Allensbank Primary School

Only Our Best Will Do

Internet Access Policy

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Summary

Allensbank Primary School, in line with Cardiff LA believes that the educational benefits of Internet access far outweigh the possible risks and that good planning and management will ensure appropriate and effective pupil use. This is our policy for Internet access.

Cardiff LA Advisers and members of the Education ICT Working Party produced a template to help schools write their policy. Issues presented were taken into account in writing this policy.

Internet Access Policy for Allensbank Primary School

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 require 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 pupils.

In writing this policy, reference was made to the policy produced by teachers and officers in Cardiff to help schools write their own Internet access policy. In drafting that the LA expressed gratitude to colleagues in a number of LAs, the Kent NGfL Initiative, ESIS, The Northern Ireland Education Office, members of NAACE and the British Computer Society Schools Committee.

The authority wished to acknowledge the KCC and the Northern Ireland Education Office copyrights for sections of this paper.

Why have 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 schools' educational aims, responsibilities to pupils are met and that Cardiff Councils requirements are satisfied. In addition, The National Assembly for Wales (NafW) requires that a school's ICT development plan 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.
When writing the policy, a wide range of educational, management and technical issues needed to be considered.

Contents

- Internet Access Policy for Schools - *a template for schools to edit*
- List of contributors – *further comments welcome*
- Acceptable Use Statement - *for staff and senior students*
- Rules for Responsible Internet Use - *for younger pupils*
- Sample letter to parents – *with permission form*
- References and further reading – *for schools and for parents*

Internet Access Policy

for Allensbank Primary School

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

The Internet Access Policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis. It has been agreed by the senior management and approved by governors.

Why Internet access is important:
- *Access to the Internet is a necessary tool for staff and students. It is an entitlement for students who show a responsible and mature approach.*

- *It is a requirement of the National Curriculum (NC) orders for ICT and is implied in other subjects' orders.*
- *It is also used to raise educational standards, to support the professional work of staff and to enhance the school's management information and business administration systems*

The benefits to the school

The Government set targets for ICT use in all schools by 2002 through the National Grid for Learning (NGfL) initiative. A number of studies and 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 The National Assembly for Wales initiatives such as NGfL and the Virtual Teacher Centre;*
- *Cultural, vocational, social and leisure use in libraries, clubs and at home;*
- *Information from experts in many fields for pupils and staff;*
- *Staff professional development - access to educational materials and good curriculum practice;*
- *Communication with the LEAs advisory and support services, professional associations and colleagues;*
- *Improved access to technical support including remote management of networks;*
- *Exchange of curriculum and administration data with the LEA and The National Assembly for Wales.*

Internet use to 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 balance to be struck between encouraging autonomous learning and maintaining adequate supervision. Systems that ensure that Internet access is as safe as possible will enable increased use. The quality of this use is a critical factor.

- *Internet access will be purchased from a supplier that provides a service designed for pupils. This will include filtering appropriate to the content and age of pupils;*
- *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;*
- *Approved sites will be bookmarked and listed;*
- *Pupils will be educated in taking responsibility for their own Internet access.*

How pupils will 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. However, ICT teaching has been widened to incorporate Internet content issues, for instance the value of Web materials in relationship to other media. The use the Web when better information may be obtained from books is considered.

- *Pupils will be taught, as appropriate to their age, ways to validate information before accepting that it is necessarily accurate;*
- *Pupils will be taught, as appropriate to their age, 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.*
- *Pupils will be supervised when accessing and using the internet.*

Managing e-mail

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. E-mails for pupils and teachers in Cardiff can be supplied via CardiffSchools.Net. Allensbank School uses these E-mail addresses.

- *Pupils need to use e-mail as part of the National Curriculum (Wales) 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;*
- *Our pupils may send e-mail as part of planned lessons but will not be given individual e-mail accounts;*
- *In-coming email will be checked by staff – pupils will be informed of this and the implications of inappropriate messages;*
- *Messages sent using the school domain name should be regarded in the same way as messages written on school headed paper;*
- *The forwarding of chain letters will be banned, as will the use of chat lines (except under guidance and using the CardiffSchools.Net);*
- *The school reserves the right to scrutinise the content of all email sent or received using the school's registered domain name suffix and all electronic data stored on its system.*

Managing publishing on the Web

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, on Web pages the publishing of pupils' names beside photographs that identify individuals is considered inappropriate.

