

# Acceptable Use of Electronic Communication Policy

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| <b>Review Date</b> | February 2023 | <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.

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# Acceptable Use of Electronic Communication Policy

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.

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.

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. File transfer / remote access 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.

## Learning Environments and Awareness Raising

Students are taught what Internet use is acceptable and what is not and given clear objectives for Internet use in line with the eSafety policy. 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 Website to inform and inspire students to publish work to a high standard for a very wide range of audiences.

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# Acceptable Use of Electronic Communication Policy

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.

It is expected that any contraventions of the Acceptable Use of electronic Communications Policy will be dealt with in line with the School's Behaviour Policy.

All staff using school computers are expected to sign the Acceptable Use Policy relating to the use of the school network and in doing so confirm that they have read the rules outlined below.

## E-MAIL USAGE

Although the Authority (Flintshire LA) recognises that there are benefits in using e-mail, the Authority is also aware that the system could be misused. Consequently, the Authority has prepared a simple and easy to use guide of the do's and don'ts for users of the system. For further information see Simon Budgen.

### DO'S

- Use the system in accordance with the law. Relevant law includes Data Protection Act, Computer Misuse Act, Human Rights Act, Obscene Publications Act and Protection of Children Act.
  - Ensure that you have the authorisation of your manager/supervisor to access the system.
  - Use it in a responsible/professional manner. The question of whether the use is responsible or professional will be determined by the Director of Corporate Strategy and is not to be judged on what an individual may himself/herself consider responsible or professional. The test will be that of the reasonable standards of a public authority and adherence to the policies and standards of Flintshire County Council.
  - Report to your Line Manager, if you receive any e-mail which you consider may be defamatory or offensive.
  - Use it responsibly for personal e-mails, ensuring that any private use does not impact on you carrying out the normal duties and responsibilities of your job and that use adheres to the rules of this policy.
  - Do keep your username and password secure.
    - Do not share them with anybody.
    - Do log out when you have finished using the email service.
  - Do manage your mailbox
    - Do use folders to organise your storage. It is possible to invite other colleagues and students to share folders and calendars in the cloud via email invitations.
    - Do delete e-mails from the cloud when no longer
  - Do treat the onedrive like an online secure [but not encrypted] memory stick.
    - **Do keep a copy of essential files on school network** – files placed in it are not automatically backed up.
    - Do anonymise all personal information in the Cloud wherever possible.
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# Acceptable Use of Electronic Communication Policy

- You must anonymise or password protect if you are saving sensitive documents to the onedrive, e.g. containing disciplinary or medical notes.
- Do delete documents from the Cloud when no longer required

## DON'T

- Send defamatory or offensive e-mails, this is strictly forbidden. The question of whether the content of any e-mail is offensive will be determined by the Headteacher and is not to be judged on what an individual may himself/herself consider offensive.
- Send e-mails which may be considered or construed as harassment, intimidation, threatening or in any way discriminatory.
- Use the e-mail system for private business or profit making ventures.
- Respond to junk mail, otherwise known as spam mail.
- Forward junk mail or chain letters.
- Use your school e-mail address for shopping or surfing the internet for non work related purposes.
- Use any other e-mail system in the workplace other than the one provided by the County Council.

## INTERNET USAGE POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

Although the Authority recognises that there are benefits in using Internet, the Authority is also aware that the system could be misused. Consequently, the Authority has prepared a simple and easy to use guide of the do's and don'ts for users of the system.

### DO'S

- Ensure that you are authorised to access the Internet by your line manager.
- Use the system in accordance with the law. Relevant law includes Data Protection Act, Computer Misuse Act, Human Rights Act, Obscene Publications Act and Protection of Children Act.
- Use it in a responsible/professional manner. The question of whether the use is responsible or professional will be determined by the Director of Corporate Strategy and is not to be judged on what an individual may himself/herself consider responsible or professional. The test will be that of the reasonable standards of a public authority and adherence to the policies and standards of Flintshire County Council.
- Use the internet responsibly for private use outside of work time.
- Be responsible for checking that the content of videos streamed or downloaded from YouTube and other video hosting sites are educationally appropriate to the age and maturity of pupils.

### DON'T

- Use it for private purposes in work time.
- Use it for illegal or unlawful activities.
- Use it for private business or profit making ventures.
- Use it for accessing pornographic or sexual sites or downloading offensive material at anytime.
- Use it for downloading non work related files or software, including images, videos and games.

### WARNING:

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# Acceptable Use of Electronic Communication Policy

INTERNET AND EMAIL ACCESS IS MONITORED BY THE SCHOOL AND THE COUNTY COUNCIL

| Administration Use                                |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| Statutory/Non-Statutory:                          | Non Statutory      |
| School Website:                                   | Yes                |
| Document Author:                                  | Mr. S. Budgen      |
| GB Committee Overview:                            | Premises Committee |
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| To be Reviewed:                                   | Annually           |
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