



# St. Godric's RCVA School

## Internet Policy

### 1) Policy, writing and review:

Our Internet Policy has been written by the school, building on the Durham NGfL policy and government guidance. It has been agreed by the senior management and approved by governors and the PTA. It will be reviewed annually.

Created by: .....

Date: .....

To be revised: .....

Approved: .....

### 2) Importance of the Internet in School:

- The purpose of Internet use in 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.
- Internet use is a part of the statutory curriculum and a necessary tool for staff and pupils.
- Internet access is an entitlement for students who show a responsible and mature approach to its use.
- The Internet is an essential element in 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

### 3) How does the Internet benefit education?

Benefits of using the Internet in education include:

- access to world-wide educational resources including museums and art galleries;
- inclusion in government initiatives such as the DfES ICT in Schools and the Virtual Teacher Centre (VTC) <http://vtc.ngfl.gov.uk>;
- educational and cultural exchanges between pupils world-wide;
- cultural, vocational, social and leisure use in libraries, clubs and at home;
- access to experts in many fields for pupils 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 the LEA and DfES.
- mentoring of pupils and provide peer support for them and teachers

#### **4) How will Internet use enhance learning?**

- The school Internet access will be designed expressly for pupil use and will include filtering appropriate to the age of pupils.
- Pupils will be taught what Internet use is acceptable and what is not and given clear objectives for Internet use.
- Internet access will be planned to enrich and extend learning activities. Access levels will be reviewed to reflect the curriculum requirements and age of pupils.
- Staff should guide pupils in on-line activities that will support the learning outcomes planned for the pupils' age and maturity.
- Pupils will be educated in the effective use of the Internet in research, including the skills of knowledge location, retrieval and evaluation.

#### **5) How will pupils learn to evaluate Internet content?**

- If staff or pupils discover unsuitable sites, the URL (address) and content must be reported to the Internet Service Provider via the ICT Co-ordinator.
- Schools should ensure that the use of Internet derived materials by staff and by pupils complies with copyright law.
- Pupils should be taught to be critically aware of the materials they read and shown how to validate information before accepting its accuracy.
- Pupils will be taught to acknowledge the source of information used and to respect copyright when using Internet material in their own work.

#### **6) How will e-mail be managed?**

The durhamlea.org.uk email system gives anonymity to pupils through the email address they are given. The pupil's first name and initial letter of their surname are used with a number; e.g. [James.b6001@durhamlea.org.uk](mailto:James.b6001@durhamlea.org.uk)  
 This means the pupil's full name is not available, nor is the location of their school. This system combines the best of practice in pupil email account names. The service is also filtered.

- Pupils may only use durhamlea.org.uk e-mail accounts on the school system.
- Pupils must immediately tell a teacher if they receive offensive e-mail.
- Pupils must not reveal details of themselves or others in e-mail communication, such as address or telephone number, or arrange to meet anyone.
- Whole-class or group e-mail addresses can be requested (from frogmail) for any age group as well as individual email accounts.
- Access in school to external personal e-mail accounts may be blocked.
- E-mail sent to an external organisation should be written carefully and authorised before sending, in the same way as a letter written on school headed paper.
- The forwarding of chain letters is not permitted.

#### **7) How should Web site content be managed?**

- The point of contact on the Web site should be the school address, school e-mail and telephone number. Staff or pupils' home or personal information will not be published.
- Web site photographs that include pupils will be selected carefully and will not enable individual pupils to be clearly identified.
- Pupils' full names will not be used anywhere on the Web site, particularly in association with photographs.
- Written permission from parents or carers will be obtained before photographs of pupils are published on the school Web site.
- The head teacher or nominee will take overall editorial responsibility and ensure that content is accurate and appropriate.
- The Web site should comply with the school's guidelines for publications.
- The copyright of all material must be held by the school, or be attributed to the owner where permission to reproduce has been obtained.

#### **8) What are newsgroups and e-mail lists?**

- Newsgroups will not be made available to pupils unless an educational requirement for their use has been demonstrated.

#### **9) Can Chat be made safe?**

- Pupils will not be allowed access to public or unregulated chat rooms.
- Children should use only regulated educational chat environments. This use will be supervised and the importance of chat room safety emphasised.
- A risk assessment will be carried out before pupils are allowed to use a new technology in school.

### **10) How can emerging Internet applications be managed?**

- Emerging technologies will be examined for educational benefit and a risk assessment will be carried out before use in school is allowed.
- Mobile phones will not be used during lessons or formal school time. The sending of abusive or inappropriate text messages is forbidden.

