



INTERNET and COMPUTER ACCESS POLICY Y PANT SCHOOL



Rhondda Cynon Taf LEA **INTERNET ACCESS POLICY FOR SCHOOLS**

Why use the Internet?

The statutory curriculum expects pupils to learn how to locate, retrieve and exchange information using ICT. In delivering the curriculum, teachers need to plan for and make use of communications technology, for example, web-based resources and e-mail. Access to life-long learning and employment increasingly require computer and communications use and pupils need to develop life skills in their use.

Home and social Internet use is expanding and it is becoming an important part of learning and communication during leisure time. This brings pupils into contact with a wider range of information, the scope and nature of which may or may not be appropriate for the pupil. Some schools are discussing with parents strategies for the responsible use of the Internet in the home and community.

Why write an Internet Access Policy?

The Internet is managed by a worldwide, non-statutory collaboration of independent agencies that serve mainly an adult audience. Without appropriate measures, access to unsuitable materials would be possible and security compromised. An Internet Access Policy will help to ensure that Internet use supports schools' educational aims, responsibilities to pupils are met and that Rhondda Cynon Taf requirements are satisfied. In addition, the National Assembly for Wales requires that a school's ICT development plan for NGfL must set out their policy to protect pupils from access to undesirable materials.

Although teachers will have heard about the inappropriate aspects of the Internet, few will have had opportunities to discuss the issues in detail. The writing of the policy provides such an opportunity and the agreed policy produced is more likely to be implemented effectively. The template is intended to speed the writing process without bypassing the essential debate.

INTERNET ACCESS POLICY FOR Y PANT SCHOOL

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1. Who will write the policy?

Points for Consideration:

The School's Internet Access Policy is part of the school's ICT Policy and ICT Development Plan and will relate to other policies including those for behaviour; for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and for citizenship.

Statement:

The Internet Access Policy has been written by a team with a wide range of experience and will be reviewed on a yearly basis. It has been agreed by the senior management and approved by governors.

Created: 15/12/08 by Mark Pearsall (ICT Coordinator)

Revised: 01/09/2009

2. Why is Internet access important?

Statements:

- The purpose of Internet access in school is to raise educational standards, to support the professional work of staff and to enhance the school's management information and business administration systems.
- Access to the Internet is a necessary tool for staff and students. It is an entitlement for students who show a responsible and mature approach.



3. What are the benefits to the school?

Statements:

A number of studies and The National Assembly for Wales projects have indicated the benefits to be gained through the appropriate use of the Internet in education. These benefits include:

- Access to world-wide educational resources including museums and art galleries;
- Inclusion in The National Assembly for Wales initiatives such as NGfL and the Virtual Teacher Centre;
- Information and cultural exchanges between students world-wide;
- Cultural, vocational, social and leisure use in libraries, clubs and at home;
- Discussion with experts in many fields for pupils and staff;
- Staff professional development - access to educational materials and good curriculum practice;
- Communication with the LEAs advisory and support services, professional associations and colleagues;
- Improved access to technical support including remote management of networks;
- Exchange of curriculum and administration data with the LEA and The National Assembly for Wales.



4. How will Internet use provide effective learning?

Points for Consideration:

Teachers, parents and pupils need to develop good practice in using the Internet as a tool for learning and teaching. There is a balance to be struck between encouraging autonomous learning and maintaining adequate supervision. Systems that ensure Internet access is as safe as possible will enable increased use; the quality of this use is a critical factor.

Statements:

- The Local Education Authority will provide Internet access. It is specifically designed for use with schools and as such includes appropriate monitored, filtering systems.
- Internet access will be purchased from a supplier that provides a service designed for pupils. This will include filtering appropriate to the age of pupils;
- Internet access will be planned to enrich and extend learning activities. Access levels will be reviewed to reflect the curriculum requirement;
- Pupils will be given clear objectives for Internet use;
- Staff will select sites which will support the learning outcomes planned for pupils' age and maturity;
- Approved sites will be book marked, listed and, where appropriate and copyright permits, could be copied to the school intranet;
- Pupils will be educated in taking responsibility for their own Internet access.



5. How will pupils be taught to assess Internet content?

Points for Consideration:

Pupils in school are unlikely to see inappropriate content in books due to selection by publisher and teacher. This level of control is not so straightforward with Internet-based materials. Therefore, ICT teaching should be widened to incorporate Internet content issues, for instance the value and credibility of Web materials in relationship to other media. The tendency to use the Web when better information may be obtained from books will need to be challenged.

Statements:

- Pupils will be taught ways to validate information before accepting that it is necessarily accurate;
- Pupils will be taught to acknowledge the source of information, when using Internet material for their own use;
- Pupils will be made aware that the writer of an e-mail or the author of a Web page might not be the person claimed;
- Pupils will be encouraged to tell a teacher immediately if they encounter any material that makes them feel uncomfortable.



