



Internet Access Policy

Rationale

Holy Cross RC High School believes that the educational benefits of Internet access far outweigh the possible risks and that good planning and management will ensure appropriate and effective student use. Government policy is to connect all schools to the Internet by 2002, an objective that we at Holy Cross have already achieved. The Internet can be used by students of all ages, by teachers and by managers. Home Internet use is increasing and it is becoming an important part of learning and communication during leisure time.

However, the Internet is managed by a worldwide collaboration of independent agencies and serves mainly an adult audience. Without appropriate measures, access to unsuitable materials would be possible and security compromised.

Why is Internet access important?

The purpose of Internet access in schools 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 an entitlement for students who show a responsible and mature approach. It should be noted that the use of a computer system without permission or for a purpose not agreed by the school could constitute a criminal offence under the Computer Misuse Act 1990.

What are the benefits to the school?

The Government set targets for ICT use in all schools through the National Grid for Learning Initiative. A number of studies and government 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 government initiatives such as NGFL and the Virtual Teacher Centre;
- Information and cultural exchanges between students world-wide;
- News and current events;
- Cultural, social and leisure use in libraries, clubs and at home;
- Discussion with experts in many fields for students and staff;
- Staff professional development - access to educational materials and good curriculum practice;
- Communication with the advisory and support services, professional associations and colleagues;
- Exchange of curriculum and administration data with the LEA and DfEE.



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 students. The school will supervise students 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 particular types of material will never appear on a terminal. Neither the school nor the governors can accept liability for the material accessed, or any consequences thereof.

- Methods to quantify and minimise the risk will be reviewed;
- Staff, parents, governors and advisers will work to establish agreement that every reasonable measure is being taken;
- The Headteacher will ensure that the policy is implemented effectively.

How will Internet access be authorised?

- Is Internet access is an entitlement for students based on responsible use;
- Parents will be informed that students will be provided with supervised Internet access where it is important to their education;
- All staff and students have Internet access.

How will the security of the school ICT system be maintained?

- The network manager will ensure that the system has the capacity to take increased traffic caused by Internet use;
- The whole system will be reviewed with regard to threats to potential threats from Internet access;
- No personal data should be sent over the Internet unless it is encrypted or otherwise secured;
- Virus protection will be installed and updated regularly;
- Personal floppy disks may not be brought into school without specific permission and a virus check;

How will the security of the school ICT system be maintained?

- Curriculum planning will identify opportunities to enrich and extend learning activities via access to the Internet;
- Students will be given clear objectives for Internet use;
- Students will be provided with lists of relevant and suitable Web sites;
- Students will be informed of their responsibilities;
- Students will be informed that checks can be made on files held on the system;
- Students using the Internet will be supervised appropriately;
- Internet access will be purchased from a supplier that provides a service designed for students. This will include filtering appropriate to the age of students;
- The school will work with the LEA and the Internet Service Provider to ensure systems to protect students are regularly reviewed and improved.



How will students be taught to assess Internet content?

ICT teaching should be widened to incorporate Internet content issues, for instance the value and credibility of Web materials in relationship to other media.

Statements:

- Students will be taught to validate information before accepting it as true, and to discriminate between fact and opinion;
- When copying materials from the Web, students will observe copyright;
- Students will be made aware that the writer of an E-mail or the author of a Web page may not be the person claimed;
- Students 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;
- Students will be encouraged to tell a teacher immediately if they encounter any material that makes them feel uncomfortable.

How will E-mail be managed?

- Students are expected to use E-mail as part of the National Grid for Learning Initiative;
- Communications with persons and organisations will be managed to ensure appropriate educational use and that the good name of the school is maintained;
- The forwarding of chain letters will be banned;
- Students may send E-mail as part of planned lessons;

E-mail messages on school business (e.g. arranging a work placement) must be approved before sending

How will publishing on the Web be managed?

- The Headteacher has delegated editorial responsibility to a member of staff (Network Manger & Head of ICT) to ensure that content is accurate and quality of presentation is maintained;
- The Web site will comply with the school's guidelines for publications;
- Students will be taught to publish for a wide range of audiences which might include governors, parents or young children;
- All material must be the author's own work, credit the sources used and state clearly the author's identity or status;
- The point of contact on the Web site will be the school address and telephone number. Home information or individual E-mail identities will not be published;
- Photographs of identifiable individual students will not be published on the Web site. Group photographs should not have a name list attached.



How will the school ensure Internet access is appropriate and safe?

- Staff will check that the sites selected for student use are appropriate to the age and maturity of students;
- The network manager will monitor the effectiveness of Internet access strategies; and will use various security systems to monitor the appropriate use of ICT.
- Access levels will be reviewed as students' Internet use expands and their ability to retrieve information develops;
- The network manager will ensure that regular checks are made on files to monitor compliance with the school's Internet Access Policy;
- A range of fully tested, approved sites will be copied to the school intranet;

How will complaints be handled?

Responsibility for handling incidents will follow a strategic line of management. ICT technicians, to Head of ICT to Year Head/Senior Leadership team.

