



Online Safety Policy

Policy Review

Last reviewed: August 2026

Date of next review: August 2029

An Acceptable Use of the Internet

With the installation of C2K computers, Interactive whiteboards, Interactive Touch Panels and iPads in classrooms, children and teachers now have increased access to online learning platforms. There is a need to provide pupils with as safe an Internet environment as possible and a need to teach them to be aware of and respond responsibly to the risks.

It is therefore important that schools have in place an Internet Safety Policy with clear rules for an acceptable use of Internet resources.

It is essential that teachers, parents, Boards of Governors and pupils are all aware of Internet safety and are involved in devising and discussing appropriate strategies for the safety of all users.

What is the Internet?

The Internet is a huge network of computers making a worldwide community. It is a way of connecting computers together so that people using them can:

- share and increase their knowledge;
- talk to each other;
- send and receive messages;
- obtain information and resources;
- publish information;
- buy and sell things;
- have fun.

Its most frequently used facilities include:

The World Wide Web (WWW)

The World Wide Web (WWW) or Web provides easy access to the vast quantity of information and resources available on the Internet and is the facility which people use to “surf” for information. It is made up of millions of screens or pages of information.

The collection of pages created by one individual or organisation is known as a website. Each page can include text sound, images, animation and video and has its own unique address.

E-Mail

E-mail allows users to send and receive written messages.

Chat Rooms

Chat rooms allow a number of people to “meet” on the Internet. It is similar to having a telephone conversation with a number of people at one time except that the participants type instead of talk.

The Internet is often described as being like a vast city. It is an exciting place with a great variety of places to visit. There are shops, entertainment areas, educational areas and people to meet. But it also contains dangers. There are areas that we do not want to go to and that we certainly would not want children to visit.

How valuable is the Internet in Education?

The Internet is a unique and exciting resource. It brings the world into the classroom by giving children access to a global network of educational resources.

- ☐ It gives children opportunities to locate, retrieve and exchange information;
- ☐ It encourages the development of ICT skills that are vital to life-long learning;
- ☐ It takes learning beyond the classroom;
- ☐ It allows access to stores of information that might otherwise be unavailable in school;
- ☐ It provides up-to-date information;
- ☐ It is a fast and efficient way of communicating and retrieving information;
- ☐ It encourages independent learning;
- ☐ Children enjoy using it;

- ☐ It is part of their life experience. It is “cool”.

The Internet is increasingly forming part of our work, home, social and leisure activities. There is no doubt that the use of the Internet is an essential skill for children as they grow up in the modern world.

What are the Dangers?

The Internet is an open communications channel, available to all. Anyone can send messages, discuss ideas and publish materials with little restriction. This brings young people into contact with people from all sectors of society and with a wide variety of materials some of which could be unsuitable.

Key Concerns are:

- ☐ **Potential Contact** - Children may come into contact with someone on-line who may wish to harm them. Some adults use chat rooms or e-mail to communicate with children for inappropriate reasons

Children need to be taught:

- That people are not always who they say they are;
- That “Stranger Danger” applies to the people they encounter through the Internet.;
- That they should never give out personal details; or
- That they should never meet alone anyone contacted via the Internet.

- ☐ **Inappropriate Content** - Through the Internet there are unsuitable materials in many varieties. Anyone can post material on the Internet. Some material is published for an adult audience and is unsuitable for children e.g. materials with a sexual content. Materials may express extreme views. E.g. some use the web to publish information on weapons, crime and racism which would be restricted elsewhere. Materials may contain misleading and inaccurate information. E.g. some use the web to promote activities which are harmful such as anorexia or bulimia.

Children need to be taught:

- That information on the Internet is not always accurate or true;
- To question the source of information;
- How to respond to unsuitable materials or requests and that they should tell a teacher/adult immediately.

- **Excessive Commercialism** - The Internet is a powerful vehicle for advertising. In visiting websites children have easy access to advertising which is very persuasive.

Children should be taught:

- Not to fill out forms with a lot of personal details;
- Not to use an adult's credit card number to order online products.

If children are to use the Internet in places other than at school e.g. – libraries, clubs and at home, they need to be educated about how to behave on-line and to discuss problems.

There are no totally effective solutions to problems of Internet safety. Teachers, pupils and parents must be vigilant.

Steps We Take to Protect Children in School

Use of a Filtered Service

Access to the Internet on computers and laptops is provided through a filtered service. All access is provided through the C2k service which is designed to filter out unsuitable material. iPads are filtered by Capita.