6. How will e-mail be managed?

Points for Consideration:

Electronic mail is a very important means of communication within education. The logistics of setting pupils up with individual e-mail accounts and monitoring these accounts has proven to be a problem that the Local Education Authority has yet to solve. A possible solution to this is the setting up of the school's Moodle Virtual Learning Environment and the implementation of a communication system utilising Google Docs. Google Docs enables pupils to communicate electronically with each other and with their teacher and to work on and share documents. This tackles some of the issues related to not having a working e-mail system and in some ways is more beneficial as it ensures that pupils focus only on educational topics. Google Docs is in the process of being facilitated by RCT ICT Support Services (as of 15/12/08)

Quote from National Curriculum Orders for ICT;

Create and communicate information

Pupils should be given opportunities to:

share and exchange information safely through electronic means, e.g. use of e-mail, virtual learning environments (p.13)

Statements:

- E-mail must only be used in school for educational purposes;
- Pupils will not be allowed to access personal e-mail from the school system;
- Messages sent using the school domain name should be regarded in the same way as messages written on school headed paper;
- The forwarding of chain letters will be banned, as will the use of chat rooms and social networking sites.



7. How will publishing on the Web be managed?

Points for Consideration:

A Web site can celebrate pupils' work, promote the school, inform parents and the community and publish resources for projects or homework. Ground rules are important to ensure that the Web site reflects the school's ethos and that information is accurate and well presented.

As the school's Web site can be accessed by anyone on the Internet, the security of staff and pupils must be considered carefully. Although common in newspaper reports, on Web pages the publishing of pupils' names beside photographs that identify individuals may sometimes be considered inappropriate. Common sense and professional judgement must be an integral part of updating the school website on a regular basis. One individual member of staff will be allocated to be School Website Manager (as of 01/09/08, Miss Lucy Bunce) and it will be their responsibility to maintain and update the school website using appropriate security procedures to access the school internet provider's server. Resources and information that require to be uploaded onto the school website should be given to the School Website Manager (SWM) who will assess them for viability and appropriate material before incorporating them onto the live website. Structure and content on the website should be checked on a regular basis by the Senior Management Team (SMT) and School ICT Coordinator (Mr Mark Pearsall) and appropriate feedback given to the SWM. Concerns or issues from pupils, parents, staff or the public should be directed to Reception, SMT or SWM, whichever is most appropriate.

Statements:

- The Headteacher will delegate editorial responsibility to a member of staff to ensure that content is accurate and quality of presentation is maintained;
- The Web site will comply with the school's guidelines for publications;
- Pupils will be made aware that the quality of their work published on the web needs to reflect the diversity of the audience;
- All material must be the author's own work, or where permission to reproduce has been obtained, clearly marked with the copyright owner's name;



- The point of contact on the Web site should be the school address and telephone number. Home information or individual e-mail identities will not be published;
- Parents who do not want their children's photographs to appear on the public domain will need to sign a disclaimer making explicit this desire.

8. How will Internet access be authorised?

Points for Consideration:

All pupils and staff will be allocated permission to access the Internet. This should be made explicit to all parents and guardians. Those parents not wishing their children to access the Internet in school will need to inform the school of this desire and suitable technical steps will be taken.

Statements:

- Internet access is a necessary part of the statutory curriculum. It is an entitlement for pupils based on responsible use;
- Parents should be made aware that all pupils will have Internet access and their children will be expected to use it responsibly, adhering to rules on acceptable use of Internet dealt with during the ICT phase of Year 6-7 transition and during discrete ICT lessons. Issues regarding acceptable use of the Internet are embedded into ICT Schemes of Work.
- A record will be maintained of all staff and pupils with Internet access. Persons will be removed from the record when access is no longer required, or is withdrawn.

9. How will the risks be assessed?

Points for Consideration:

The school will need to address the issue that it is difficult to remove completely the risk that pupils might access unsuitable materials via the school system. Teachers and other employees in charge of pupils have a common law duty to act as any reasonably prudent parent would to ensure the Health and Safety of pupils whilst they are in their charge.



There is naturally concern about all forms of computer misuse but the greatest specific threats to children's well being are from contact with undesirable characters, computer pornography and anarchic views. There are two obvious ways by which computer pornography can be brought into the School. It could be downloaded from the Internet or any other external communications system or it could simply be carried into the School on portable storage devices.

The content filtering system operated by our service provider, Rhondda Cynon Taff Local Education Authority, should provide a successful deterrent to accessing sites of an unsuitable nature. However it is accepted that this may not always be the case. In the event of a pupil inadvertently gaining access to an unsuitable website, they should be aware that they should bring it to the attention of a teacher who will inform the Network Administrator of the web address which can then be forwarded to RCT LEA for blocking. As long as the pupil tells the teacher straightaway and it is deemed to be a genuine mistake, no disciplinary action will take place against the pupil.