### **11) How will Internet access be authorised?**

- The school will keep a record of all staff and pupils who are granted Internet access. The record will be kept up-to-date, for instance a member of staff may leave or a pupil's access be withdrawn.
- At Key Stage 1, access to the Internet will be by adult demonstration with occasional directly supervised access to specific, approved on-line materials.
- Parents will be informed that pupils will be provided with supervised Internet access (an example letter for schools is included as an appendix).
- Parents will be asked to sign and return a consent form. Please see the sample form later in this document.

### **12) How will the risks be assessed?**

- In common with other media such as magazines, books and video, some material available via the Internet is unsuitable for pupils. 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 a school computer. Neither the school nor DCC can accept liability for the material accessed, or any consequences of Internet access.
- The use of computer systems without permission or for inappropriate purposes could constitute a criminal offence under the Computer Misuse Act 1990.
- Methods to identify, assess and minimise risks will be reviewed regularly.
- The headteacher will ensure that the Internet policy is implemented and compliance with the policy monitored.

### **13) How will filtering be managed?**

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

- **Blocking strategies** prevent access to a list of unsuitable sites or newsgroups. Maintenance of the blocking list is a major task as new sites appear every day.

- **A walled-garden or allow list** provides access only to a list of approved sites. An allow list will inevitably restrict pupils' access to a narrow range of information.
- **Dynamic filtering** examines the content of Web pages or e-mail for unsuitable words. Filtering of outgoing information such as Web searches is also required.
- **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.
- **Monitoring** records Internet sites visited by individual user. Access to a site forbidden by the filtering policy will result in a report. It is also possible to remove access automatically after a set number of policy violations.

Despite careful design, filtering systems cannot be completely effective due to the speed of change of Web content. Filtering may be performed by the ISP, by the LEA, at school-level or by any combination. School-level systems require considerable management to maintain effectiveness and place huge responsibility on the school if they are the only systems in place.

Careful monitoring and management of all filtering systems will be required. It is important that the school establishes the filtering criteria rather than simply accepting filtering default settings.

- The school will work in partnership with parents, the LEA, DfES and the Internet Service Provider to ensure systems to protect pupils are reviewed and improved.
- If staff or pupils discover unsuitable sites, the URL (address) and content must be reported to the Internet Service Provider via the ICT Co-ordinator.
- Larger schools, may manage the configuration of their filtering. This task requires both educational and technical experience.
- Senior staff will ensure that regular checks are made to ensure that the filtering methods selected are appropriate, effective and reasonable.

#### **14) How will the policy be introduced to pupils?**

- Rules for Internet access will be posted in all rooms where computers are used.
- Pupils will be informed that Internet use will be monitored.
- Instruction in responsible and safe use should precede Internet access.

### **15) How will staff be consulted?**

- All staff must accept the terms of the '**Responsible Internet Use**' statement before using any Internet resource in school.
- All staff including teachers, supply staff, classroom assistants and support staff, will be provided with the School Internet Policy, and Internet and E-mail Code of Practice and their importance explained.
- Staff should be aware that Internet traffic can be monitored and traced to the individual user. Discretion and professional conduct is essential.
- The monitoring of Internet use is a sensitive matter. Staff who operate monitoring procedures should be supervised by senior management.
- Staff development in safe and responsible Internet use, and on the school Internet policy will be provided as required.
- Staff will sign the Document Log to indicate they have received, noted and understand the arrangement for Internet and e-mail use and access.

### **16) How will ICT system security be maintained?**

- The school ICT systems will be reviewed regularly with regard to security.
- Virus protection will be installed and updated regularly.
- Use of portable media such as floppy disks, memory sticks and CD-ROMs will be reviewed. Portable media may not be brought into school without specific permission and a virus check.
- Files held on the school's network will be regularly checked.

### **17) How will complaints regarding Internet use be handled?**

- Responsibility for handling incidents will be delegated by the HT to a senior member of staff.
- Any complaint about staff misuse must be referred to the headteacher.
- 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 or child protection staff must be contacted. Early contact could be made to establish the legal position and discuss strategies.
- Sanctions available include:
  - interview/counselling by appointed staff;
  - informing parents or carers;
  - removal of Internet or computer access for a period, which could ultimately prevent access to files held on the system, including examination coursework.
- other sanctions as defined in school disciplinary system.

### **18) How will parents' support be enlisted?**

- Parents' attention will be drawn to the School Internet Policy in newsletters, the school brochure and on the school Web site.
- Internet issues will be handled sensitively to inform parents without undue alarm.
- A partnership approach with parents will be encouraged. This could include demonstrations, practical sessions and suggestions for safe Internet use at home.
- Advice on filtering systems and educational and leisure activities that include responsible use of the Internet will be made available to parents.
- Interested parents will be referred to organisations such as PIN, Parents Online and NCH Action for Children (URLs in reference section).