



INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT) ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Recent issues highlighted by the media, concerning Internet and unsolicited email safety, affect all schools. Whilst some of the media treatment is exaggerated, there are clearly some risks relating to the use of the Internet and computer systems in general about which teachers, staff and parents should be made aware. While there are risks of pupils encountering undesirable content, provided that sensible precautions are taken, the Internet in particular provides a rich source of high quality and attractive material for schools.

This Policy has been drawn up to protect all parties - the pupils, the staff and the School, and the following general principles apply:

- The computer system is owned by the School and is primarily made available to pupils to conduct research and further their education.
- Pupils are responsible for good behaviour on the Internet and email just as they are in a classroom.
- General school rules apply.
- Access is a privilege, not a right and that access requires responsibility.
- Pupils are responsible for their behaviour and communications on the Internet and email.
- Pupils must comply with the School standards and honour the agreement they have signed with the School.
- Serious contravention of this Acceptable Use Policy may lead to a pupil's suspension and/or permanent exclusion from the School.

INTERNET

The School provides an automatic filter system for accessing the Internet, which is constantly updated. A very common fear is that a pupil will encounter inappropriate material on the Internet. There is a danger of this happening, against which all schools must take precautions. It is true that a pupil is as likely to access inappropriate material through television, magazines and videos, for example, as through Internet access at School.

In fact, given the limited time available in School, it is more likely that a pupil will access inappropriate material from home computer use than during School hours. Parents should ensure that supervised use of the Internet is as vigilant at home as it is in School. This supervision is as vital for Internet access, as it would be in the case of access to televisions, telephones, movies, videos, radio and other potentially offensive media.

Internet filtering is not a substitute for personal vigilance. It is important that a sense of perspective is maintained in regard to Internet access, content and activity. Unwelcome material constitutes only a portion of the information available. However, parents are assured that this 'Acceptable Use Policy' must be strictly observed by all pupils.

GENERAL INTERNET USE

Pupils must not use the Internet to seek, read, display, print, download, or send any information, message or image in any medium that would be considered harmful or in anyway detrimental to the health, well-being, or positive development of the pupil or any other pupil who may be encouraged

to view the information/image or who may be the recipient of the information/image. Pupils will be provided with appropriate guidance as they make use of communications systems and electronic information resources to conduct research and other studies.

The School has developed a set of guidelines for Internet use by pupils. These guidelines, given below, will be made available to all pupils, and kept under constant review.

The School rules for Internet use and their implications will be explained to all pupils. Parents will be supplied with copies of this Policy and are encouraged to familiarise themselves with its contents.

All members of staff are aware of the possibility of misuses of on-line access and of their responsibilities and need for vigilance towards pupils. Internet sessions are automatically monitored, and, where possible, teachers will preview sites which are intended for use as part of a lesson. The use of search engines by pupils will be also closely monitored and/or restricted as appropriate.

PUPIL ACCESS TO THE INTERNET AND EMAIL INTERNET

A pupil's use of the Internet will only be permitted upon submission of a duly signed 'Permission and Agreement' form, and Internet access is available to all pupils. The School is pleased to offer this tool as an available resource to pupils for reference purposes and for researching project materials.

Pupils will therefore have ready access to thousands of libraries and databases on every subject written, and Electronic information research skills are fundamental to preparation for living and working. The School will integrate such information as appropriate within the curriculum and staff will provide guidance and instruction to pupils in the appropriate use of such resources.

EMAIL

A pupil's use of the School email system will only be permitted upon submission of a duly signed 'Permission and Agreement' form. Use of the School's system to send electronic mail, or email, is permitted to allow pupils to communicate with peers, teachers and family only. A separate set of guidelines exist regarding the use of email at the School and should be read in conjunction with this policy.

Pupils should be aware that email messages are open to inspection by the system administrator if any misuse is suspected. Email is monitored for inappropriate material via automatic filtering, and, in order to be on the safe side, this may occasionally lead to valid email being quarantined in error. Whilst this is monitored, anyone who suspects email is being unreasonably blocked should contact the Director of Information Systems.

WORLD WIDE WEB

Access to on-line resources will enable pupils to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and bulletin boards throughout the world, and the School believes that the benefits to pupils from access to these information resources and the increased opportunities for collaboration exceed the disadvantages.

The School uses filtering software which blocks out web pages containing expletive words, pictures, or topics of an unsuitable nature. Computer logs of all information accessed by pupils are regularly checked, and any misuse will incur severe penalties.

SCHOOL WEBSITE (PUBLIC DOMAIN)

Pupils may create projects, artwork or writing which would be suitable for publication on the School website. The work will appear in an educational context on web pages with a copyright notice prohibiting the copying of such work without express written permission.

The home address or telephone numbers of pupils will not appear with such work, and particular care will be taken where photographs of pupils are being used on the School's website. Personal pupil information including home address and contact details will be omitted from School web pages.

SCHOOL INTRANET (SHAREPOINT and 'Elaine')

Two private websites known as Intranets are also provided by the School which provides greater freedom for publishing and showcasing pupils' work and also to provide teaching and learning resources. The first website facility is known as 'SharePoint', this is used by both staff and pupils. It operates in a closed environment accessed only from within the School. The School has prepared appropriate procedures for SharePoint publishing and for reviewing and evaluating its effect on teaching and learning.

The second Intranet facility known as 'Elaine' is primarily for use by the pupils, but staff provide much of the content. This website is accessible from within the school and from outside the school. This website may only be accessed with a valid username and password which is allocated and is private to each individual pupil. 'Elaine' will eventually replace the pupil section on SharePoint allowing pupils to experience richer content and to provide access to school resources when not in school. The website address is www.students.downhouse.net

DATA PROTECTION ACT

The Data Protection Act 1998 was introduced to make new provision for the regulation of the processing of information relating to individuals, including the obtaining, holding, use or disclosure of such information. In accordance with the Act, the School only publishes pupils' information that is relevant to the context of the material. Information about material published and stored on SharePoint is available to parents on request.