Supervision

No filtering service is 100% effective; therefore all children's use of the Internet is supervised by an adult/teacher.

Planned Activities

Use of the Internet is a planned activity. Aimless surfing is not allowed. Children are taught to use the Internet in response to a need e.g. a question which has arisen from work in class.

Websites are previewed by teachers and revisited to ensure that they are suitable for children's curriculum needs and ability levels.

Search engines are used selectively. Teachers will choose the search engine and topic and discuss sensible search words which have been tried out beforehand.

Restrictions on E-mail

P4-7 children are given individual web-based e-mail addresses. These accounts are filtered by Capita. The children would only be accessing emails when supervised by teacher/adult.

Use of Agencies: PSNI, Ceops & Microsoft

Our pupils are regularly instructed on how to stay safe on the internet and how to use communicative technology appropriately. Each year we celebrate Internet Safety Day and organise appropriate talks with external agencies. We also hold information sessions for parents; provide copies of policies on our website. Our P7 children also participate in the PSNI Bee Safe programme and Citizenship and Safety Education (CASE).

Internet Safety Rules

Children are taught to be Internet Wise (netiquette). Children are made aware of Internet Safety Rules and are encouraged to discuss how to cope if they come across inappropriate material.

Children and their parents will be expected to read ICT Policy and complete an online Consent Form – Google Forms

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf_UTAaT2VfrPNmJ1b9RIDVHA1suYMNC1pHvL5zQvN-PunJ8g/viewform?usp=sf_link

All reasonable and appropriate steps have been taken to protect pupils. The school recognises that despite employing safety procedures, in some circumstances, the Internet may give children access to undesirable information or images.

Children are regularly reminded that should they encounter inappropriate material online they must immediately:

- ☐ Leave that website
- ☐ Inform an adult

Should a child or teacher encounter unsuitable material on the internet, this will be reported to ICT co-ordinator and Principal using a reporting log (Reporting Log – Appendix 1). This information will then be logged with C2k via the C2k helpdesk number.

Mobile Phones & Social Networking Sites

Many mobile phones now provide access to the internet and social networking sites and for this reason and for the protection of the entire school community, we would ask parents to note that mobile phones are not permitted on school premises unless a prior written agreement exists between parents and the Principal.

As a school we recognise that technology is fast-paced and ever-evolving. We encourage the responsible use of computer technology as a valid communication and research tool however, we do not encourage pupils (nor legally should pupils) under 16 years become members of any social networking site.

We would strongly advise parents against allowing pupils to access sites such as Facebook or Twitter etc.

Obviously, this is a decision parents must make and police for themselves but we, as a school, actively discourage this use until such times as pupils are mature enough to use this method of communication appropriately.

Inappropriate use of social networking sites or mobile phones which could cause offence or reflect negatively on any pupil or member of staff will be taken very seriously.

Points for Teachers to Consider

Internet use should be planned, task orientated and educational within a regulated and managed environment

- ☐ Supervision is the key strategy. Children should have a teacher or classroom assistant present when using the Internet. Computers should be positioned so that it is possible for adults to see materials on screen.
- ☐ Children should know why they are using the Internet. Aimless surfing should never be allowed. Teach children to use the Internet in response to a need e.g. to answer a question which has arisen from work in class.
- ☐ Search engines require careful use and planning/supervision. Children can be bombarded with information and yet fail to find the material they need. Teachers should select the search engine and topic and discuss sensible search words which have been tried out beforehand.

- ☐ Children do not need thousands of website addresses. A small appropriate choice is much more effective. 'Favourites' is a useful way to present this choice. Sites should always be previewed and revisited to be checked out. Consider off-line viewing.
- ☐ Discuss with pupils the rules for responsible Internet use. It is not enough to protect children from materials; we must teach them to become Internet Wise. Children need to learn to recognise and avoid the risks. Children need to know what to do if they come across inappropriate material or if they are approached by a stranger.
- ☐ They should ensure that the privacy settings are correct and that their account does not compromise their professional position. It is therefore essential that staff do not make disparaging remarks about employer/colleague/parents or pupils. Doing so in presence of others may be deemed as bullying and/or harassment. This may result in disciplinary action.
- ☐ Be informed – read e.g. - [Thinkuknow - home](#)
- ☐ Discuss Internet Safety with colleagues and as a staff.

All members of staff are expected to agree and complete 'Staff Acceptable Usage.'

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd5jzmFRdBheMbdEsL6K43xpcncqc8mB1jVbrhgp2kuxcbqdA/viewform?usp=sf_link

Points for Parents to Consider

It is important to promote Internet Safety in the home and to monitor Internet use.