- Students and parents will be informed of the procedure;
- Parents and students will need to work in partnership with staff to resolve any issue;
- 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;
- If staff or students discover unsuitable sites, the URL (address) and content will be reported to the Internet Service Provider;
- Any material that the school suspects is illegal will be referred to the Internet Watch Foundation;
- Sanctions available include interview by head of ICT and/or head of year and, if appropriate, informing parents or carers;
- A student may have Internet or computer access denied for a period;
- Denial of access could include all school work held on the system, including any examination work;

How will staff, students and parents be kept informed?

- Rules for Internet access will be posted near computer systems.
- All pupils and staff including teachers, supply staff, classroom assistants and support staff, will be provided with the Internet Access Policy, which they must agree to each year before they are allowed access to the system.
- Parents' attention will 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 PSHE/ICT programme covering both school and home use.

How will parents' support be enlisted?

- The school will assist parents to develop a well informed and balanced view of the risks and benefits;
- Demonstrations and practical IT sessions for parents will be organised to encourage a partnership approach;
- Joint home / school guidelines on issues such as safe Internet use will be established;
- Suitable educational and leisure activities which make responsible use of the Internet will be developed with parents;
- A stock of relevant leaflets from organisations such as BECTa, PIN, and NCH Action for Children will be maintained.



Acceptable Internet Use Statement

For Staff and Students

The computer system is owned by the school, and may be used by students to further their education and by 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. The school will use a security system that allows constant monitoring of computers to ensure the following guidelines are adhered to.

Staff and students requesting Internet access should must accept and comply with the following guidelines.

- All Internet activity should be appropriate to staff professional activity or the student's education;
- Access should only be made via the authorised account and password, which should not be made available to any other person;
- Activity that threatens the integrity of the school ICT systems, or activity that attacks or corrupts other systems, is forbidden;
- Users are responsible for all E-mail sent and for contacts made that may result in E-mail being received;
- Use for personal financial gain, gambling, political purposes or advertising is forbidden;
- Copyright of materials must be respected;
- Posting anonymous messages and forwarding chain letters is forbidden;
- As E-mail can be forwarded or inadvertently be sent to the wrong person, the same professional levels of language and content should be applied as for letters or other media;
- Use of the network to access inappropriate materials such as pornographic, racist or offensive material is forbidden.

NOTE:

School reserves the right to discipline the student for actions taken off-campus if they are intended to have an effect on a student or they adversely affect the safety and well-being of student while in school. This makes it a contractual, not a constitutional, issue.



Rules for Responsible Computer Network Use

The school has installed computers with Internet access to help our learning. These rules will keep you safe and help us be fair to others.

- I will only access the system with my own login and password, which I will keep secret;
- I will not enter or tamper with another users personal use area or access other people's files;
- I will use the computers for school work and homework;
- I will not bring in floppy disks/CD's from outside school unless I have been given permission;
- I will ask permission from a member of staff before using the Internet;
- When using email I will only E-mail people I know, or my teacher has approved. The language used will neither be rude or offensive. The messages I send will be polite and responsible;
- I will not store images and music for personal use. Any images or music stored on the network will not be excessive and will be solely for work purposes.
- I will not give my home address or telephone number, or arrange to meet someone, unless my parent, carer or teacher has given permission;
- I will report any unpleasant material or messages sent to me. I understand this report would be confidential and would help protect other students and myself;
- I understand that the school may check my computer files and may monitor the Internet sites I visit and my computer usage.
- I will not load new programs onto the school network.
- I will not involve myself in any form of cyber bullying.
- I will not try and breach the security systems that are already in use by the school.
- I will not use the computer system to play games, other than those stipulated by my class teachers which are of educational value.

NOTE: If any of the above rules are broken I understand that appropriate disciplinary action will be taken depending on the severity of the action. Such measures will include, detentions, temporary or permanent suspension of computer use, letters home to parent, school exclusion or even police action

References

Kent NGfL Website Latest version of this policy www.kent.gov.uk/ngfl/policy.html

Connecting Schools: Networking People DfEE / BECTa April 1998 Tel. 0845 6022260 (free order line)

Preventing the Misuse of Computers in Schools British Computer Society www.bcs.org.uk/news/misuse.htm

Organising IT in Schools Norfolk County Council The PDC Centre, Woodside Road, Norwich, NR7 9QL Tel. 01603 433276 £25

Association for Co-ordinators and Teachers of IT (ACITT) Acceptable Use Policy for UK Schools www.acitt.org.uk/aup.html

Parents' Information Network (PIN) Leaflets www.pinlift.org.uk

NCH Action for Children A Parents' Guide www.nchaforchildren.org.uk

Censorship Issues BECTa www.becta.org.uk/projects/censor/

Internet Watch Foundation www.iwf.org.uk Reporting illegal Internet material Tel: 0845 600 8844

If a student has been found to be using the Internet inappropriately the rules, with the return slip will be sent home to parents/guardians. If it is not returned signed by parent/guardian access to the internet by the student will be denied.



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Student

I understand that my parents will be informed if I misuse the Internet.

I have read this policy and agree to follow it.

If I do not understand part of the policy and how it applies to me, I will ask a teacher or technician for help.

Name (please print) _____ Form: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian

I have read and understand this policy. I give permission for my son/daughter to use the Internet at school.

I understand if he/she fails to follow this policy, he/she will be punished and may not be allowed to use the Internet in future.

Name (please print) _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

If the letter is not returned the student will be barred from using the Internet in school.