



## Rathfarnham Educate Together National School,

### Our rules for Acceptable Internet Use

In Rathfarnham Educate Together N.S. we believe that Internet use is a necessary tool for education. Internet will be used as a teaching resource to raise educational standards and to promote pupil achievement and motivation to learn. The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) 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 Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions – as outlined in the AUP – will be imposed.

Staff/People employed by the school, student teachers, volunteers etc who breach the AUP may be dealt with by the Board of Management's disciplinary procedures and/or child protection procedures. \* See RETNS Child Protection Policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with RETNS Anti-Bullying Policy and RETNS Behaviour Policy.

### School's Strategy

The school will employ 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 will always be supervised by a teacher.
- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- The school will regularly monitor pupils' Internet usage.
- Teachers will be made aware of internet safety issues.
- Pupils will be provided with training in the area of internet safety.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- Children will not bring any computer games, USB keys, etc. from home, unless with express permission from a teacher.
- Pupils 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.
- 'YouTube' (and similar sites) will be accessed only under the supervision and guidance of the teacher.

#### World Wide Web

- Pupils will not intentionally visit Internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Pupils will use the Internet for educational purposes and/or as deemed appropriate by the teacher-

e.g. as a reward or for golden time etc.

- Teachers and pupils will be familiar with copyright issues relating to online learning.
- Pupils will never disclose or publicise personal information.
- All Internet users in Rathfarnham Educate Together School should be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored.
- Pupils and staff (including people employed by the school/contractors etc) will not visit Internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable material.

### Email

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

### Internet Chat

- Pupils 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 are forbidden.

### School Website

- 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.
- Photographs, audio and video clips of children may be used on the website. These will be published with permission using the school's standard permission form which is signed on accepting a place in the school. These will focus on group activities and the use of individual photographs will be avoided. 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.

### Personal Devices

Pupils using their own technology in school, such as leaving a mobile phone turned on or using it in class, sending nuisance text messages or the unauthorised taking of images with a mobile phone camera, is in direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy.

### 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. The following is a selection of websites offering support and advice in the area of Internet Safety:

- NCTE – <http://www.ncte.ie/InternetSafety/>
- Webwise – <http://www.webwise.ie>
- Make IT Secure – <http://makeitsecure.ie>
- Safe Internet – <http://www.saferinternet.org>

The following guide is available in the school:

Be Wise on the Net...Information and Advice for Schools NCTE

### Education

Rathfarnham Educate Together School will undertake an education programme to educate children on the safe, responsible use of the Internet. 21<sup>st</sup> century life presents dangers including violence, racism and exploitation from which children and young people need to be protected. At the same time they need to learn to recognise and avoid these risks – to become Internet wise.

### Filtering

Rathfarnham Educate Together School will use the Internet provided and filtered by the NCTE (National Centre for Technology). The access to websites from all school computers is monitored and regularly reviewed by the NCTE. Websites are only allowed through the filtering system following a verification of their suitability.

## Sanctions

If a pupils deliberately misuses the Internet or email, is found running searches on inappropriate topics or attempting to access inappropriate/unsuitable websites, this will result in disciplinary action, including the withdrawal of access privileges. Parents/guardians will receive notification of misuse by a pupil. Further misuse will result in longer withdrawal of access privileges, as seen fit by the school staff. In extreme cases of Internet misuse, suspension or expulsion may occur. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

## Sample Letter to Parents

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As part of the school's education programme we offer pupils supervised access to the Internet. This will allow pupils vast educational opportunities by helping them, for example, locate material for projects, communicate with students from different cultures, become independent in controlling their own research and become independent learners.

While we as educationalists recognize the value of the Internet as a resource, we must also acknowledge the potential risks to students. We feel that the answer to this issue is to teach pupils to recognize the risks and to become **Internet Wise**. We also allow limited access to 'YouTube' on a strictly supervised basis. This is to allow access to a range of educational material. The filter to prevent access to unsuitable material on YouTube is also in operation.

**This process of education and supervision is the shared responsibility of the school and the parent/guardian.**

For this reason we have compiled a school policy on Internet safety. Parents must also set and convey standards of usage to their children.

It is important that you read the school's Internet Acceptable Use Policy (available on the school website) and sign the attached document.

There is also a document for pupils to sign. Parents should discuss this document with their children to ensure that they clearly understand the school rules with regard to Internet usage.

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Principal

## **Responsible Internet Use Pupil Undertaking**

We use the school computers and Internet connection for learning.

These rules will help us to be fair to others and keep everyone safe.

- I will ask permission before entering any website, unless my teacher has already approved that site
- I will not bring external storage devices such as pen drives (or memory sticks/USB keys, etc.) into school without permission
- I will not use email for personal reasons
- I will only use email for school projects and with my teacher's permission
- The messages I send will be polite and sensible
- When sending email, I will not give my home address or phone number or arrange to meet anyone
- I will ask for permission before opening an email or an email attachment
- I will not use internet chat rooms
- If I see anything I am unhappy with, or if I receive a message I do not like, I will tell a teacher immediately
- I know that the school may check my computer files and may monitor the sites I visit
- I understand that if I deliberately break these rules I could be stopped from using the Internet and computers and my parents will be informed.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Pupil(s)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