The ICT Support Team endeavours to track any misuse of the school network. By adopting a proactive approach to network security rather than a reactive one we aim to ensure that pupils are not subjected to images or ideologies of an upsetting nature. For those who seek to be mischievous or cause damage to the integrity, both technical and ethical, of the school network, they should be aware that they can be traced and that punitive measures may be taken against them.

Statements:

- In common with other media such as magazines, books and video, some material available via the Internet is unsuitable for pupils. The school will supervise pupils and take all reasonable precautions to ensure that users access only appropriate material. However, due to the international scale and linked nature of information available via the Internet, it is not possible to guarantee that unsuitable material will never appear on a terminal. Neither the school nor Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council can accept liability for the material accessed, or any consequences thereof;
- The use of computer systems without permission or for purposes not agreed by the school could constitute a criminal offence under the Computer Misuse Act 1990;
- Methods to identify, assess and minimise risks will be reviewed;



- Staff, parents, governors, officers and advisers will work to establish agreement that every reasonable measure is being taken;
- The Headteacher, SMT and School ICT Coordinator will ensure that the policy is implemented effectively.

10. How will the school ensure Internet access is safe?

Points for Consideration:

The Internet is a communications medium that is freely available to any person wishing to send e-mail or publish a Web site on almost any topic. Access to appropriate information should be encouraged and Internet access must be safe for all members of the school community from youngest pupil to teacher and administrative officer. Pupils will generally need protected access to the Internet.

However, older secondary pupils, as part of a supervised project, might need to access adult materials, for instance a set novel that includes references to sexuality. Teachers might need to research areas including drugs, medical conditions, bullying or harassment. In such cases, legitimate use must be recognised and the user protected from possible accusation of inappropriate use.

The technical strategies being developed to restrict access to inappropriate material fall into several overlapping types (sometimes all referred to as filtering):

- a) **Blocking strategies** remove access to a list of unsuitable sites or newsgroups. Maintenance of the blocking list is a major task, as new sites appear every day.*
- b) A **walled-garden or pass list** provides access only to a list of approved sites. Inevitably this approach will restrict pupils' access to valid information.*
- c) **Filtering** examines the content of Web pages or e-mail messages for unsuitable words. Filtering of Web searches attempts to block a current loophole.*
- d) **Rating** systems give each Web page a rating for sexual, profane, violent or other unacceptable content. Web browsers can be set to reject these pages.*

None of these systems can be completely effective and a combination of approaches will be required, alongside adequate supervision. It is important to establish the criteria used to accept or reject material, whether the criteria are set by the LEA, the software supplier or the school, and whether the criteria are appropriate. With



EDNET blocking and/or filtering is performed as part of the service. School-level systems require management to maintain effectiveness and place greater responsibility on the school. Systems to alter the degree of control to suit the age and learning context of the pupil are being developed, again requiring a degree of local management.

Statements:

- Pupils will be informed that Internet use will be supervised and monitored;
- Before accessing the internet, Pupils will be made aware of the systems and procedures in place for reporting unacceptable content;
- The school will work in partnership with parents, the LEA, The National Assembly for Wales, and the Internet Service Provider to ensure systems to protect pupils are reviewed and improved;
- School ICT Coordinator will ensure that occasional checks are made to ensure that the filtering methods selected are effective in practice;
- If staff or pupils discover any unsuitable sites, the URL (address) and content will be reported to the LEA via the ICT Unit's Helpdesk;



11. How will the security of school ICT systems be maintained?

Points for Consideration:

The Internet is a new connection to the outside world that could compromise system performance or threaten security.

Statements:

- Security strategies will be discussed with the LEA.
- The network manager will ensure that the system has the capacity to take increased traffic caused by Internet use;
- The security of the whole system will be reviewed with regard to threats to security from Internet access;
- Personal data sent over the Internet will be encrypted or otherwise secured;
- Virus protection will be installed and updated regularly;



12. How will complaints regarding Internet use be handled?

Points for Consideration:

Prompt action will be required if a complaint is made. The facts of the case will need to be established, for instance whether the issue has arisen through Internet use inside or outside school. Transgressions of the rules could include minor issues as well as potentially serious issues and a range of sanctions will be required, linked to the school's behaviour policy.