- ☐ Keep the computer in a communal area of the home.
- ☐ Ask children how the computer works.
- ☐ Monitor on-line time and be aware of excessive hours spent on the Internet.
- ☐ Take an interest in what children are doing. Discuss with the children what they are seeing and using on the Internet.
- ☐ Advise children to take care and to use the Internet in a sensible and responsible manner. Know the SMART tips.
- ☐ Discuss the fact that there are websites which are unsuitable.
- ☐ Discuss how children should respond to unsuitable materials or requests.
- ☐ Remind children never to give out personal information on the Internet.
- ☐ Remind children that people online may not be who they say they are.

- ☐ Be vigilant. Ensure that children do not arrange to meet someone they meet online.
- ☐ Be aware that children may be using the Internet in places other than in their own home or at school.

Filtering for the Home Computer –

Parents may wish to invest in security software for their children's computers. Some of this software works by monitoring all Internet activity for trigger words.

There are many types of security software available.

[Best Antivirus Software \(antivirusguide.com\)](http://antivirusguide.com)

Points for children to consider: Follow these SMART tips

- **Safe-** Always keep your name, address, mobile phone number and password private – it's like giving out the keys to your home!
- **Meeting** someone you have contacted in cyberspace can be dangerous. Only do so with your parent's/carer's permission, and then when they can be present.
- **Accepting** e-mails or opening files from people you don't really know or trust can get you into trouble – they may contain viruses or nasty messages.
- **Remember** someone on-line may be lying and not be who they say they are. Stick to the public areas in chat rooms and if you feel uncomfortable simply get out of there!
- **Tell** your parent or carer if someone or something makes you feel uncomfortable or worried.

Helping your parents be cool about the Internet.

On our School Website:

- ☐ Any images of children will only be uploaded with parental permission
- ☐ No close-up pictures of children will be made available on line.
- ☐ Children and teachers will not reveal their personal details, home addresses or telephone numbers on the website.
- ☐ Website links selected by teachers, with prior approval from Principal/Vice Principal) may be put on the website for pupils to access outside of school – sites will be previewed and checked regularly.

Parents’/Carers’ permission will be sought to publish pupils work and/or photographs. These will only be published subject to the strict safeguards above.

Guidance Material on Internet Safety

ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE INTERNET AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES IN SCHOOLS Circular Number: 2007/1
[2007.01 - Amended\(2\).pdf \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

ONLINE SAFETY Circular Number: 2016/27
[DE Circular 2016.27 Online Safety.pdf \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Thinkuknow is the education programme from NCA-CEOP, a UK organisation which protects children both online and offline.

[Thinkuknow - home](#)

[Safety Advice & Tools | SafeKids.com](#)

NSPCC Internet Safety Training

www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/get-expert-training/keeping-children-safe-online-course/

Examples of safety rules for children are also available from:

[Kids’ Rules for Online Safety | SafeKids.com](#)

[Online Safety for Children - Tips & Guides | NSPCC](#)

[How to support your child when they're at home this month \(thinkuknow.co.uk\)](http://thinkuknow.co.uk)

APPENDIX 1

ICT Code of Practice Agreement for Pupils and Parents

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

- ☐ I will access the system with my login and password, which I will keep confidential.
- ☐ I will not access other people's files without permission.
- ☐ I will ask a teacher or suitable adult if I want to use the computers.
- ☐ I will ask permission from a member of staff before using the Internet.
- ☐ I will only use the computers for school work and homework.
- ☐ I will take care of the computer and other equipment.
- ☐ I will ask for help from a teacher or suitable adult if I am not sure what to do or if I think I have done something wrong.
- ☐ I will not bring an iPad, phone or technological device into school without permission.
- ☐ I will only e-mail people I know, or my teacher has approved.
- ☐ I will not open e-mails sent by someone I don't know.
- ☐ The messages I send will be polite and responsible.
- ☐ I will not give my home address or telephone number, or arrange to meet someone.
- ☐ I will tell a teacher or suitable adult if I see something that upsets me on the screen.
- ☐ I will report any unpleasant material or messages sent to me.
- ☐ I understand that the school may check my computer files and may monitor the Internet sites I visit.
- ☐ I will not use Internet chat-rooms in school.
- ☐ I will never give out personal information or passwords.
- ☐ I know that if I break the rules I might not be allowed to use a computer.