- *The Headteacher and members of staff with editorial responsibility 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.*

Other Internet applications

New applications are being developed to use the internet communications capability including Webcams and conferencing applications such as Chat and Newsgroups. Many of these facilities have great potential for education, for instance pupils could exchange live text, speech or video with a similar class in another country, at low cost. However, most new applications start without the needs of young users being considered, particularly in the area of security. Thus:

- *Pupils will not be allowed to access public chat rooms.*

- *New applications will be thoroughly tested before pupils are given access.*

Authorising Internet access

The school allocates access to the Internet on the basis of educational need. In the case of Allensbank Primary school, all staff and all pupils have been granted access as a blanket requirement.

- *Internet access is a necessary part of the statutory curriculum. It is an entitlement for pupils based on responsible use;*

- *At Foundation Phase much 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;*

- *It will be assumed that parents who do not return a form stating they do not wish their child to have internet access (except in lesson time) give their consent;*

Risk assessment

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

- *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. Neither the school nor Cardiff can 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, officers and advisers will work to establish agreement that every reasonable measure is being taken;*

- *The Headteacher will ensure that the policy is implemented effectively.*

Ensuring that 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 senior staff. Pupils have protected access to the Internet.

Teachers might need to research areas including drugs, medical conditions, bullying or harassment. In such cases, legitimate use must be recognised and the user protected from possible accusation of inappropriate use.

The technical strategies being developed to restrict access to inappropriate material fall into several overlapping types (sometimes all referred to as filtering):

a) **Blocking strategies** remove access to a list of unsuitable sites or newsgroups. Maintenance of the blocking list is a major task as new sites appear every day.

b) **A walled-garden or pass list** provides access only to a list of approved sites. Inevitably this approach will restrict pupils' access to valid information.

c) **Filtering** examines the content of Web pages or e-mail messages for unsuitable words. Filtering of Web searches attempts to block a current loophole.

d) **Rating systems** give each Web page a rating for sexual, profane, violent or other unacceptable content. Web browsers can be set to reject these pages.

None of these systems can 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, whether the criteria are set by the software supplier, the ISP or the school and whether the criteria are appropriate.

Blocking and/or filtering may be performed by the Internet Service Provider (ISP), by the use of CardiffSchools.Net or at school level. School-level systems require management to maintain effectiveness and place greater responsibility on the school. Systems to alter the degree of control to suit the age and learning context of the pupil are being developed, again requiring a degree of local management.

- *Pupils will be informed that Internet use will be supervised and monitored;*
- *The school will work in partnership with parents, the LEA, The National Assembly for Wales, Schoolmaster and the Internet Service Provider to ensure systems to protect pupils are reviewed and improved;*
- *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 Audit Department and the Internet Watch Foundation (see appendix);*

The security of school ICT systems

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

- *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 USB drives will be reviewed. Pupils' Personal USB drives may not be brought into school without specific permission and a virus check;*
- *Personally owned devices, such as PDA's or laptop computers, may not be connected to the schools network to gain access to the internet:*

Complaints regarding Internet use

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. Transgressions of the rules could include minor as well as the potentially serious and a range of sanctions will be required, linked to the school's behaviour policy.

- *Responsibility for handling incidents will be given to senior members of staff;*
- *Pupils and parents will be informed of the complaints procedure;*
- *Parents and pupils will need to work in partnership with staff to resolve issues;*
- *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;*
- *Sanctions available include interview/counselling by head and, if appropriate, informing parents or carers;*

Staff and pupil consultation

It is very important that all subscribe to the school Internet Access Policy.

- *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 prospectus and on the school Web site;*

Parental support

Internet use in pupils' homes has increased rapidly. 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.

- *Joint home / school guidelines on issues such as safe Internet use will be established;*

Internet use across the community

Internet use in the local community is becoming common. In addition to the home, access may be available at the local library, youth club, adult education centre, village hall or supermarket. The school may wish to contact their community colleagues in order to advise pupils regarding issues such as membership, booking procedures, availability and cost. Each organisation is developing its own approach and pupils may find variations in the rules and even unrestricted access to the Internet. Although policies may differ in detail, community partners adhere to the same laws as schools with respect to content, copyright and misuse.

