

Use of the Internet - Priory School

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1. Introduction.

Usually, the resources used by pupils in school are carefully chosen by the teacher and determined by curriculum policies. Use of the Internet, by its nature, will provide access to information which has not been selected by the teacher. Whilst pupils will often be directed to sites which provide reviewed and evaluated sources, at times, they will be able to move beyond these, to sites unfamiliar to the teacher.

The problems and issues that have been highlighted by the media concern all schools. Whilst some of the media interest is hype, there is genuine cause for concern that children might access unsuitable material either accidentally or deliberately.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Establish the ground rules we have in school for using the Internet
- Describe how these fit into the wider context of our discipline policies
- Demonstrate the methods used to protect the children from sites containing pornography, racist or politically extreme views and violence

The school believes that the benefits to pupils from access to the resources of the Internet, far exceed the disadvantages. Ultimately, the responsibility for setting and conveying the standards that children are expected to follow, when using media and information resources, is one the school shares with parents and guardians.

At any, we feel that the best recipe for success lies in a combination of site-filtering, of supervision and by fostering a responsible attitude in our pupils in partnership with parents. Parents will be sent an explanatory letter and the rules which form our Internet Access Agreement (Attached to the end of this document). This can be seen as an extension to the Home School Agreement.

2. Using the Internet for Education

The benefits include:

- access to a wide variety of educational resources including libraries, art galleries and museums
- rapid and cost effective world-wide communication
- gaining an understanding of people and cultures around the globe
- staff professional development through access to new curriculum materials, experts' knowledge and practice
- exchange of curriculum and administration data with LEA/DFEE
- social and leisure use
- greatly increased skills in Literacy, particularly in being able to read and appraise critically and then communicate what is important to others

The school intends to teach pupils about the vast information resources available on the Internet, using it as a planned part of many lessons.

All staff will review and evaluate resources available on web sites appropriate to the age range and ability of the pupils being taught and the IT Co-ordinator will assist in the dissemination of this information.

Pupils will have the opportunity to exchange information via email. They will be taught how to use the address book, how to attach files to an email and how to follow conventions of politeness.

As pupils gain experience, they will be taught how to use searching techniques to locate and specific information for themselves. Comparisons will be made between researching from different sources of information, (CD Rom, books, WWW). We hope that pupils will learn to decide when it is appropriate to use the Internet, as opposed to other sources of information, in terms of: the time taken; the amount of information found; the usefulness and reliability of information located.

At times, information, such as text, photos etc may be “downloaded” from the Internet for use in pupils’ presentations. Tasks will be set to encourage pupils to view web sites and information with a critical eye.

3. Pupils’ Access to the Internet

Our School will use a “filtered” Internet Service, which will minimise the chances of pupils encountering undesirable material.

Any School will normally only allow children to use the Internet when there is a responsible adult present to supervise. However it is unrealistic to suppose that the teacher’s attention will always be directed toward the computer screen.

Members of staff will be aware of the potential for misuse, and will be responsible for explaining to pupils, the expectation we have of pupils.

Teachers will have access to pupils’ internet related files and will check these on a regular basis to ensure expectations of behaviour are being met.

4. Expectations of Pupils using the Internet

- All pupils are expected to read and agree the Internet Agreement.
- At any, we expect all pupils to be responsible for their own behaviour on the internet, just as they are anywhere else in school. This includes materials they choose to access, and language they use.
- Pupils using the World Wide Web are expected not to deliberately seek out offensive materials. Should any pupils encounter any such material accidentally, they are expected to report it immediately to a teacher, so that the ICT technician can block further access to the site.
- Pupils are expected not to use any rude language in their email communications and contact only people they know or those the teacher has approved. They have been taught the rules of etiquette in email and are expected to follow them.
- Pupils must ask permission before accessing the Internet and have a clear idea why they are using it
- Pupils should not access other people's files.
- Computers should only be used for schoolwork and homework unless permission has been granted otherwise.
- No program files may be downloaded to the computer from the Internet. This to prevent corruption of data and avoid viruses.

- No programs on disc or CD Rom should be brought in from home for use in school. This is for both legal and security reasons.
- Homework completed at home may be brought in on memory stick but this will have to be virus scanned by the class teacher before use.
- No personal information such as phone numbers and addresses should be given out and no arrangements to meet someone made unless this is part of an approved school project.
- Pupils consistently choosing not to comply with these expectations will be warned, and subsequently, may be denied access to Internet resources. They will also come under the general discipline procedures of the school which comprises an escalating set of measures including a letter to parents and withdrawal of privileges.

5. Web Site Guidelines

A web site can celebrate good work, promote the school, publish resources for projects and homework, and link to other good sites of interest.

- Home information and e-mail identities will not be included only the point of contact to the school i.e. phone number, school address and e-mail to Head/ Administrator or PSA
- Group photos will not contain a names list
- Work displayed will be of the highest quality and reflect the status of the school

6. Internet Agreement

All pupils and their parents / guardians will be asked to read and sign an agreement covering the expectations we have of pupils using the Internet in school.