

# Acceptable Use of ICT Policy

<b>Review Date</b>	October 2015	<b>Leader of Policy Review</b>	Mr. S. Budgen
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## Principles

Use of electronic communication relates to students and all staff. The purpose of using electronic communication is to raise educational standards, support the professional work of staff, and support the professional development of staff and to enhance the school's management information and business administration systems.

Linking computer technology with telecommunications offers access to a wide range of information and services. This link has given rise to the term information and communications technology (ICT). Of particular importance is the networking of computers and linking to the Internet. The benefits include: access to world- wide educational resources including museums and art galleries; educational and cultural exchanges; access to experts; professional development for staff; collaboration across support services and professional associations; improved access to technical support; exchange of curriculum and administration data.

Access to electronic communication systems is a necessary tool for staff and an entitlement for students who show a responsible and mature approach. The purpose of Internet use is to raise educational standards, to promote student achievement and to support the professional work of staff. Internet use is part of the statutory curriculum and a necessary tool for learning. Students use the Internet widely outside school need to learn how to evaluate Internet information and to take care of their own safety and security.

The use of a computer system without permission or for a purpose not agreed by the school may constitute a criminal offence under the Data Protection Act 1998 or Computer Misuse Act 1990. Use of electronic communications is permitted outside of working hours subject to the Council Security Policy for Schools

## Risk Assessment, Authorisation and Security of using ICT technologies

The school allocates access to the Internet on the basis of educational need. Students are required to apply for Internet access individually, by signing an Electronic Communication Acceptable Use Statement and a parent must have agreed to use of electronic communication. All Internet connections will be achieved via Flintshire's Wide Area Network to ensure compliance with the security policy, thus every use, by staff or students, requires a unique identity and password.

Students are educated in taking responsibility for Internet access and informed that checks can be made on files held on the system and on access to remote computers. Teachers monitor and control access and inform students that the secure retention of individual identity and password is essential. Inappropriate use by students will be investigated by the School and sanctions applied in line with the Behaviour Policy. Staff of Flintshire ICT Unit and Council Officers may also need to take appropriate action.

In common with other media, some material available via electronic communication and the Internet is unsuitable for students. The school will supervise students and take all reasonable precautions to ensure that users access only appropriate material suitable to their age and maturity. Senior staff will monitor and regularly review the effectiveness of access strategies for electronic communication. If staff or older students require less restricted Internet access a separate arrangement can be provided. However, due to the international scale and linked nature of information available via the Internet, it is not possible to guarantee that particular types of material will never appear on a screen. Neither the school nor Flintshire County Council can accept liability for the material accessed, or any consequences thereof.

Access to social networking sites is filtered and, where appropriate, blocked. Newsgroups are blocked unless a specific use is approved. Students are advised never to give out personal details of any kind which may identify them or their location, or to publish specific and detailed private thoughts. The School is aware that bullying can take place through social networking especially when a space has been setup without a password and others are invited to see the bully's comments.

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The security of the whole system is regularly reviewed with regard to threats to security resulting from use of electronic communication. Virus protection is installed and updated regularly, and all files held on the school's network are regularly checked. Portable media may not be used without specific permission and a virus check, and unapproved system utilities and executable files will not be allowed in students' work areas. Access by wireless devices will only be implemented by staff from the ICT Unit in compliance with the LA wireless policy.

All staff are allocated an e-mail account based on the address of the School. External email users should be encouraged to send initial messages to a school email address rather than an individual email address. Subsequent contact, once approved, is likely to be via an individual address. Students will not normally be granted access to e-mail accounts. Staff are permitted to use electronic communications, including the Internet, outside of working hours provided it is in a responsible and professional manner. Any complaint about staff misuse must be referred to the Headteacher.

Emerging technologies will be examined for educational benefit and a risk assessment will be carried out before use in school is allowed. A risk assessment will be undertaken on each new technology and effective practice in classroom use developed. Use of cellular wireless, infrared and Bluetooth communication is only allowed within the context of the agreed policy maintained by the ICT Unit. File transfer will be undertaken subject to restrictions imposed via the Corporate Firewall and may be limited to designated PCs/individuals. All files downloaded will be appropriate to educational use or technical needs and both licensing and copyright requirements will be met.

Remote access from the ICT Unit to computers in school allows problems and performance to be investigated without the need for a visit to school. Additionally, new and updated software can be downloaded directly and quickly to computers in school. File servers in school are able to automatically log, with the ICT Unit, potential faults before they occur. This allows preventative action to be taken to ensure continuity of operation. In using remote access the School understands that the principle adopted is that the action being taken is exactly the same as would be carried out if the support was given by visiting the school. Remote access from outside of FlintNet to school servers and servers within FlintNet is only available via the secure virtual private network connection managed jointly by Corporate IT and the ICT Unit. All remote access is subject to the Flintshire Commitment Statement.

## **Learning Environments and Awareness Raising**

Students are taught what Internet use is acceptable and what is not and given clear objectives for Internet use. Staff will guide students in on-line activities that will support the learning outcomes planned for the students' age and maturity. Students are educated in the effective use of the Internet in research, including the skills of knowledge location, retrieval and evaluation.

Students are taught to be critically aware of the materials they read and shown how to validate information before accepting its accuracy. They are made aware that the writer of an electronic mail message or the author of a Web page may not be the person claimed or the intended recipient. They are also taught to expect a wider range of content, both in level and in audience, than is found in the school library or on television and are encouraged to tell a teacher immediately if they encounter any material that makes them feel uncomfortable. When an unsuitable site is reported, the URL (address) and content will be conveyed to Flintshire ICT Unit who will immediately prevent access.

The School has created a Website to inform and inspire students to publish work to a high standard for a very wide range of audiences. We also have a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) – currently hosted by Flintshire County Council and available from within and beyond school. As they can be accessed by anyone on the Internet, the security of staff and students will be maintained. No students or staff will be named unless permission had been granted, and pictures will be reduced in quality and size to prevent misuse.

Rules for Internet access, Acceptable Use Statement and Rules for Responsible Use are displayed near computer systems. All staff is provided with the Electronic Communication Acceptable Use Policy and its importance explained. Parents' attention will be drawn to the Policy in the school prospectus. Responsible use of electronic communication, covering both school and home use, will be included in the induction programme for all students when they join the school.

Internet use in students' homes is rapidly increasing and the school is sensitive to Internet related issues experienced by students out of school, e.g. social networking sites, and offers appropriate advice. Information sessions for parents are organised through the Friends of Hawarden High to explain needs, rationale and details of the School's policies. A careful balance will be maintained between keeping parents informed and raising issues of concern.

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