

BLOGGS SCHOOL

Internet Access Policy

Revised September 2001

The statutory curriculum expects pupils to learn how to locate, retrieve and exchange information using ICT. In delivering the curriculum, teachers need to plan for and make use of communications technology, for example, web-based resources and e-mail. Access to life-long learning and employment increasingly requires computer and communications use and pupils need to develop life skills in their use.

Home and social Internet use is expanding and it is becoming an important part of learning and communication during leisure time. This brings pupils into contact with a wider range of information, the scope and nature of which may or may not be appropriate for the pupil. Some schools are discussing with parents strategies for the responsible use of the Internet in the home and community.

Why write an Internet Access Policy?

The Internet is managed by a worldwide, non-statutory collaboration of independent agencies that serve mainly an adult audience. Without appropriate measures, access to unsuitable materials would be possible and security compromised. An Internet Access Policy will help to ensure that Internet use supports the school's educational aims, that responsibilities to pupils are met. In addition, the DfEE requires that a school's ICT development plan for NGfL must set out their policy to protect pupils from access to undesirable materials.

Although teachers will have heard about the inappropriate aspects of the Internet, few will have had opportunities to discuss the issues in detail. The writing of the policy provides such an opportunity and the agreed policy produced is more likely to be implemented effectively.

The School's Internet Access Policy is part of the school's ICT Policy and ICT Development Plan and will relate to other policies including those for behaviour and for personal, social and health education including citizenship.

- *The purpose of Internet access in school 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 pupils. It is an entitlement for pupils who show a responsible and mature approach.*

The Internet Access Policy has been drawn up by a sub-committee of the governing body. It has been agreed by the senior management and approved by governors.

Chair of Governors..... Date.....

What are the benefits to the school?

The Government has set targets for ICT use in all schools by 2002 through the National Grid for Learning (NGfL) 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 pupils world-wide;*
- *Cultural, vocational, social and leisure use in libraries, clubs and at home;*
- *Discussion with experts in many fields for pupils 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 Internet use provide effective learning?

Teachers, parents and pupils need to develop good practice in using the Internet as a tool for teaching and learning. There is a fine balance between encouraging autonomous learning and maintaining adequate supervision. Systems to ensure Internet use is as safe as possible will enable increased use, the quality of that use becomes a critical factor.

- *Internet access will be planned to enrich and extend learning activities. Access levels will be reviewed to reflect the curriculum requirement;*
- *Pupils will be given clear objectives for Internet use;*
- *Staff will select sites which will support the learning outcomes planned for pupils' age and maturity;*
- *Pupils will be educated in taking responsibility for Internet access.*

How will pupils be taught to assess Internet content?

Pupils in school are unlikely to see inappropriate content in books due to selection by publisher and teacher. This level of control is not so straightforward with Internet-based materials. Therefore, ICT teaching should be widened to incorporate Internet content issues, for instance the value and credibility of Web materials in relationship to other media. The tendency to use the Web when better information may be obtained from books may need to be challenged.

- *Pupils will be taught ways to validate information before accepting that it is necessarily accurate;*
- *Pupils will be taught to acknowledge the source of information, when using Internet material for their own use;*
- *Pupils will be made aware that the writer of an e-mail or the author of a Web page might not be the person claimed;*
- *Pupils will be encouraged to tell a teacher immediately if they encounter any material that makes them feel uncomfortable.*

How will e-mail be managed?

E-mail is an essential means of communication within education. The government is encouraging the ownership of personal e-mail IDs for both teachers and pupils, but care needs to be taken to establish the implications for the school and for the pupils.

Once e-mail is available it is difficult to control its content, nevertheless e-mail content should not be considered private. School will monitor whether individual or whole-class e-mail accounts can be managed within the time and resources available.

- *Pupils need to use e-mail as part of the National Curriculum 2000 Orders;*
- *E-mail must only be used in school for educational purposes;*
- *Pupils will not be allowed to access personal e-mail from the school system;*
- *Primary pupils may send e-mail as part of planned lessons but will not be given individual e-mail accounts;*
- *The forwarding of chain letters will be banned, as will the use of chat lines;*
- *Excessive social chit-chat wastes pupils' time and computer resources and will be discouraged.*

How will publishing on the Web be managed?

Many schools have created Web sites that inspire pupils to publish work to a high standard, for a very wide audience. A Web site can celebrate pupils' work, promote the school and publish resources for projects or homework. Ground rules are important to ensure that the Web site reflects the school's ethos and that information is accurate and well presented.

As the school's Web site can be accessed by anyone on the Internet, the security of staff and pupils must be considered carefully. Although common in newspaper reports, the publishing of pupils' names beside photographs that identify individuals may be considered inappropriate on Web pages. While any risks might be small, the parents' perception of risk must also be taken into account in devising an appropriate policy.

