



St. Joseph's Boys' National School, Terenure

INTERNET ACCESS POLICY

Introduction

This policy, in accordance with guidelines published by the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE), outlines our purpose in providing access to the internet and e-mail facilities and explains how the school is seeking to avoid the potential problems which may arise through unrestricted internet access.

Internet use by schools is in its infancy yet it is growing rapidly. Providing access to the Internet in school will raise educational standards and support the professional work of staff. Teachers and pupils have access to web sites world-wide (including museums and art galleries) which offer educational resources, news and current events. There are opportunities for discussion with experts in many fields and for communicating and exchanging information with schools and others world-wide.

In addition, staff has the opportunity to access educational materials and good curriculum practice, to communicate with advisory services, professional associations, colleagues and to exchange curriculum and administration data.

Many schools are now publishing websites on the Internet, and some include pupil photographs and pupil related information. The publication and availability of such material require us to implement procedures, which will protect children. This we aim to achieve by implementing our school policy.

What is the Internet?

The Internet is a worldwide system of connected computers, each of which may be connected to another network of computers. For this reason, it is sometimes called a network of networks. The Internet allows people in all corners of the world to communicate electronically, and to send and access information electronically in a matter of minutes.

What is the World Wide Web?

The World Wide Web is the main source of content that is accessible via the Internet. It is like a library of books, with the pages stored on lots of different computers around the world. A unique feature of the World Wide Web is that anyone can create content and make it accessible on the Web.

What are the advantages of Internet access?

The Internet allows people to access vast information resource, talk to each other by email, and join electronic news, discussion and special mailing groups. Educationally speaking, it can open up a whole new world for the user as well as providing access to information and resources. It also provides a creative outlet for those who wish to construct web pages.

School Policy

Pupil accessing the Internet

Internet access is now available to pupils. The school is pleased to offer this tool as an available resource to both pupils and teachers for reference purposes and for researching project materials. Pupils have ready access to thousands of libraries and databases on every subject written.

Electronic information research skills are now fundamental to preparation for living and working in the coming Information Age. The school will integrate such information as appropriate within the curriculum and staff will provide guidance and instruction to pupils in the appropriate use of such resources.

Pupil use of telecommunications and electronic information will be provided and only be permitted upon submission of permission and agreement forms by parents of pupils and by pupils themselves

Dangers inherent in giving children access to the Internet

There are three main categories of risk associated with Internet usage:

- (i) Exposure to illegal and/or harmful images and text, whether violent, racist, hate based or of a pornographic nature.
- (ii) Receiving or transmitting messages which are demeaning, threatening or in other ways disturbing to the well being of the child.
- (iii) Being lured into a physical encounter that might threaten the safety and well being of children.

Ensuring Internet access is appropriate and safe

The Internet is a relatively new communications medium and is freely available to any person wishing to send e-mail or publish a web site. In common with other media such as magazines, books and video, some material available on the Internet is unsuitable for pupils. Pupils in school are unlikely to see inappropriate content in books due to selection by publishers. The school will take every practical measure to ensure that children do not encounter upsetting, offensive or otherwise inappropriate material on the Internet. The following key measures have been adopted to help ensure that our pupils are not exposed to unsuitable material:

- The NCTE provides the filtering of inappropriate websites.
- All websites accessed are logged and checked by ICT co-ordinator.
- Children have their own password and username
- Children using the Internet will be supervised by the teacher at all times.
- Staff will check that the sites pre-selected for pupil use are appropriate to the age and maturity of pupils;
- Staff will be particularly vigilant when pupils are undertaking their own search and will check that the children are following the agreed search format;
- Pupils will be taught to use e-mail and the internet responsibly in order to reduce the risk to themselves and others;
- Our Rules for Responsible Internet Use will be posted near computer systems.

- The ICT co-ordinator will monitor the effectiveness of internet access strategies;
- The ICT co-ordinator will ensure that checks are made on files to monitor compliance with the school's Internet Access Policy;
- Internet access in the classroom is provided on request from the class teacher.
- Methods to quantify and minimise the risk of pupils being exposed to inappropriate material will be reviewed.

It is the experience of the NCTE that the above measures have been highly effective. 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 computer screen. The school cannot accept liability for the material accessed, or any consequences thereof.

- A most important element of our Rules of Responsible Internet Use is that pupils will tell a teacher immediately if they encounter any material that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- Internet sessions will not be allowed without the close monitoring of the children's activities.
- Unmonitored chat-room sessions are not allowed.
- Registration or the signing of visitor books on web sites is not allowed without the permission of the teacher in charge.
- Pupils are not allowed to bring CD Roms or floppy disks other than work disks to school. This protects against the danger of introducing unsuitable materials externally.
- Access to the computer room will be restricted to class time unless supervised. Pupils may not log on to the Internet at these times unless a supervisor is present and permission has been given.
- Remember that teachers have access to all files and disks used on school computers, including email messages sent and received by pupils. School computers also record details of what pupils have viewed on the Internet.