Likely policy elements:

- *In libraries, parents/carers of children under 18 years of age will generally be required to sign an acceptable use policy on behalf of the child;*

- *In libraries, adult users will also need to sign the acceptable use policy;*

- *In libraries, children under 8 years of age must be accompanied by an adult when accessing the Internet, as required by The Children Act 1989;*

- *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.*

Union Advice "Any breach (of the Internet policy) may also be considered a breach of the employer" condition of service which would lead to disciplinary action on grounds of gross misconduct".

Acknowledgements

The original policy was developed by KCC, ESIS and further adaptations by Cardiff LEA

Allensbank School

Acceptable Internet Use Statement - For Staff

To ensure that members of staff are fully aware of their professional responsibilities when using information systems and when communicating with pupils, they are asked to sign this code of conduct. Members of staff should consult the school's e-safety policy for further information and clarification.

- I understand that it is a criminal offence to use a school ICT system for a purpose not permitted by its owner.

- I appreciate that ICT includes a wide range of systems, including mobile phones, PDAs, digital cameras, email, social networking and that ICT use may also include personal ICT devices when used for school business.

- I understand that school information systems may not be used for private purposes without specific permission from the Headteacher.

- I understand that my use of school information systems, Internet and email may be monitored and recorded to ensure policy compliance.

- I will respect system security and I will not disclose any password or security information to anyone other than an authorised system manager.

- I will not install any software or hardware without permission.

- I will ensure that personal data is stored securely and is used appropriately, whether in school, taken off the school premises or accessed remotely.

- I understand that I am responsible for any e-mails I send and for contacts made that may result in e-mails being received.

- I will respect copyright and intellectual property rights.

- I will report any incidents of concern regarding children's safety to the e-Safety Coordinator, the Designated Child Protection Coordinator or Headteacher.

- I will ensure that electronic communications with pupils including email, IM and social networking are compatible with my professional role and that messages cannot be misunderstood or misinterpreted.

- I will promote e-safety with students in my care and will help them to develop a responsible attitude to system use, communications and publishing.

The school may exercise its right to monitor the use of the school's information systems and Internet access, to intercept e-mail and to delete inappropriate materials where it believes unauthorised use of the school's information system may be taking place, or the system may be being used for criminal purposes or for storing unauthorised or unlawful text, imagery or sound.

I have read, understood and accept the Staff Code of Conduct for ICT

Signed: Date:

Access Granted: Date:

Allensbank Primary 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 use only my own login and password, which I will keep secret;**

- **I will not access other people's files;**

- **I will use the computers only for school work and homework;**

- **I will not bring USB drives into school unless I have permission;**

- **I will only e-mail people 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.**

Dear Parents

Responsible Use of the Internet

As part of pupils' curriculum enhancement and the development of ICT skills, Allensbank Primary School 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. This may not be the case at home and we enclose references to information on safe Internet access that may be of use.

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

I enclose a copy of the Rules for Responsible Internet Use that we operate at Allensbank Primary School. We also have a number of leaflets from national bodies that explain issues further.

Should you wish to discuss any aspect of Internet use (or to see a lesson in operation) please telephone me to arrange an appointment.

Yours sincerely

Ms S Roberts
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 Parents

America Links Up
Useful US government site for parents   www.netparents.org/

Government site for Parents (UK)
Information about education for parents   www.dfee.gov.uk/parents/

NCH Action for Children
A Parents' Guide to the Internet, leaflet   www.nchafc.org.uk/internet/

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

Connecting Schools, Networking People 2000
BECTa, October 1999 (free order line)   Tel: 024 7641 6669

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

Irish National Centre for Technology in Education
Comprehensive advice on Internet use   www.ncte.ie/support.htm

Promoting the Responsible Use of the Internet in Schools
British Computer Society / NAACE leaflet   www.bcs.org.uk/iap.htm

Superhighway Safety Pack   http://vtc.ngfl.gov.uk/vtc/library/safety.html
Free pack from DfEE on safe Internet use   Tel: 0845 6022260

The Internet and the World Wide Web
Information sheet published April '99   www.becta.org.uk/info-sheets/internet.html