

William Barcroft Internet Policy

Written March 2006

The statutory curriculum requires pupils to learn how to locate, retrieve and exchange information using ICT. In delivering the curriculum, teachers need to plan to integrate the use of communications technology such as web-based resources and e-mail. Computer skills are vital to access life-long learning and employment; indeed ICT is now seen as an essential life-skill.

Most technologies present risks as well as benefits. Internet use for work, home, social and leisure activities is expanding in all sectors of society. This brings young people into contact with a wide variety of influences, some of which - as in life generally - may be unsuitable. It is important that schools, libraries and youth clubs, as well as parents, adopt strategies for the safe and responsible use of the Internet.

William Barcroft Internet Policy

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

Created by:

Date:

To be revised:

Approved:

Why is Internet use important?

- 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 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.

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

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.

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.
- The school will ensure that the use of Internet derived materials by staff and by pupils complies with copyright law.
- Pupils will 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.
- The staff are made aware by ICT staff of the need to evaluate articles of Web origin and the need to develop students' critical attitudes.

How will e-mail be managed?

- Pupils may only use approved 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.
- Access in school to external personal e-mail accounts may be blocked.
- Excessive social e-mail use can interfere with learning and will be restricted.
- 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.

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 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 headteacher 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.

What are newsgroups and e-mail lists?

- Newsgroups will not be made available to pupils or staff.

Can Chat be made safe?

- Pupils will not be allowed access to public or unregulated chat rooms.
- A risk assessment will be carried out before pupils are allowed to use a new technology in school.

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.
- Pupils are not allowed mobile phones in school.

How will Internet access be authorised?

- Parents will be informed that pupils will be provided with supervised Internet access (an example letter for primary 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.
- Primary pupils will be issued individual email accounts, but will only be used as part of a lesson.

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 NEL LEA can accept liability for the material accessed, or any consequences of Internet access.
- The use of computer systems without permission or for inappropriate purposes can be tracked and 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.

How will filtering be managed?

- 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 staff.

- Technical staff in the school and the LEA will ensure that regular checks are made to ensure that the filtering methods selected are appropriate, effective and reasonable.
- Any material that the school believes is illegal must be referred to the Internet Watch Foundation (please see references given later).
- Filtering strategies will be selected by the school, in discussion with the filtering provider where appropriate. The filtering strategy will be selected to suit the age and curriculum requirements of the pupil.

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.
- A module on responsible Internet use will be included in the PSHE programme covering both school and home use.

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 its 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.

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.
- Security strategies will be discussed with the LEA, particularly where a wide area network connection is being planned.
- Personal data sent over the Internet will be encrypted or otherwise secured.
- 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.
- Unapproved system utilities and executable files will not be allowed in pupils' work areas or attached to e-mail.
- Files held on the school's network will be regularly checked.
- The IT co-ordinator / network manager will ensure that the system has the capacity to take increased traffic caused by Internet use.

How will complaints regarding Internet use be handled?

- Responsibility for handling incidents will be delegated 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 must be contacted. Early contact could be made to establish the legal position and discuss strategies.
- Sanctions available include:
 - interview/counselling by head of year;
 - 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.

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).

How is Internet used across the community?

- Adult users will need to sign the acceptable use policy.
- Parents/carers of children under 16 years of age will generally be required to sign an acceptable use policy on behalf of the child.
- In libraries, generally children under 8 years of age must be accompanied by an adult when accessing the Internet.

