material on the internet.

These strategies are as follows:

General

- Children using the internet will be working during class time
- Computer sessions, the interactive whiteboards, will always be supervised by an adult (usually the class teacher).
- Staff will check that the sites pre-selected for pupil 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 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 internet access strategies;
- The IT co-ordinator will ensure that occasional checks are made to monitor compliance with the school's IAP;
- The Principal will ensure that the policy is implemented effectively;
- Methods to quantify and minimise the risk of pupils being exposed to inappropriate material will be reviewed in consultation with colleagues from other schools and advice from other bodies such as the NCTE.
- The school will regularly monitor pupils' Internet usage.
- Students and teachers will be provided with training in the area of Internet safety.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- The use of personal disks, CD-ROMs and memory sticks in school requires a teacher's permission.
- 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.

NCTE Filtering Options:

Our broadband access is provided by the NCTE and all content is filtered from the NCTE filtering options. Our school will use two content filtering levels in order to ensure appropriate internet safety levels for all our pupils.

Level 3:

Level 3 is the school's main filtering level and can be used by both staff and pupils. This level gives access to millions of websites including games but blocks 'YouTube' and websites that are categorized as Personal such as blogs and Social Networking such as Facebook.

Level 4:

Level 4 is accessible to teachers only and allows access to the same websites as Level 3, but also allows access to 'YouTube'. The purpose for opening up YouTube for staff use is to encourage teachers to preview YouTube videos to align with curricular objectives. The following guidelines will be adhered to at all times.

- Access and use of YouTube videos shall be for educational purposes only.
- Teachers will preview video content to ensure it supports the curriculum and relates to lesson objectives.
- All digital projectors will be turned off when previewing on a computer connected to the classroom projector.
- Pupils may not use staff members' computers to search for YouTube videos online. This level of access is only available to teachers, not pupils.
- When showing a video in class, one of the following options will be used to eliminate ads and comments:
 - Embed the video into an ActivInspire flip chart, PowerPoint slide, or Website.
 - Shrink the page so that only the video is visible.
- Teachers will document all YouTube video use in class notes.

It is the experience of other schools 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 cannot accept liability for the material accessed, or any consequences thereof.

A most important element of our Rules of Responsible Internet Use is that pupils will be taught to tell a teacher immediately if they encounter any material that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Maintaining the security of the school ICT network

We are aware that connection to the internet significantly increases the risk that a computer or a computer network may be infected by a virus or accessed by unauthorised persons. The IT co-ordinator will up-date virus protection regularly, will keep up-to-date with IT news developments and work with Internet Service Provider to ensure system security strategies to protect the integrity of the network are reviewed regularly and improved as and when necessary.

Using the internet to enhance learning

Pupils will learn how to use a web browser. Older pupils will be taught to use suitable web search engines. Staff and pupils will begin to 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 (or sometimes other-adult) demonstration;
- pupils may access teacher-prepared materials, rather than the open internet;
- pupils may be given a suitable web page or
- younger children may be provided with a single web site to access;
- pupils may be supplied 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 the sites they access.

Pupils accessing the internet will be supervised by an adult, normally their teacher, 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 monitor the children using the internet.

World Wide Web

- Students will not visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Students will use the internet for educational purposes only.
- Students will be familiar with copyright issues relating to online learning.
- Students will never disclose or publicise personal information.
- Students will be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored for unusual activity, security and/or network management reasons.
- A webcam may only be used under supervision of a teacher and also must be in relation to ongoing projects e.g. link-ups with partner schools in an ongoing Comenius project

Using information from the internet

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 for example, most of the information on the internet is intended for an adult audience, 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 TV;
- 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 (as a non-moderated medium);
- when copying materials from the Web, pupils will be taught to observe copyright;
- 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

- pupils may send e-mail as part of planned lessons but will not be given individual e-mail accounts.
- Pupils may send e-mails as part of a school link with another school or educational establishment.
- Students will use approved class email accounts under supervision by or permission from a teacher
- Students will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Students will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
- Students will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.
- Students will note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher.
- The use of email for sending 'junk mail', for-profit messages, or chain letters is strictly prohibited.

Internet Chat

- Pupils will not use Internet Chat Rooms.

St Seachnall's N.S. Website

Our school web site is intended to:

- provide accurate, up-to-date information about our school;
- enable pupils to publish work to a high standard, for a very wide audience including pupils, parents, staff, members of the local community and others;
- provide pupils with the opportunity to publish their work on the internet;
- promote the school.

To ensure the integrity of our website

- Uploading of projects, artwork or school work on the World Wide Web will be done by teaching staff only.
- The website will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety of pupils or staff.
- The school will use digital photographs, audio or video clips focusing on best practice in our school. (Video clips will be also available on YouTube)
- Pupil personal information will not be included on school web pages.

In the future it may be used to publish resources for projects or homework.

- All classes may provide work for publication on the school web site.
- Class teachers will be responsible for ensuring that the content of the pupils' work is accurate and the quality of presentation is maintained. All material must be the author's own work, crediting other work included and stating clearly that author's identity and/or status.
- The IT co-ordinator is responsible for up-loading pages to the school web site, ensuring that the links work and are up-to-date, and that the site meets the requirements of the site host.
- The point of contact on the web site will be the school address, telephone number and e-mail address.
- Home information or individual e-mail identities will not be published. Staff will be identified by their title and surname unless they request otherwise.

We do not publish pupils' full names with photographs or videos that identify individuals on our web pages.

Sanctions

Breach of the policy may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities if these come to the notice of any member of staff.

This policy was sanctioned by the Board of Management in December 2014

Parental Permission

Please review the above Acceptable Use Policy. Should you object to the use of the internet by your child or children within the school please make this known in writing to the principal of the school, Ms. Ciara Whelan.

This policy will be revised again in 2017.