

# An Internet Safety Policy

## St. Anthony's Primary School Craigavon

### An Acceptable Use of the Internet

In all schools 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.



***“Children and young people need to be empowered to keep them-selves safe – this isn’t just about a top-down approach. Children will be children – pushing boundaries and taking risks. At a public swimming pool we have gates, put up signs, have lifeguards and shallow ends, but we also teach children how to swim.”***

***Dr Tanya Byron Safer children in a digital world: The report of the Byron Review***

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:

- talk to each other,
- send and receive messages,
- obtain information and resources,
- publish information,
- buy and sell things and
- 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.

The Internet is increasingly 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.

## What risks should we be guarding against?

The Byron Review has classified the risks as relating to **content**, **contact** and **conduct**. The risk is often determined by **behaviours** rather than the technologies themselves.

<b>Commercial</b>	<b>Aggressive</b>	<b>Sexual</b>	<b>Values</b>	
<b>Content</b> (child as recipient)	Adverts Spam	Violent/hateful content	Pornographic or unwelcome sexual	Bias Racist
Sponsorship Personal info	content advice	Misleading info or		
<b>Contact</b> (child as participant) info	Tracking Harvesting personal persuasions	Being bullied, harassed or stalked	Meeting strangers Being groomed	Self-harm Unwelcome
<b>Conduct</b> (child as actor) Gambling Financial scams Terrorism	Illegal downloading Hacking inappropriate material	Bullying or harassing another	Creating and uploading	Providing misleading info/advice

### 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.

## **Appropriate online behaviour**

- Social networking sites are good if they are used in the right way
- Personal data must be protected on line
- Don't provide any information that will help to locate you on line
- Public profiles are not advisable
- Reporting inappropriate behaviour
  - to the service provider/school
  - teachers or other adults
  - organisations such as CEOP
- Always think before you decide to disclose anything that is sensitive as you would in person.
- This is as applicable to teachers/parents as to young people

## **Steps We Take to Protect Children in School**

### **Use of a Filtered Service**

Access to the Internet is provided through a filtered service. All access is provided through the C2k managed service which is designed to filter out unsuitable material.

### **Supervision**

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

### **Planned Activities**

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

### **Restrictions on E-mail**

Children are not always given individual web-based e-mail addresses. In some instances children may have access to a group e-mail address to communicate with other children as part of a particular project. Messages sent and received in this way are supervised by the teacher.



## **Internet Safety Rules**

- The Internet can be a wonderful source of information. It can also be a great way for you to express yourself, share information with friends as well as network with people from all over the world. Having so much accessibility at your fingertips can be a very powerful resource if used appropriately. Unfortunately, there are situations whereby personal information that you have submitted to a website can get into the wrong hands, or that harmless photograph at a party has appeared on a world stage without your approval. If we are to get serious with using the internet appropriately then we need to address the issues surrounding internet safety.

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

## 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. 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.
- Children do not need thousands of website addresses. A small appropriate choice is much more effective.
- Individual e-mail addresses may not be considered appropriate for younger children. Class or project e-mail addresses may be used. All incoming and outgoing mail should be checked.
- 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.
- Be informed – read about e-safety e.g. – Becta materials <http://schools.becta.org.uk>
- Discuss Internet Safety with colleagues and as a staff.

## 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 on line may not be who they say they are.
- Be vigilant. Ensure that children do not arrange to meet someone they meet on line.
- 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.

Examples include:

- Net Nanny, [www.netnanny.com](http://www.netnanny.com)
- Surfwatch [www.safesurf.com](http://www.safesurf.com)

## **Mobile Phones**

Be aware of the safety issues regarding mobile phones. Increasingly these have Internet access.

Encourage children to talk about how they use mobile phones. Remind children not to give mobile numbers to strangers and people they do not know very well. Talk about responsible use of text messaging/images etc.

## Points for Children to Consider

### Follow These SMART TIPS



**Secret** - 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.

SMART Tips from: – Helping your parents be cool about the Internet,  
produced by: Northern Area Child Protection Committees

## **An Acceptable Use of the Internet**

Children should know that they are responsible for making an Acceptable Use of the Internet.

They must discuss and agree rules for this Acceptable Use. Parents are also asked to be aware of the code of Acceptable Use and confirm that their children will follow these rules.

- On the network, I will only use my own login username and password.
- I will not look at, change or delete other people's work/files.
- I will ask permission before entering any website, unless my teacher has already approved that site.
- I will only send e-mail which my teacher has approved. I will make sure that the messages I send are polite and sensible.
- When sending e-mail I will not give my name, address or phone number or arrange to meet anyone.
- I understand that I am not allowed to enter Internet Chat Rooms while using school computers.
- If I see anything I am unhappy with or I receive messages I do not like, I will tell a teacher immediately.
- I understand that if I deliberately break these rules I could be stopped from using the Internet.

## **A School Website**

On our School Website:

- Children are only referred to by their first names.
- Any images of children will not be labelled with their name.
- 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.
- Children do not have individual e-mail addresses.
- Website links selected by teachers 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.

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 on line they must immediately

- Leave that website
- Inform an adult

Should a child or teacher encounter unsuitable material through the managed service, this will be reported to C2k via the C2k helpdesk number.

### **Policy Review**

Internet technology and school use of resources will develop and change with time. It is our intention to revise and up-date our Internet Safety Policy as appropriate and where necessary.

## **Guidance Material on Internet Safety**

<http://schools1.becta.org.uk>

[www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk)

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

Examples of safety rules for children are also available from:

<http://www.kented.org.uk/ngfl/policy>