Electronic Mail or Email

School email address:

info@stjosephsterenure.ie or office@stjosephsterenure.ie

Safety with regard to e-mail

- Electronic mail or e-mail allows pupils to communicate with peers and educationalists around the world. Pupils will learn how to use an e-mail application and be taught e-mail conventions.
- e-mail will be used to communicate with others, to request information and to share information

In relation to school projects key-pals internet relay chat (IRC) or e-mail correspondences, the following procedures shall apply:

- No personal information about the child, his family, the teachers or the school will be disclosed without the permission of the supervising teacher and without the child's parents giving permission.
- The supervising teacher will monitor all email received before being passed to a child.
- Pupils will not be permitted to use e-mail at school to arrange to meet someone outside school hours.
- Children will have the e-mail messages they compose checked by a teacher before sending them;
- Pictures or images, which might be used in helping to identify an individual pupil/teacher/parent, may not be transmitted without permission.
- E-mail messages containing information, which makes a pupil uncomfortable, must be reported to the teacher.

School Web Site

St. Joseph's School website address: <http://www.stjosephsterenure.ie>

Our school web site is intended to:

- Provide accurate, up-to-date information about our school;
- Enable pupils to publish work to a high standard, for a very wide audience including pupils, parents, staff, members of the local community and others;
- Celebrate good work;
- Provide pupils with the opportunity to publish their work on the internet;
- It may be used to publish resources for projects.
- All classes may provide work for publication on the school web site.
- Class teachers will be responsible for ensuring that the content of the pupils' work is accurate and the quality of presentation is maintained.
- All material must be the author's own work, crediting other work included and stating clearly that author's identity and/or status.
- The IT co-ordinator is responsible for up-loading pages to the school web site, ensuring that the links work and are up-to-date, and that the site meets the requirements of the site host.
- The point of contact on the web site will be the school address, telephone number and e-mail address.
- We do not publish pupils' full names or photographs that identify individuals on our web pages.
- Home information or individual e-mail identities will not be published.
- Permission will be sought from other individuals before they are referred to by name on any pages we publish on our web site.

Procedures Which Apply to the School Web Site

- Pupils' work will appear in an educational context on web pages with a copyright notice prohibiting the copying of such work without written permission.
- Children's telephone numbers, home addresses or other personal information will not appear on the web-site.
- Pupils, who wish to make contact with other Internet users, must use the school email address only.
- Pupils are not allowed to register or complete forms on-line.
- Particular care will be taken where photographs of pupils are being used on the school web-site. They will not be accompanied by names or personal information.

Rules for responsible Internet use

The school has installed computers with Internet access to help our learning. These rules will help keep us safe and help us be fair to others.

Using the Computers:

1. I will only access the computer system with the login and password I have been given;
2. I will not access other people's files;
3. I will not bring in floppy disks or CDs from outside school and try to use them on the school computers.

Using the Internet:

1. I will ask permission from a teacher before using the internet;
2. I will report any unpleasant material to my teacher immediately because this will help protect other pupils and myself;
3. I understand that the school may check my computer files and may monitor the internet sites I visit;
4. I will not complete and send forms without permission from my teacher;
5. I will not give my full name, my home address or telephone number when completing forms.

Using e-mail:

1. I will ask permission from a teacher before checking the e-mail
2. I will immediately report any unpleasant messages sent to me because this would help protect other pupils and myself;
3. I understand that e-mail messages I receive or send may be read by others;
4. The messages I send will be polite and responsible;
5. I will only e-mail people I know, or my teacher has approved;
6. My e-mail may be checked by a teacher;
7. I will not give my full name, my home address or telephone number;
8. I will not use e-mail to arrange to meet someone outside school hours.
9. I will not disclose my e-mail password to others, except to my parents.

Sanctions

- Pupils are responsible for good behaviour on the Internet just as they are in a classroom or on a school corridor. General school rules apply.
- Access is a privilege, not a right and that access requires responsibility. The right of access may be withdrawn following a breach of the rules.
- If any of the above rules are broken, it will result in a temporary or permanent ban on Internet and/or computer use.
- Additional disciplinary action may be taken in line with existing approved school practice on inappropriate language or behaviour.

Tips for Parents

- Take the time to see what your children are doing online and what their interests are.
- Teach children never to give out their personal information to people they meet online especially in public places like chat rooms
- Instruct your child never to plan a face-to-face meeting alone with online acquaintances
- Establish clear ground rules for Internet use for your children. Decide whether or not to use parental control tools or protective software.
- Place your computer in a family room or another open area of your home.

Note:

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management in accordance with circumstance and procedure.

The Board of Management and staff do not accept liability for material accessed through Internet use or the consequences thereof.

Revised by the Board of Management – February 2001.