



## **Internet Usage Policy**

“The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen”. 2 Timothy 4:18

### **Introduction**

The Internet, when used with care in school can provide students with a vast array of information, pictures, sounds and video, prepared by experts in an array of fields.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safe and sensible use of this great resource. This policy is split into the following sub-sections:

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### **1. Policy Authors**

Our Internet Policy has been written by the school, building on the Kent NGfL policy and government guidance. It has been agreed by the senior management and approved by governors. It will be reviewed annually.

Created by: .....

Date: .....

To be revised: .....

Approved: .....

## **2. The purpose of the Internet at St. Martha's**

- Internet use is a part of the statutory curriculum and a necessary tool for staff students and pupils.
- The Internet is an essential element in 21st century life for education, business and social interaction. The school has a duty to provide students with quality Internet access as part of their learning experience.

## **3. Benefits to the School**

- access to world-wide educational resources including museums and art galleries;
- access to experts in many fields for students, pupils and staff;
- staff professional development through access to national developments, educational materials and good curriculum practice;
- communication with support services, professional associations and colleagues;
- mentoring of students, pupils and provide peer support for them and teachers

## **4. Benefits to learning**

- St. Martha's Internet access will be designed expressly for student and pupil use and will include filtering appropriate to the age of the students/pupils.
- Students and pupils will be taught what Internet use is acceptable and what is not and given clear objectives for Internet use.
- Internet access will be planned to enrich and extend learning activities. Access levels will be reviewed to reflect the curriculum requirements and age of the students and pupils.
- Staff should guide students and pupils in on-line activities that will support the learning outcomes planned for their age and maturity.
- Students and pupils will be educated in the effective use of the Internet in research, including the skills of knowledge location, retrieval and evaluation.

## **5. Content**

- If staff, students, or pupils discover unsuitable sites, the URL (address) and content must be reported to the Network Manager.
- The school will ensure that the use of Internet derived materials by staff, students and pupils complies with copyright law. Students and pupils will be taught to be critically aware of the materials they read and shown how to validate information before accepting its accuracy.
- Students and pupils will be taught to acknowledge the source of information used and to respect copyright when using Internet material in their own work.

## **6. E-Mail**

- Students/pupils will only use approved e-mail accounts for educational tasks.
- Students/pupils must immediately tell a teacher if they receive offensive e-mail.
- Students/pupils must not reveal details of themselves or others in e-mail communication, such as address or telephone number, or arrange to meet anyone.
- Excessive social e-mail use can interfere with learning and may be restricted.

- E-mail sent to an external organisation should be written carefully and authorised before sending, in the same way as a letter written on school headed paper.
- The forwarding of chain letters is not permitted.

### **7. Website**

- The point of contact on the Web site should be the school address, school e-mail and telephone number. Staff, students' or pupils' home information will not be published.
- Students'/pupils' full names will not be used anywhere on the Web site, particularly in association with photographs.
- Written permission from parents or carers will be obtained before photographs of students/pupils are published on the school Web site.
- The Headmaster or nominee will take overall editorial responsibility and ensure that content is accurate and appropriate.
- The Web site should comply with the school's guidelines for publications.
- The copyright of all material must be held by the school, or be attributed to the owner where permission to reproduce has been obtained.

### **8. Newsgroups**

- Newsgroups will not be made available to students/pupils unless an educational requirement for their use has been demonstrated.

### **9.Chat / Instant Messaging**

- Students/pupils will not be allowed access to public or unregulated chat rooms.
- A risk assessment will be carried out before students/pupils are allowed to use a new technology in school.

### **10. Emerging Technologies**

- Emerging technologies will be examined for educational benefit and a risk assessment will be carried out before use in school is allowed.
- Mobile phones will not be used during lessons or formal school time without the permission of the teacher. The sending of abusive or inappropriate text messages is forbidden.