Statements:

- Responsibility for handling incidents will be given to senior members of staff;
- Pupils and parents will be informed of the complaints procedure;
- Parents and pupils will need to work in partnership with staff to resolve issues;
- As with drugs issues, there may be occasions when the police must be contacted. Early contact will be made to establish the legal position and discuss strategies;
- Sanctions available include interview/counselling by head of year and, if appropriate, informing parents or carers;
- A pupil may have e-mail, Internet or computer access denied for a period of time depending on the nature of the incident;
- Denial of access could include all school work held on the system, including any examination work.



13. How will staff and pupils be consulted?

Points for Consideration:

It is very important that staff regard themselves as being prepared for Internet use and subscribe to the school Internet Access Policy. Staff should be given opportunities to discuss the issues and develop appropriate teaching strategies. It would be unreasonable if staff, particularly supply staff, were asked to take charge of an Internet activity without training. Reassurance and discussion may be required.

Statements:

- Rules for Internet access will be posted near computer systems. The Acceptable Use Statement or Rules for Responsible Internet Use may be printed as posters
- All staff including teachers, supply staff, classroom assistants and support staff, will be able to read the Internet Access Policy via the School Internet, and its importance explained;
- Parents' attention may be drawn to the Policy in newsletters, the school brochure and on the school Web site;
- A module on responsible Internet use will be included in the ICT Scheme of Work.



14. How will parents' support be enlisted?

Points for Consideration:

Internet use in pupils' homes is increasing rapidly. Unless parents are aware of the dangers, pupils may have unrestricted access to the Internet. The school may be able to help parents plan appropriate, supervised use of the Internet at home.

Statements:

- A careful balance between informing and alarming parents will be maintained;
- Links to supportive websites and agencies will be highlighted on the School Website ;
- Joint home/school guidelines on issues such as safe Internet use will be established;
- A stock of relevant leaflets from organisations such as BECTa, PIN, and NCH Action for Children will be maintained.



15. How is the Internet used across the community?

Points for Consideration:

Internet use in the local community is becoming common. In addition to the home, access will be available at a variety of establishments throughout the LEA, with the implementation of the Authority's Broadband Strategy. The school may wish to contact their community colleagues in order to advise pupils regarding issues such as membership, booking procedures, availability and cost. Each organisation is developing its own approach and pupils may find variations in the rules and even unrestricted access to the Internet. Although policies may differ in detail, community partners adhere to the same laws as schools with respect to content, copyright and misuse. This would be particularly relevant with regard to the E3+ initiative's use of school Internet access.

Statements:

- All community members who utilise the school computer system must adhere to the School's Internet Access Policy
- Rules for Internet access will be posted near computer systems, or will be available on request. Rules are there to protect legitimate use;
- Visits, demonstrations and practical IT sessions for schools may be organised to encourage a partnership approach;
- Suitable educational, vocational and leisure use is encouraged in community facilities.

Union Advice "Any breach (of the Internet policy) may also be considered a breach of the employer" condition of service which would lead to disciplinary action on grounds of gross misconduct".



**The following pages contain examples
of Acceptable Use Policies
for Secondary schools.**

**These pages may be edited
for display as a poster near computers.**

Pupils and parents need to be provided with a copy of these rules.



Rhondda Cynon Taf Secondary Schools

Acceptable Internet Use Statement for Staff and Senior Students

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.

- Access must only be made via the authorised account and password, which must not be made available to any other person;
- All Internet use should be appropriate to staff professional activity or student's education;
- Activity that threatens the integrity of the school ICT systems, or that attacks or corrupts other systems, is forbidden;
- Sites and materials accessed must be appropriate to work in school. Users will recognise materials that are inappropriate and should expect to have their access removed.
- Users are responsible for e-mail they send and for contacts made that may result in e-mail being received;
- The same professional levels of language and content should be applied as for letters or other media, particularly as e-mail is often forwarded;
- Posting anonymous messages and forwarding chain letters is forbidden;
- Copyright of materials and intellectual property rights must be respected;
- Legitimate private interests may be followed, providing school use is not compromised;
- Use for personal financial gain, gambling, political purposes or advertising is forbidden;

All members of the school community who are granted computer and Internet access agree to abide by the above guidelines. Those who do not accept the above guidelines will need to inform the School ICT Coordinator and School Computer Access will be removed.

REFERENCES FOR PARENTS

www.GetSafeOnline.org/

The website for the UK's first national internet security awareness campaign.

<http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

Website for all ages, including parents and teachers

www.youngpeoplesafeonline.com/

MSN's guide to Internet security for young people.

<http://www.ncha.fc.org.uk/>

NCH Action for Children A Parents' Guide to the Internet.

<http://www.getnetwise.org/>

Get Net Wise. A useful US site for parents, including a link to the 'America Links Up' safety campaign archives.

<http://www.wisekids.org.uk/>

Promoting innovative, positive and safe Internet use.

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/>

Tackling cyber-bullying

<http://www.ceop.gov.uk/>

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre