

Ratified by BOM @ 21st September 2006

Ashbourne Community School

Acceptable Use Policy

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that pupils will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's Internet resources in a safe and effective manner. Internet use and access is considered a school resource and privilege. Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions – as outlined in the AUP – will be imposed.

It is envisaged that school and parent representatives will revise the AUP annually. Before signing, the AUP should be read carefully to ensure that the conditions of use are accepted and understood.

This version of the AUP was created on _____ (date)

by

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Information Technology at Ashbourne Community School

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School's Strategy

Ashbourne Community School employs a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet. These strategies are as follows:

General

- Internet sessions are always be supervised by a teacher.
- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems are used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- The school regularly monitors pupils' Internet usage.
- Students and teachers will be provided with training in the area of Internet safety.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software is not permitted.
- Virus protection software is used and updated on a regular basis.
- The use of personal floppy disks, CD-ROMs and memory sticks in school is not permitted.
- Students and teachers work can be saved to a single server and as a result files are accessible from any computer that networked.
- Teachers are given an IT Information Booklet (attached at back of policy).
- Students sign in at a computer and sign out when class is finished. This allows the school to know who has worked at any particular computer at any time.
- Students will observe good "netiquette" (i.e., etiquette on the Internet) at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.

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World Wide Web

Explanation:

The WWW World Wide Web can be considered a virtual library of information; as a result, many schools use it to locate information published by other schools, governments, universities, companies and teacher organisations.

Benefits

- Exposure to a wide variety of educational material in multimedia formats.
- The ability to broaden information research skills.

Risks

- Exposure to illegal or harmful material.
- As the WWW is made up of web pages of information where any member of the global community can be an author, the validity of information available may often be questionable or inauthentic. Students need to be taught the necessary literacy skills to be able to discern the validity of content on web pages

Policy:

- Students will not visit Internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Students will use the Internet for educational purposes only.
- Students will be familiar with copyright issues relating to online learning.
- Students will never disclose or publicise personal information.
- Students will be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored for unusual activity, security and/or network management reasons.

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Email

Explanation:

Electronic mail or email is a communication tool that allows people around the world to send text (and non-text items) to each other. Communication by email is probably the most frequently used application and the most compelling aspect of using the Internet. Email sent via the Internet normally arrives at its destination in a matter of seconds. Broadly speaking, there are two scenarios of email access in schools with the most common being the first described below. Here, students can send or receive emails internal to the school using a class, school or personal email account; in this case, sending both internal and external emails is usually conducted under the supervision of a teacher.

The second type of email access in schools is the use of web-based email such as "hotmail" or "yahoo". This may be considered unrestricted personal email access as it means that teachers are unable to monitor the content of student emails.

Ashbourne Community does not allow students access to web – based email.

Benefits

- Allows students to communicate, share ideas and resources with teachers and students all over the world.
- Students can engage in collaborative projects with online peers.
- Improvement in student writing and communication skills.

Risks

- Receipt of spam mail (electronic junk mail), which may be offensive, controversial or of an illegal or harmful nature.
- Contact with unsuitable social groups or people who disguise their identity.
- Receipt and distribution of viruses and chain mail.

Policy

- Students will use approved class email accounts under supervision by or permission from a teacher.
- Students will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Students will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
- Students will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.
- Students will note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher.

Chat rooms

A chat room is a place where messages are posted in order to conduct a conversation in real time with one or more people. When a line of conversation is typed the other person sees it immediately and can reply straight away. There are number of different varieties of chat, including IRC (Internet Relay Chat), ICQ (I-Seek-You) and chat rooms that facilitate avatars or cartoons. Reputable chat rooms normally have clearly stated terms and conditions, safety tips and a privacy statement.

Although chat rooms are rarely used in schools, students are enthusiastic users in their free time. Given that students are already highly motivated to use chat rooms, this presents many possibilities for the effective integration of chat rooms into lessons.

As students can interact with a variety of types of people in a chat room, it is important to foster and encourage an understanding of the benefits and the risks associated with their usage.

Ashbourne Community School does not allow students access to chat rooms.

Benefits

- May enhance language-learning opportunities and collaborative projects.
- Presents opportunities to interact with mentors or subject specialists.

Risks:

- Contact with people who disguise their true identity.
- Disclosure of personal details such as a/s/l (age, sex, location).
- Invitation to a face-to-face meeting.
- Exposure to harmful or illegal material.

Policy:

- Students will only have access to chat rooms, discussion forums or other electronic communication forums that have been approved by the school.
- Chat rooms, discussion forums and other electronic communication forums will only be used for educational purposes and will always be supervised.
- Usernames will be used to avoid disclosure of identity.
- Face-to-face meetings with someone organised via Internet chat will be forbidden.

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Publishing a school website

Publishing a school or class website presents a wide range of learning opportunities for both teachers and students. Often, as students with advanced technology skills become project leaders, teachers take on a new role as either facilitator or learner. Through this activity, curricular resources can be shared, collaborative projects can be undertaken and the school can be promoted within the wider community.

Benefits:

- Students and teachers are given an opportunity to learn technical skills related to web authoring.
- Students gain an appreciation of the online publishing process (planning, creating storyboards, content development, teamwork, testing, evaluation, editing etc.) and publishing for a wider target audience.
- Students gain an insight into roles and responsibilities associated with project work.

Risks:

- Photographs of children may be downloaded by social groups for illegal use.
- The publication of personal details may place students at risk of being contacted either face-to-face or online by other users.

Policy:

- Pupils will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the World Wide Web.
- The publication of student work will be co-ordinated by a teacher.
- Pupils' work will appear in an educational context on Web pages with a copyright notice prohibiting the copying of such work without express written permission.
- Digital photographs, audio or video clips of individual students will not be published on the school website. Instead photographs, audio and video clips will focus on group activities. Video clips may be password protected.
- Personal pupil information including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages.
- Pupils will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

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Legislation

The school will provide information on the following legislation relating to use of the Internet which teachers, students and parents should familiarise themselves with:

- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998
- Interception Act 1993
- Video Recordings Act 1989
- The Data Protection Act 1988

Support Structures

The school will inform students and parents of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet.

Sanctions

Misuse of the Internet may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

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Internet Acceptable Use Policy.

- Students will use the Internet for educational purposes only.
- Students will be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored for unusual activity, security and/or network management reasons.
- Students will use approved class email accounts under supervision by or permission from a teacher.
- Students will not send or request to receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Students will note that sending or requesting the receipt of email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher.
- The use of personal floppy disks, CD-ROMs and memory sticks in school is not permitted
- Ashbourne Community School does not allow students access to chat rooms.
- Ashbourne Community School does not allow access to web based email unless under the strict supervision of a teacher and for project use only.

Sanctions

Misuse of the Internet may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

Pupil

I agree to follow the school's Acceptable Use Policy on the use of the Internet. I will use the Internet in a responsible way and obey all the rules explained to me by the school.

Pupil's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian

I understand that Internet access is intended for educational purposes. I also understand that every reasonable precaution has been taken by the school to provide for online safety but the school cannot be held responsible if pupils access unsuitable websites.

Parent / Guardian: _____ Date: _____