- *The headteacher will delegate editorial responsibility to a member of staff to ensure that content is accurate and quality of presentation is maintained;*
- *The Web site will comply with the school's guidelines for publications;*
- *Pupils will be made aware that the quality of their work published on the web needs to reflect the diversity of the audience;*
- *All material must be the author's own work, or where permission to reproduce has been obtained, clearly marked with the copyright owner's name;*
- *The point of contact on the Web site should be the school address and telephone number. Home information or individual e-mail identities will not be published;*
- *Photographs must not identify individual pupils. Group shots or pictures taken over the shoulder will be used in preference to individual "passport" style images;*
- *Full names will not be used anywhere on the Web site, particularly alongside photographs;*
- *Written permission from parents will be sought before photographs of pupils are published on the school Web site.*

What other Internet applications are available?

The Internet is the underlying technology, ie. the wires and switches. New applications are being developed to use this ability to communicate, including conferencing applications such as Chat, Newsgroups and Webcams. Many of these facilities have great potential for education, for instance pupils could exchange live text, speech or video with a similar class in South Africa or Italy, at low cost. However most new applications start without the needs of young users being considered, particularly in the area of security.

- *Pupils will not be allowed to access public chat rooms;*
- *Newsgroups will only be available to staff and to senior pupils with specific permission;*
- *New facilities will be thoroughly tested before pupils are given access;*

How will Internet access be authorised?

The school should allocate access to the Internet on the basis of educational need and it should be clear who has Internet access, and who has not

- *Internet access is a necessary part of the statutory curriculum. It is an entitlement for pupils based on responsible use;*
- *At Key Stage 1, the majority of the access to the Internet will be by teacher or adult demonstration. However there may be situations when children have supervised access to specific approved on-line materials;*
- *At Key Stage 2, Internet access will be granted to a whole class as part of the scheme of work, after a suitable education in responsible Internet use;*
- *Parents will be informed that pupils will be provided with supervised Internet access.*
- *Parents will be asked to sign and return a permission form;*

How will the risks be assessed?

The school recognises that it is difficult to remove completely the risk that pupils might access unsuitable materials via the school system.

Disclaimer.

In common with other media such as magazines, books and video, some material available via the Internet is unsuitable for pupils. The school will supervise pupils 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 unsuitable material will never appear on a terminal. The school cannot accept liability for the material accessed, or any consequences thereof;

- *The use of computer systems without permission or for purposes not agreed by the school could constitute a criminal offence under the Computer Misuse Act 1990;*
- *Methods to identify, assess and minimise risks 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 the school ensure Internet access is safe?

The Internet is a communications medium that is freely available to any person wishing to send e-mail or publish a Web site on almost any topic. Access to appropriate information should be encouraged and Internet access must be safe for all members of the school community from youngest pupil to teacher and administrative

- **Filtering;** *examines the content of Web pages or e-mail messages for unsuitable words.*

This system cannot be completely effective and a combination of approaches will be required, alongside adequate supervision. It is important to establish the criteria used to accept or reject material,

- *Pupils will be informed that Internet use will be supervised and monitored;*
- *The school will work in partnership with parents, the LEA, DfEE and the Internet Service Provider to ensure systems to protect pupils are reviewed and improved;*
- *Senior staff will ensure that occasional checks are made to ensure that the filtering methods selected are effective in practice;*
- *If staff or pupils discover unsuitable sites, the URL (address) and content will be reported to the Internet Service Provider via the ICT co-ordinator;*
- *Any material that the school suspects is illegal will be referred to the Internet Watch Foundation.*

- **How will the security of school ICT systems be maintained?**

The Internet is a new connection to the outside world that could compromise system performance or threaten security.

- *Security strategies will be discussed with the LEA.*
- *The security of the whole system will be reviewed with regard to threats to security from Internet access;*
- *Personal data sent over the Internet will be encrypted or otherwise secured;*
- *Virus protection will be installed and updated regularly;*
- *Use of floppy disks will be reviewed. Personal floppy disks may not be brought into school without specific permission and a virus check;*
- *Use of e-mail to send attachments such as system utilities will be reviewed;*

How will complaints regarding Internet use be handled?

Prompt action will be required if a complaint is made. The facts of the case will need to be established, for instance whether the issue has arisen through Internet use inside or outside school.

- *Parents and pupils will need to work in partnership with staff to resolve issues;*
- *Sanctions available include interview/counselling by the headteacher and, if appropriate, informing parents or carers;*
- *A pupil may have e-mail, Internet or computer access denied for a period of time depending on the nature of the incident;*

How will staff and pupils be consulted?

It is very important that staff feel prepared for Internet use and subscribe to the school Internet Access Policy. Staff should be given opportunities to discuss the issues and develop appropriate teaching strategies. It would be unreasonable if staff, particularly supply staff, were asked to take charge of an Internet activity without training. Reassurance and discussion may be required.

- *Rules for Internet access will be posted near computer systems.*
- *All staff including teachers, supply staff, classroom assistants and support staff, will be provided with the Internet Access Policy, and its importance explained;*
- *Parents' attention will be drawn to the Policy in newsletters, the school brochure and on the school Web site;*

How will parents' support be enlisted?