LEGAL ISSUES

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 (UK). In many cases, laws relating to copyright, libel, defamation, obscenity or incitement to racial hatred are likely to apply. While the legal position is not always well defined, all users should bear in mind that there is a legal framework within which we all have to work and that misuse may result in appropriate disciplinary and legal action being taken.

PUPIL GUIDELINES FOR INTERNET, EMAIL AND OTHER TECHNOLOGY

- Activity that threatens the integrity of the School's information systems, or activity that attacks or corrupts other systems, is forbidden. Use of the network to access inappropriate materials such as pornographic, racist or offensive material is prohibited and where detected will be dealt with severely.
- In order that the school may maintain its duty of care pupils may only access the internet via the school network. Any pupil found accessing the internet by any other means such as via a mobile phone or laptop G3 device or any other similar device will have the device confiscated until the end of term.

- As email 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. No pupil may use strong or obscene language, swear or send or display messages or pictures that could be offensive to another person. Aggressive behaviour is not permitted, and pupils must not state anything which could be interpreted as libel or defamation. Additional disciplinary action may be taken in line with existing approved School practice on inappropriate language or behaviour.
- Pupils must not upload/send personal addresses, telephone/fax numbers or photographs of anyone (staff or pupils whether past or present) at the School.
- Use of names or photographs of pupils will require parents to have been informed about such use.
- Under no circumstances should a pupil view, upload or download any material which is likely to be unsuitable for children. This applies to any material of a violent, dangerous or inappropriate nature. If a pupil is unsure she should ask her teacher or Housemistress.
- Any use of email and/or the Internet (or other technology) which causes hurt or distress to others (cyberbullying), or which causes or could cause the School's name to be brought into disrepute, or which impacts or could impact negatively on the School community, will be viewed very seriously. Any pupil found engaging in this type of activity will face the appropriate sanction. Unacceptable use has many forms but can include: posting video clips of, or references to, a person without their permission; using Instant Messaging services such as MSN Messenger to harass or exclude a person; posting messages which defame or insult a member(s) of the School community.
- Pupils should never give out personal information such as their home address or telephone number in an email message to an unknown recipient or on the Internet more generally.
- Pupils should never make arrangements for an unsupervised meeting with another person online without the express permission in writing of a teacher/parent.
- If a pupil receives a message that causes them to feel uncomfortable in any way it must be reported to a teacher, their Housemistress or the Director of Information Systems. If a staff member receives a message that causes them to feel uncomfortable, it must be reported to the Director of Information Systems. On no account should there be a response made to such a message.
- Users are responsible for all email sent and for contacts made that may result in email being received.
- Creating, transmitting or posting anonymous messages or under an assumed name, is forbidden.
- Forwarding chain letters is forbidden.
- All users must access the system with their own login and password, which must be kept secret. Pupils must not use others' passwords or accounts. If a user suspects their password has been compromised they should contact the IT Support department for advice and/or instructions to generate a new password.
- Pupils must not access other students' files, folders, or work for any reason.

- Internet chat room sessions are prohibited, with the exception of forums on the School Intranet or when authorised by a teacher for use in a class (e.g. Modern Languages).
- Pupils must not under any circumstances use the School's network to post messages on any Internet message board or set up or log text or information on a blog.
- Use of the Internet for personal financial gain, trading, gambling (including the lottery), political purposes or advertising is forbidden. Pupils may use commercial websites for purchases on-line where access to such websites has been granted. The list of approved commercial websites is maintained through the school's website filtering software.
- Pupils must not violate copyright laws – they should not download, use or upload any material which is copyright. Pupils should always seek permission from the owner before downloading or emailing any material from the Internet. Pupils should remember that text, music and other content on the Internet are copyright works. If in doubt, pupils should not use the material.
- Pupils must not cause damage to School computers, or the School computer network or system. If a pupil attempts to abuse or interfere with the School computer network or system, or with any School computer equipment, this will be regarded as an extremely serious offence which will lead to sanctions being applied.
- All users should be familiar with these rules and how to use the Internet before going online.
- Pupils must ensure that they have followed the correct procedures for using the Internet. If any of the above guidelines are broken, it will result in appropriate disciplinary action being taken.
- The School reserves the right to examine or delete any files, communications (including email messages) and their attachments that may be held on its computer system and to monitor any Internet sites visited. Pupils should not expect that files stored on servers or storage media are always private. Computer logs may be viewed by the Headmistress or the Director of Information Systems where misuse is suspected or detected.

SANCTIONS

- Any violation of the above rules will result in a temporary or permanent ban on Internet/computer use.
- The pupil's parents will be informed.
- Additional disciplinary action may be taken in line with the School's Discipline Policy.
- Where appropriate, police or local authorities may be involved.
- If necessary, external agencies such as Social Networking or Email Member sites may be contacted to resolve any issues identified.
- This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's 'Email Policy'.

PARENT EXTRANET

A private website known as an Extranet is provided for Parents to access a range of information published by the school from school events to pupil end of term reports.

Access to this website is at two levels of security. The first level allows access to all generic school information via a global login (same for all users) namely a username of: DHParents and Password of: PP234 (Not case sensitive).

To access private information concerning individual pupils a second login is required. Each parent/guardian has an individual username and password. This is provided by IT Support.

The website address is www.extranet.downehouse.net

Review Leader: Director of Information Systems

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