### **11. Access Authority**

- The school will keep a record of all staff, students and pupils who are granted Internet access. The record will be kept up-to-date, for instance a member of staff may leave or students/ pupils access be withdrawn.
- Parents will be informed that students and pupils will be provided with supervised Internet access.
- Students and pupils must apply for Internet access individually by agreeing to abide by the Responsible Internet Use statement.
- Parents will be asked to sign and return a consent form.

### **12. Risk Assessment**

- In common with other media such as magazines, books and video, some material available via the Internet is unsuitable for students/pupils. The school will take all reasonable precautions to ensure that users access only appropriate material. However, due to the international scale and linked nature of Internet content, it is

not possible to guarantee that unsuitable material will never appear on a school computer. St. Martha's cannot accept liability for the material accessed, or any consequences of Internet access.

- The use of computer systems without permission or for inappropriate purposes could constitute a criminal offence under the Computer Misuse Act 1990.
- Methods to identify, assess and minimise risks will be reviewed regularly.
- The Headmaster will ensure that the Internet policy is implemented and compliance with the policy monitored.

### **13. Filtering**

- The school will work in partnership with parents, DfES and the Internet Service Provider to ensure systems to protect students/pupils. These are reviewed and improved regularly.
- If staff, students or pupils discover unsuitable sites, the URL (address) and content must be reported to the Network Manager.
- Senior staff will ensure that regular checks are made to ensure that the filtering methods selected are appropriate, effective and reasonable.
- Any material that the school believes is illegal must be referred to the Internet Watch Foundation.
- Filtering strategies will be selected by the school, in discussion with the filtering provider where appropriate. The filtering strategy will be selected to suit the age and curriculum requirements of the student/pupil.

### **14. How will the policy be introduced to students and pupils?**

- Rules for Internet access will be posted in all rooms where computers are used.
- Students/pupils will be informed that Internet use will be monitored.
- Instruction in responsible and safe use should precede Internet access.
- A module on responsible Internet use will be included in the PSHE programme covering both school and home use.

### **15. How will staff be consulted?**

- All staff must accept the terms of the 'Responsible Internet Use' statement before using any Internet resource in school.
- All staff including teachers, supply staff, classroom assistants and support staff, will be provided with the School Internet Policy, and its importance explained.
- Staff should be aware that Internet traffic can be monitored and traced to the individual user. Discretion and professional conduct is essential.
- The monitoring of Internet use is a sensitive matter. Staff who operate monitoring procedures should be supervised by senior management.
- Staff development in safe and responsible Internet use, and on the school Internet policy will be provided as required.
- The school ICT systems will be reviewed regularly with regard to security.
- Virus protection will be installed and updated regularly.
- Personal data sent over the Internet will be encrypted or otherwise secured.
- Use of portable media such as memory sticks and CD-ROMs will be reviewed. Portable media may not be brought into school without specific permission and a virus check.
- Unapproved system utilities and executable files will not be allowed in students'/pupils' work areas or attached to e-mail.
- Files held on the school's network will be regularly checked.
- The Network Manager will ensure that the system has the capacity to take increased traffic caused by Internet use.

## **16. How will complaints regarding Internet use be handled?**

- Responsibility for handling incidents will be delegated to a senior member of staff.
- Any complaint about staff misuse must be referred to the Headmaster.
- Students, pupils and parents will be informed of the complaints procedure.
- Parents, students 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 could be made to establish the legal position and discuss strategies.
- Sanctions available include:- interview/counselling by head of year; informing parents or carers; removal of Internet or computer access for a period, which could ultimately prevent access to files held on the system, including examination coursework.

## **17. How will parents' support be enlisted?**

- Parents' attention will be drawn to the School Internet Policy in newsletters, the school brochure and on the school Web site.
- Internet issues will be handled sensitively to inform parents without undue alarm.
- A partnership approach with parents will be encouraged. This could include demonstrations, practical sessions and suggestions for safe Internet use at home.
- Advice on filtering systems and educational and leisure activities that include responsible use of the Internet will be made available to parents.
- Interested parents will be referred to organisations such as PIN, Parents Online and NCH Action for Children (URLs in reference section).