Internet use in pupils' homes is increasing rapidly, encouraged by offers of free software and access on magazine covers. Unless parents are aware of the dangers, pupils may have unrestricted access to the Internet. The school may be able to help parents plan appropriate, supervised use of the Internet at home.

- *A careful balance between informing and alarming parents will be maintained;*
- *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;*
- *A stock of relevant leaflets from organisations such as BECTa, PIN, and NCH Action for Children will be maintained.*

16 How is Internet used across the community?

Internet use in the local community is becoming common. Although policies may differ in detail, community partners adhere to the same laws as schools with respect to content, copyright and misuse.

- *Rules for Internet access will be posted near computer systems, or will be available on request. Rules are there to protect legitimate use;*
- *Visits, demonstrations and practical IT sessions for schools may be organised to encourage a partnership approach;*
- *Suitable educational, vocational and leisure use is encouraged in community facilities.*

BLOGGS SCHOOL

Acceptable Internet Use Statement

For Staff and members of the community

The computer systems are owned by the school and are made available to pupils and the community to further their education and to 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 pupils, 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.

- All Internet use should be appropriate to staff professional activity or pupils education;
- Activity that threatens the integrity of the school ICT systems, or that attacks or corrupts other systems, is forbidden;
- Sites and materials accessed must be appropriate to work in school. Users will recognise materials that are inappropriate and should expect to have their access removed.
- Users are responsible for e-mail they send and for contacts made that may result in e-mail being received;
- The same professional levels of language and content should be applied as for letters or other media, particularly as e-mail is often forwarded;
- Posting anonymous messages and forwarding chain letters is forbidden;
- Copyright of materials and intellectual property rights must be respected;
- Legitimate private interests may be followed, providing school use is not compromised;
- Use for personal financial gain, gambling, political purposes or advertising is forbidden;

BLOGGS SCHOOL

Rules for Responsible Internet Use

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

- I will ask permission from a member of staff before using the Internet;**
- I will not access other people's files;**
- I will use the computers only for school work and homework;**
- I will not bring floppy disks into school unless I have permission;**
- I will only e-mail people I know, or my teacher has approved;**
- The messages I send will be polite and sensible;**
- I will not give my home address or phone number, or arrange to meet someone, unless my parent, carer or teacher has given permission;**
- To help protect other pupils and myself, I will tell a teacher if I see anything I am unhappy with or I receive messages I do not like;**
- I understand that the school may check my computer files and may monitor the Internet sites I visit.**

BLOGGS SCHOOL

Dear Parents

Responsible Use of the Internet

As part of pupils' curriculum enhancement and the development of ICT skills, BLOGGS is providing supervised access to the Internet including e-mail.

Although there have been concerns about pupils having access to undesirable materials, we are taking positive steps to deal with this risk in school. Our school Internet access provider operates a filtering system that restricts access to inappropriate materials.

Whilst every endeavour is made to ensure that suitable restrictions are placed on the ability of children to access inappropriate materials, the school cannot be held responsible for the nature or content of materials accessed through the Internet. The school will not be liable under any circumstances for any damages arising from your child's use of the Internet facilities.

A copy of the Rules for Responsible Internet Use is on the reverse of this form, a full copy of our Internet Access Policy is available on request. We also have a number of leaflets from national bodies that explain issues further.

Should you wish to discuss any aspect of Internet use please telephone me to arrange an appointment.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Permission for Internet Access

Parent/carer's permission

I give permission for access to the Internet on the terms set out in the above letter.

Signed:

Print name:

Date:

Pupil's agreement

I agree to follow the Rules for Responsible Internet Use.

Signed:

Print name:

Class:

References

Particularly for Parent

AmericaLinksUp

Useful US government site for parents

www.netparents.org/

Government site for Parents (UK)

Information about education for parents

www.dfes.gov.uk/parents/

NCHActionforChildren

A Parents' Guide to the Internet, leaflet

www.nchaforchildren.org.uk/internet/

ParentsandIT

BECTa information sheet

www.becta.org.uk/info-sheets/parents.html

Parents' Information Network (PIN)

Guidelines on using the Internet safely

www.pin-parents.com

Particularly for Schools

Association for Co-ordinators

Acceptable Use Policy for UK Schools

and Teachers of IT (ACITT)

www.acitt.org.uk/aup.html

Connecting Schools,

BECTa, October 1999 (free order line)

Networking

People

2000

Tel: 024 7641 6669

Internet Watch Foundation

Reporting illegal Internet material

www.iwf.org.uk

Tel: 0845 600 8844

Irish National Centre

Comprehensive advice on Internet use

for Technology in Education

www.ncte.ie/support.htm

Kent NGfL Website

Latest version of this policy

www.kent.gov.uk/ngfl/policy.html

Promoting the Responsible Use

British Computer Society / NAACE leaflet

of the Internet in Schools

www.bcs.org.uk/iap.htm

Superhighway Safety Pack

Free pack from DfEE on safe Internet use

<http://vtc.ngfl.gov.uk/vtc/library/safety.html>

Tel: 0845 6022260

The Internet and

Information sheet published April '99

the World Wide Web

www.becta.org.uk/info-sheets/internet.html