Signed by child

Signed by parent/guardian

Date

APPENDIX 2

Staff Acceptable Use Policy Agreement

I understand that I must use school ICT systems in a responsible way, to ensure that there is no risk to my safety or to the safety and security of the ICT systems and other users. I recognise the value of the use of ICT for enhancing learning and will ensure that students / pupils receive opportunities to gain from the use of ICT. I will, where possible, educate the young people in my care in the safe use of ICT and embed e-safety in my work with young people.

For my professional and personal safety

- I understand that the *school* will monitor my use of the ICT systems, email and other digital communications.
- I understand that the rules set out in this agreement also apply to use of school ICT systems (eg laptops, email, VLE, iPads etc) out of school, and to the transfer of personal data (digital or paper based) out of school
- I understand that the school ICT systems are primarily intended for educational use and that I will only use the systems for personal or recreational use within the policies and rules set down by the school.
- I will not disclose my username or password to anyone else, nor will I try to use any other person's username and password. I understand that I should not write down or store a password where it is possible that someone may steal it.
- I will immediately report any illegal, inappropriate or harmful material or incident, I become aware of, to the appropriate person.

I will be professional in my communications and actions when using school ICT systems

- I will not access, copy, remove or otherwise alter any other user's files, without their express permission.
- I will communicate with others in a professional manner, I will not use aggressive or inappropriate language and I appreciate that others may have different opinions.
- I will ensure that when I take and / or publish images of others I will do so with their permission and in accordance with the school's policy on the use of digital / video images. I will not use my personal equipment to record these images, unless I have permission to do so. Where these images are published (eg on the school website / VLE) it will not be possible to identify by name, or other personal information, those who are featured.
- I will only communicate with pupils and parents / carers using official school systems. Any such communication will be professional in tone and manner.
- I will not engage in any on-line activity that may compromise my professional responsibilities.
- I will not accept any friend requests from pupils.
- I will always ensure that I have watched completely any videos downloaded from sites such as 'You Tube' prior to use, to ensure they are appropriate.
- I will not use personal email addresses on the school ICT systems.
- I will not open any hyperlinks in emails or any attachments to emails, unless the source is known and trusted, or if I have any concerns about the validity of the email (due to the risk of the attachment containing viruses or other harmful programmes)
- I will ensure that my data is regularly backed up.
- I will not try to upload, download or access any materials which are illegal (child sexual abuse images, criminally racist material, adult pornography covered by the Obscene Publications Act) or inappropriate or may cause harm or distress to others. I will not try to use any programmes or software

that might allow me to bypass the filtering / security systems in place to prevent access to such materials.

- I will not try (unless I have permission) to make large downloads or uploads that might take up internet capacity and prevent other users from being able to carry out their work.
- I will not install or attempt to install programmes of any type on a machine, or store programmes on a computer.
- I will not disable or cause any damage to school equipment, or the equipment belonging to others.
- I understand that data protection policy requires that any staff or pupil data to which I have access, will be kept private and confidential, except when it is deemed necessary that I am required by law or by school policy to disclose such information to an appropriate authority.
- I will immediately report any damage or faults involving equipment or software, however this may have happened.

When using the internet in my professional capacity or for school sanctioned personal use:

- I will ensure that I have permission to use the original work of others in my own work
- Where work is protected by copyright, I will not download or distribute copies, incl. music & videos
- I understand that I am responsible for my actions in and out of the school
- I understand that this Acceptable Use Policy applies not only to my work and use of school ICT equipment in school, but also applies to my use of school ICT systems and equipment off the premises and my use of personal equipment on the premises or in situations related to my employment by the school.
- I understand that if I fail to comply with this Acceptable Use Policy Agreement, I could be subject to disciplinary action. This could include a warning, a suspension, referral to Governors and Principal and in the event of illegal activities the involvement of the police.

I have read and understand the above and agree to use the school ICT systems (both in and out of school) and my own devices (in school and when carrying out communications related to the school) within these guidelines.

Staff / Volunteer Name _____

Signed _____

Date _____

APPENDIX 3

Digital and Video Images of Pupils Agreement

I have read the school's Acceptable Use of the Internet and Digital Technologies policy and have circled below how I wish images of my child to be used.

Images of _____ (pupil's name) may be published in the following ways		
On the school web site	Yes	No
In the school prospectus/flier	Yes	No
In the press	Yes	No
For displays within school	Yes	No

Signed:

(Parent/Guardian)

Date:

APPENDIX 4

Reporting Log

Reporting Log Group	Signature				
	Incident Reported by				
	Action taken	By whom?			
		What?			
	Incident				
	Time				
	Date				